



## **Gavriel Cohen's Conversations with Isaiah Berlin: No. 11**

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# Gavriel Cohen: Conversation No. 11

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## **Selected topics**

British Information Services

The US labour movement

American Federation of Labor, Congress of Industrial Organizations

US union leaders

John L. Lewis, Jay Lovestone, Communism

Lucy Lang, Forverts

Syndicalism

Why IB was transferred from New York to Washington

R. H. Tawney in Washington; the telegrams

A Jewish army

Israel Sieff and the transfer of Arabs from Palestine

British attitude to Zionists; Lord Bearstead

Alexander Halpern

Hereditary honorary citizens

Mark Wolff

The Humanitarian Trust, Michael Pollack, Matthew Ginsburg

The Hebrew University in 1934

Einstein and Magnes

Redcliffe Salaman, Philip Hartog

Academic refugees in Oxford

## *Side A*

GC Well, again, I want to fill in some holes, leftovers from the previous meeting. You remember that in the meeting before last we came to your American period and I mentioned the trade unions, that you were in charge of them, too, when you were ...

IB Yes.

GC And you said you had a story.

IB Yes, I had a story.

GC And we said that you would tell it a me later, because I didn't want to stop the background.

IB Yes, I'll tell you the story.

GC All right.

IB It's quite simple. In 1941 I was in the British Information Services, and among the people I had contact with was the American labour movement. Now, the American Federation of Labor was no problem, because they were affiliated to the TUC, so I cultivated very good relations. [Walter] Citrine, who was the head [General Secretary] of the TUC, enjoyed good relations with [William B.] Green.

GC Green.

IB Who was the head of the American Federation of Labor. Green was a man about whom it was said 'Failure goes to his head.' [GC and IB laugh.] Not one of the ablest. But the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations], the other union was of course unfriendly. Partly because the AFL was friendly, partly because it consisted of unskilled workers who came from Roman Catholic countries, Poland, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, even from Northern Fra... – North Africa to some extent, not very much, Ireland. Now these people – the Church was anti-British, in America. I don't say [?], but strongly isolationist.

GC By Church you mean the Catholic ...

IB Catholic Church. Strongly isol... – there were exceptions. But on the whole isolationist. The Pope was not friendly, whatever anyone may say. And the hierarchy was isolationist in the First World War and in the Second. And maybe, of course, I don't know why, in spite of the invasion of Poland, I'd have thought they'd be more sympathetic. Well, they didn't. Perhaps the Polish priests were, but the Irish ones obviously, and they dominated. Well, of course, if the British wanted to get on terms [?] with the CIO, they could. Partly because of production, even if they wanted England to influence

them into greater productivity and so on. They were afraid that certain sabotage would occur in goods which were going to them. May be wrong, but anyhow, some of that filtered. So there was a great effort, there was going to be an annual convention of the [pause] – what does the Motor Workers belong to?

GC United Engineer Workers.

IB What did they belong to? United – they weren't called Motor Workers.

GC I'll found out.

IB UAW. I think they were called United Automobile [Auto] Workers. Their leaders were, I can tell you, quite well-known. A man called Reuther, or Reuter [Walter Reuther].

GC Walter Reuther.

IB Walter Reuther. He was I think General Motors [yes]. Then there was another man, called [Richard] Frankenstein, double 'e'. He I think was Ford [Dodge]. I may have got it wrong, but anyway, one or the other. They were the chief leaders. There were some others. Now they had an annual convention in Buffalo, NY. It was clear that no British Labour union was going to be invited to that. They invited fraternal bodies [?] from other countries, because of this tie-up. So the British suddenly thought maybe they can get a broadcast by Herbert Morrison, who was not a trade unionist, but Labour, and quite well thought of, and quite decent. And in principle they accepted. OK. I was in charge of this operation. That meant a tape or record or something would have to be played. I was in charge of the tape. I had an assistant called Bathurst [?], who has since become an eminent solicitor in London, and we were the experts. Now, of course, there was a path or person in the CIO, apart from the president, who was a man called Phil[ip] Murray.

GC Murray, sure.

IB That was the head of it. A far more powerful person was John John L. Lewis, who was the head of the miners. One of his –

originally the CIO consisted of all kinds of Jewish labour leaders as well, like [David] Dubinsky and [Sidney] Hillman and so on. They left – they went back to the AFL and that created tremendous feelings of – John Lewis was virtually [?] anti-Semitic. He made a famous speech in which he said [*dramatic voice*], ‘Who are the people who were the traitors, who went back to the Federation of Labor? Dubinsky took the easy path. [Max] Zaritzky took the easy oath. [Jacob] Potofsky took the easy path.’ It was quite clear what he meant. Now, suddenly, in the middle of all these things, I received a telephone call from the public relations man of the United Automobile Workers, who said ‘I’m terribly sorry, the deal is off. No talk.’ ‘Why?’ ‘Well, very difficult.’ ‘What is difficult? After all, you did promise.’ ‘Well, terribly sorry. It just isn’t on.’ ‘Why isn’t it on? What do I say to the government? What do I say to Mr Morrison? He’ll be very upset. After all, he’s a Cabinet Minister, you know.’ ‘I can’t tell you on the telephone.’ So I said, ‘Well, can you tell me anywhere else?’ ‘OK. If you come to Buffalo, maybe I can tell you.’ So Mr Bathurst and I got on to an aeroplane and went to Buffalo. This is in the middle of 1941. I stayed at some hotel, and telephoned him, and he said, ‘OK, I’ll be along.’ He then arrived; he was a Jew; I can’t remember his name – the public relations man – and tried to pull the telephone out of its socket, but in the hotel room it was not possible. It was better to go and talk outside. Everything is bugged. That was the first time I realised the nature of the American labour movement. He may have been wrong, but he certainly thought this. So we went to the street. He then told me the following story, which was absurd and fascinating.

There was a man called [Jay] Lovestone, who was a famous American Communist in the United Automobile Workers. He joined – he was probably a member of the American Communist Party, probably Levenstein or something [Liebstein], Lovestone, and he went to Moscow as part of the Comintern. And he had certain disagreements before the war, and he managed to escape with his life. He was in line to be arrested, but he managed to slip away and founded a breakaway movement, called the Lovestonites, partly consisting of American Communists in Mexico, and odd characters of that sort. He was hated by the official Communists, naturally. John Lewis was a close ally of the Communists, partly because of isolationism and Anglophobia, Welsh Anglophobia, etc.

Now, something had to be done about Lovestone. He was quite a powerful man, he didn't have any – the Lovestonites were not very numerous, but he was a very strong character, dangerous intriguer. I met him when I was in hospital in New York with sinusitis. I went to hospital in 6th Avenue. There were no doors in those cubicles, which I was – only low doors which swung in and out, as in horse cabins. Suddenly – I was not wearing any spectacles, so I couldn't see. I had this vaguely impressionistic conception of the outside world. I couldn't [?] read. Suddenly a man came in, tapped and said, 'You don't know me, but I know you, and I knew Lenin and Stalin too.'

GC [*laughter*]

IB He rhymed. I was terrified. He then said he was Lovestone. He then said – let me explain. After the breach, Dubinsky, to whom the CIO – he didn't belong to the Automobile Workers, he belonged to the Garment Workers – Dubinsky had to do something with him, so he put him in charge of Local 16 or something. But mainly just to give him a salary, to keep him quiet. His main job was, apart from that, being on some pro-British Committee, with Winthrop Aldridge and various eminent bankers, for Bundles for Britain, Help to England, everything Dubinsky was in favour of, and the AFL was in favour of. That was an absurd job, it was like having Trotsky as a sort of attraction [?], it was as if you make Trotsky a member of some, I don't know, Aid to Britain organisation. Still, it gave him a salary, gave him a position. So he wanted to talk to me about that. Nothing of very great interest, and then he went away.

He told me lots of stories when I was lying in my bed, about the American labour movement, the Communists, the breaches – it was all fascinating. Lots of stuff I had no idea about, the terrible splits, Trotskyites, Communists, anarchists, IWW [Industrial Workers of the World], the whole – but he was fascinating. He knew an awful lot, and he was a terrific crook, but he was interesting to talk to.

Now, the head of – this is a long story – the head of the UAW at that time was a man called [Roland J.] Thomas, who had not much of a personality, but he was quite mild. There was going to be a duel between Ruther and Frankenstein [about] who was to replace Thomas. They were moderate socialists. John Lewis didn't want either. He was going to be a fraternal delegate, organised by the CIO

at the convention. In order to stop getting the wrong candidate in, he threatened to get up and say that the whole plot about Morrison was organised by Lovestone. Once the name Lovestone was mentioned, there would be pandemonium, because Homer Martin, whom I still remember, [and] was a founder of this union, had been mixed up with Lovestone, and had to be expelled from the union, or at least left after a fearful political row. So there were Martin, Lovestone – once these names were mentioned, people would start screaming. And in the course of that anybody might be elected, but not these two. And as they wanted their peace, and they wanted Thomas to be elected if they couldn't elect the others, they couldn't take the risk of a scandal which would be entirely to prevent Morrison. So that's why I couldn't go, because it was too difficult. OK. I saw there was nothing that could be done about that, so there was no broadcast, but I met Jim Carey, who was the secretary for the CIO, and a very nice man. And I made friends with him, and him I used to see him from time to time during the war, in general. met him in Moscow too, I remember, in 1945. He came on some American labour delegation. He was the head of the – secretary of the Electrical Workers. A thoroughly nice man. Secretary of the CIO. And I used to ask him which members of the CIO were members of the Communist Party, crypto- or open, and he always told me. For example, I asked him about a man called Lee Pressman, who was the editor of the CIO journal, and there was another man on it who was an Englishman – Pressman was a Jew – an Englishman who also belonged to it, and I said to him, 'Is he a Communist?' He said, 'He cheats the Party of its dues.' [GC and IB laugh] Well, it's a description. You know what that means.

GC Yes.

IB That's my story. Then I went back and after that I had very good relations with the CIO as a result. That didn't go through, but I met him, I met Phil Murray and we made friends. Next time they had a convention was in the Middle West somewhere, in – wait a bit – in, where is General Motors?

GC Not in Detroit? I don't know.

IB Detroit. Quite right.



GC I think you mentioned it. [*very unclear*]

IB And I went to Detroit because Phil Murray invited me. But the British Consul forced me to leave; he couldn't take any risk; he begged me to go home, because there were tremendous Anglo-phobes there, a lot of – this must have been later, 1942, America was already in the war. But a tremendous amount of anti-British feeling there was in Detroit, yes. Apparently. At least he said so. I can't remember his name. It was the Consul General. He said that if I appeared in the gathering, somebody might know who I was, there would be an awful noise, yes. So he begged me not to accept this invitation. Phil Murray himself was sure it would be all right. But I thought, well, supposing it would happen – mere curiosity on my part.

GC How did you manage with trade union leaders? Were there many intellectuals among the CIO people?

IB Oh no, certainly not.

GC There were some.

IB None that I knew. Lee Pressman was an intellectual. He was a straight Jewish Communist.

GC I think that people like Irving Howe, Sig [Sid(ney)?] Diamond ...

IB No, no, Diamond and Howe, I don't know how much they had to do with the trade unions.

GC I think that some of them were active in the trade unions.

IB Could be.

GC Maybe not [?], but others.

IB I wouldn't have known. I simply didn't know.

GC But you haven't met them

IB No, I didn't know; nobody I met in the trade unions ever mentioned them. They may have been active, but I doubt if – the Communist Party did not penetrate the left-wing unions. Not like in England, where they did. And then, I'll tell you, there are exceptions. The – not longshoremen, something in California, on the coast, not the sailors, but – what are they called? They would load the ships.

GC I know what you mean; I know how we call it in Israel – 'sappanim' [sailors].

IB Sappanim. There was an Australian who was the head of that union, who I think was [sneezes]. I'm not sure he wasn't deported in the end, but anyway, he got into trouble. Told off for organising strikes. He was a straight Communist, and so the union was. The longshoremen of New York, they were Communists, because I had a friend who was idealistic – one moment [heaves] he was an idealistic, left-of-centre American who was very prominent here in the Sacco and Vanzetti case. He was in Washington, and he was in the Department of Agriculture. Idealistic, noble, more or less semi-socialist. He was anti-Communist, and left-wing New Deal. And they did – there were some – he appeared among them, talked to them, and he knocked out an eye, so there was a row and he lost an eye in the course of this battle. So there was violence on the – as you know there always is – on the quayside. Extremely viol... – you always get in these port towns, in the ports, quite a lot of rough stuff. That certainly happened there. I've forgotten the name of the man who was – there were two leaders [got into some trouble during the war]. And of course John L. Lewis himself was not a Communist, but he organised strikes during the war which made him public enemy no. 1. Then was thought to be extremely unpopular. But what were we talking about? Labour. The people I used to meet were in New York. Now the New York labour was to a large degree Jewish and Italian. I met one or two of the Italians; they were not terribly interesting. Of course I met Dubinsky. And I met Sidney Hillman, who was in Washington, part of the war effort [?]. And his deputy in New York was Jake Potofsky, whom I knew, who was very pro-Israel – pro-Zionist, anyway.

GC I know the name.

IB As you know. Now, I used to go to dinner, for example, with [Lucy Lang,] the wife of – the husband was a man called [Harry] Lang, who worked on the Jewish *Forverts*, which was closely interwoven with New York trade unionists. She was a friend of Eugene Debs, 1910, was real left-wing pre-1914 stuff. He used to go to jail from time to time. She showed me photographs on the grass together with Debs in 1908, 1909. They were quite interesting people. They dined in black ties and dinner jackets. Six o'clock in Brooklyn. There were many interesting people there, of an old kind, pre-everything, pre-1914. The Mexican border is where they operated; that is to say they helped Mexican revolutionaries, and the revolutionaries helped them.

GC You are speaking about the *Forverts* people, or ...

IB *Forverts*. Some of them actually were mixed up in Mexican leftism in those far-off years. Curious – and I remember talking to her about politics, and she said, 'We hold John L. Lewis on the leash.' Which was quite untrue. We won't let him go too far. Pure boasting. What she explained to me was that the whole of her people, trade unionists of her kind, were 100 per cent anti-Roosevelt. And they were anti-Roosevelt because fundamentally they – what are guild socialists called [syndicalists]? It has a name. People who live and work in participation and so on.

GC Cooperative?

IB No, certainly not.

GC Commune?

IB Some other name for that kind of socialism.

GC Ah, yes, of course. I don't know the name. Yes.

IB The French had them. These, who were the – Sorel, all that kind of thing.

GC Fourier.

IB Well, Fourier was more or less 100 years ago. No, I mean 1910 or something. They were not Fourierists. They had no connection with it.

GC Their name is different.

IB Comes from Proudhon. Syndicalism is what I mean. Just that. These people were syndicalists and they thought state control was the one fatal thing. What the state gives, the state can take away.

GC They had some anarchist influences.

IB They were afraid of state control. Anything the state can give, the state can take away. They tied themselves to the government. Their freedom of action, what they wanted to have, their wages and so on, would be too much pooled into government departments. The connection of government was too close. They wanted to be free to be against the government if need be. Some degree of revolutionary oppositionalism, which is what these leftist people – I don't think Abe Cahan, who was the editor, and all the Yiddish writers – but these people ...

GC There was an influential group that wrote articles – they called it anarcho-syndicalism [*unclear*] from Europe.

IB Oh, I know. Anarcho-syndicalism was not called – it wasn't called either anarcho-syndicalism or anything of that sort in America. It wasn't called anything.

GC But in Europe it was.

IB Yes. I know it was. Oh, in France, yes. But there were no anarchists in Russia, no syndicalists.

GC No, but the expression was in Russian.

IB Anarchism.

GC It was used.

IB In Russian it was anarchism.

GC I remember. All right.

IB I think. France, yes, Italy, yes. France had anarcho-syndicalism. Quite a strong movement.

GC No, I didn't say that it was in Russia, but in Russian terminology they used it.

IB Anarcho-syndicalism. The word existed all over Europe, but there was no movement in Russia. There were anarchists, but they were not called, and there were anarchist-Communists. Communist anarchists they were called.

GC In America.

IB No, in Russia. In America they were not called Communists. Ever. They were called International Workers of the World, IWW, that kind of thing. Other things, little splinter groups. Daniel De Leon, all kinds of names like that. Not Samuel Gompers, no. Anyway, these people were interesting because they really explained how the American unionist movement had grown, and how they completely departed from the original leftism into total bureaucracy of a completely terminal Tammany type, so that the leaders had enormous houses, lived in palaces, were corrupt to a large degree, particularly the teamsters' union, which was totally corrupt. All this was very fascinating to know. But I had no business, because by 1942 I was in the Embassy doing something quite different. This was in early 1941. But I did learn about what the American labour movement was like. It was interesting. Particularly John L. Lewis.

GC By the way, when you came back, did G. D. H. Cole try to enquire, to learn from you about the American labour movement?

IB Never. He hated America. He hated all foreigners.

GC Including the labour movement?

IB His daughter married an American, and he went once or twice. He did go to America once, I think, to something like Vanderbilt University – some such University. Roosevelt [?] University. I said, ‘Isn’t it rather disreputable?’ He said, ‘Yes, otherwise they wouldn’t ask me.’ No, I’ll tell you about something much more amusing. How did I come to be transferred from New York to Washington? That is not a simple story. Why should they think I would make a good reporter?

Among the reports which I sent to London was of course also reports of the Labour press, and therefore the condition of the unions so far as I really knew it, mainly, and ostensibly, entirely tied down to what the labour press was saying, or what the ordinary press was saying about the labour, for example, the frightful – the opposition, the strikes, the difficulties which the government had, the violence of some of the anarchists, and so on. Attlee managed to get the Foreign Office to send [R. H.] Tawney as Labour attaché to Washington. He came originally in 1941, I think 1941, to get an honorary degree in the University of Chicago. I met him at the airport. I was asked to do it. I met people who knew him, I didn’t know him. But I was glad to meet him. He was extremely nice to me, talked to me about my book on Karl Marx, I was very flattered, and went off to Chicago. Then he came back to Washington to settle himself as the Labour attaché in Washington. So far as I could tell, nobody in the Embassy had ever heard of him, except Halifax, because of Christian connections. But Halifax didn’t know he was, because he wasn’t told.

I used to send reports on what the Labour press were saying, so Tawney asked me to come and see him in order that we might perhaps compare notes about his information. I went to see him in the Embassy, it was a very hot summer, June, July. He was sitting in a room in the Chancery, looked like a British worker, without a collar, big front stud sticking out from in front of his shirt, and his shirtsleeves, and in front of him was a large red dispatch box, locked, with a little piece of paper in it with a list of people to whom it has to go. That was the telegrams which was circulated room to room. A black man used to bring them, then you looked at them, then you locked them with your key, which you had, and then you ticked, listened [?].

Tawney said to me, 'I don't know what's in this box. I'm trying to open it, but I've tried with a penknife and it won't work.' He managed to splinter off tiny bits of red morocco [GC laughs], so I said, 'I'll tell you what this is, Tawney, this is telegrams. Ordinary For Foreign Office telegrams, which circulate around Chancery. If you want to see them you have to ask for a key, which I am sorry you weren't given. But if you don't want to see them, all you have [to do] is to tick the paper and the man will carry them out again.' That's exactly what he did. He said, 'I'm not interested. Then I remember somehow conveying to him, the Ambassador, [that] he had this distinguished man. The Americans knew he was there, people in the States. [Adolf A.] Berle was an awful man, but still, he knew something about socialism and he came to see him. People from the New Deal, working among them, certainly met him, and he wrote some fascinating dispatches, which I never saw. They were published in the end in England by the American labour movement.

I talked to him very well about it, but in the end, what I reported in New York didn't quite agree with what he wrote, so he got frightfully angry and he telephoned me and said, 'It's got to be either you or I. We can't both send these bits of information, because they won't know what to think.' I said, 'I'm terribly sorry, of course I'll stop. It's entirely your job. I wouldn't dream of trying to get in your way. I have great reverence for you' – and all that. But that gave the Embassy the impression that I was also reporting, that I was quite good at actually reporting things, which may not have harmonised with his reports, but which were in fact reports of a kind which he was doing. And that gave them the knowledge that I was some good at producing reports, which otherwise I don't think would have struck them.

And John Foster, of course, who was my friend at the Embassy, told [Derick] Hoyer Millar, who was the head of the Embassy, whom he knew, that the telegrams which the Embassy sent to London about American opinion was done by some third secretary who was instructed by the Minister, Mr Butler, [later] Sir [Harold] Butler, simply to read the Sunday edition of the *New York Times*, which had a summary of the news, to boil down this summary and send it to London. And [laughter] John Foster quite rightly pointed out that if they sent the Sunday *Times* not in code, it would produce the same result even if the press read it [?]. There was no need to send it in code. [laughter] There was no secret information contained

there. That produced a bit of a scandal. The third secretary did it in his spare time. They were absolutely no good. This had been done for years. Ten years or more. The idea was that something more must be done. The Foreign Office is entitled to rather more detailed and more useful information, and that's when Foster recommended me. As they knew that I did reports, at once they asked if I wanted to do it and I said yes I did. That's how my promotion to the British Embassy came about.

GC What did John Foster do in the Embassy in Washington?

IB He was a legal attaché. Legal advisor.

GC Was it only during the war?

*Side B*

IB I nearly lost my job. I told you about the revisionists.

GC I'm not sure.

IB I'll tell you with pleasure. In about April, March 1941 there was agitation about the Jewish Army in London which came to nothing.

GC Really?

IB Then. Well, March, April ...

GC 1940?

IB 1940, 1941.

GC 1941?

IB It began in April, in 1940, but it went on in 1940, 1941.

GC The agitation came later: 1941.

IB Well, maybe in 1941. Weizmann was refused by Lloyd in 1940.



GC The agitation came later.

IB What do you call agitation?

GC In the press.

IB No, I don't mean that.

GC Ah.

IB Anyway, the revisionists were strongly in favour.

GC Was it Jabotinsky [*unclear*].

IB Oh, Jabotinsky was dead [d. 3 August 1940].

GC Yes, but his letter to Chamberlain ...

IB Which?

GC You know, he wrote a letter to Chamberlain.

IB No, I didn't know.

GC The day the war broke out, 3 September, he sent a letter.

IB He offered to help, yes.

GC He was in France and he sent a very warm letter to Chamberlain.

IB Saying we want to owe allegiance.

GC And we want to help you in general.

IB The British ...

GC They allowed ...

IB Exactly. The British were very clear that price last time was too high, and more than that, when I used to see the telegrams during

the war, in the Embassy, the kind of thing which used to arrive through the Palestine Intelligence said the Jews are no good as soldiers. Useless. Therefore, though one might make some use of them in other capacities, as fighting men they were absolutely useless. That was very typical.

GC I'll tell you a story.

IB All right. Now I don't know who it was, the British Intelligence Officers.

GC [*unclear*] When you have time, I'll tell you.

IB All right. But the main, official reason was, no equipment. That's what the War Office instructed the Foreign Office to say. Right. I was visited by various – since I was in charge of Jewish propaganda, Zionists were entitled to call on me. I remember a young man called Adler, I can't remember, finer[?] young men who wanted tremendous Jewish forces, legions etc. All right. One of them was one of that Jabotinsky's people. Friend of – for example, of [(Aaron) Zvi Propes]. Propes I didn't meet. He was in New York.

GC [*very unclear*] was in the youth movement.

IB Propes was the man in whose hands Jabotinsky died.

GC His wife [Mara] [?].

IB No, Propes himself. Propes, not Mara. Propes said he was in New York with Jabotinsky in 1940.

GC They were together in ...

IB In 1940.

GC Where?

IB In New York.

GC In New York, but it was camp of Betar [Zionist youth movement].

IB Whatever it was.

GC Jabotinsky didn't feel well, and Mara was there.

IB Mara I'm sure was there, and Propes. She looked after him. Anyway, this is a friend of Propes, whose name I can't remember. Who were they?

GC Not somebody who later became well known, like Hillel Cook or ...

IB Hillel Cook called on me, yes. But that was a bit late.

GC There was a certain Merlin, who was ...

IB Melnick, someone like Merlin, exactly like Merlin, but not Merlin.

GC Not Merlin.

IB Now. Something with -sky.

GC I'm trying to ...

IB It doesn't matter. Anyway, one of these men called on me and said could he see me? Yes. I was a Zionist, he was a Zionist, that was all right, and he said, 'Tell me this; which is the real reason for which our legion is not allowed?' He said, 'Politically, you know what mean.' I said, 'If you ask me, it certainly is political. The last time "the price is too high".' When he sent this report *en clair* to London, the censorship naturally intercepted it. This went to the Ministry of Information, of which I was an official. This was not the official line. Cyril Radcliffe, my ex-colleague from All Souls, who was the Permanent Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, and exceedingly anti-Zionist, all this, said this is very improper behaviour, and perhaps it is not quite right that I should be employed by the Ministry, and perhaps it might be better if I was, instead of making propaganda to the Jews – it seemed that I was an

instrument, indiscreet, to them, and therefore he didn't think me very suitable for employment. I was defended. How do I know? Because I saw this, after the war ...

GC I was going to ask.

IB ... the paper.

GC [*unclear*] That they opened later.

IB No, in the archives.

GC Only when the archives were opened.

IB Yes.

GC [*unclear*] Never used to.

IB Certainly. Not at all. I was nearly sacked. But the man who defended me, I have forgotten his name, he was also a Fellow of All Souls, funnily enough. He was one of the leading writers for *The Times*.

GC [Robert] Barrington-Ward?

IB No. I didn't know Barrington-Ward. He used to work for various Maharajahs in India, and then became – I think he worked in the Ministry of Information too, and he was certainly on the staff of *The Times*, before the war, maybe during the war he was in the war service. He was a Fellow, ex-Fellow of All Souls. He knew me. Not well. He said, 'You know, Mr Berlin, that's what the file says: "Mr Berlin's position must be rather awkward. He was probably cornered by members of his faith. There was nothing much else that he could say."' Anyway, he saved me. I had no idea that my life hung on a thread. Then, about four months later, Israel Sieff was in America, and Israel Sieff made an extremely indiscreet speech. He was the representative, probably, of the Ministry of Supply, or something like that – sent to America in that capacity. He made friends with various important Americans afterwards in Washington and so on. Quite useful. Yes, I think it was in Washington, for a

good part of the war. He made a speech in Buffalo or Schenectady or somewhere in upstate New York – it was reported in the papers – saying an exchange of populations with the Arabs ought to occur. That was the way to make Palestine Jewish. These Arabs should be moved and Jewish settlers put in. A well-known idea. Well, it was not the idea of His Majesty's Government.

GC Yes.

IB Under the White Paper.

GC Now, I have to tell about the ideas of transfer. You know that in 1944, in the labour movement ...

IB Let me finish my story.

GC Ah, sorry.

IB The result was that a telegram arrived from the Ministry of – from the Foreign Office, repeated [by the?] Ministry of Information: 'Anyone who knows Mr Sieff ought to inform him that he ought to return forthwith. The speech completely compromises his position', etc. It wasn't my business to – I telephoned him. I told him that he was in some difficulty, that if he wanted to stay, he had better talk – go to the Embassy and clear himself of this, [if?] he could. And I sent off a telegram of my own saying that I read this in the papers, that I knew he was a somewhat impulsive man, that he very greatly regretted it, and that his services as a British economic agent were probably greater than this indiscretion reported in the press, but of course I left it to them to decide. He was not taken – he was not made to return, but he very nearly was.

GC Rightly [?].

IB Of course rightly, yes. I'll tell you, that was the time when people like – who was the famous revisionist? Phil – right, Ben Hecht, made his famous statement saying, 'Every time a British soldier is killed ...?'

GC [*unclear*]

IB In 1946–7 [May 1947].

GC After ...

IB That's right, when he was already talking violently anti-British talk. I met him, and he said anything he could do against Britain, he would.

GC After 1941?

IB After 1941. After the White Paper.

GC But yes ...

IB The attitude towards the Zionists on the part of the British Embassy was embarrassing allies. They wished them not to be there. On the whole they thought they ought to get them out of the way. They were – officially they received them, but unofficially they wished they were gone.

GC That is a very good definition, embarrassing allies. Certainly.

IB But tell me about the ...

GC Ah, the transfer?

IB Yes.

GC The idea of transfer was very current among [the] British political elite, Labour, some, in the war, not only as regards Palestine. Lord Moyne, for example, who introduced [?] in [a] 1944 internal memorandum, saying that – it was 1941 – that after the war we should certainly clear Silesia and the Sudeten of the Germans, and let the displaced Jews go back.

IB Moyne? In what year?

GC 1941.

IB 1941? [*whispers*]

GC I had – I published a document about that.

IB *Yediot* [*Yediot Abaronot*, a popular newspaper].

GC What?

IB *Yediot* [?]. Tell me some more.

GC Amery was for the idea of transfer in Palestine in 1941, too.

IB Amery?

GC Amery. Now, Dalton came with it in 1944, there were ...

IB What did Dalton do?

GC Dalton was Minister of Economic Warfare, but he ...

IB Dalton ...

GC But in 1944 he brought it to the Labour conference [?]. To the open ...

IB What, the idea of transfer?

GC Transfer of the Arabs.

IB Ah, the Arabs, yes, not in Silesia.

GC No. That was in Palestine. Amery was also in Palestine. But the point is that ...

IB Let me tell you more.

GC Yes.

IB There was a letter in the Foreign Office, filed somewhere by [Walter Samuel,] Lord Bearstead, who was an anti-Zionist, who said

the best thing to do for the Jews will be to remove the Germans from Bavaria, and plant it entirely with Jews.

GC Bearstead was anti-Zionist?

IB Yes.

GC But he was a counsellor for the Jewish Agency in St James, in 1939.

IB No, no. Bearstead was not. Erleigh was. [The Marquess of] Reading's son.

GC Reading's son was, I know. But I thought Bearstead ...

IB Maybe. But secretly. I'll tell you a story about Bearstead, which has nothing to do with us, just for the record. He was the father of the present Lord Bearstead [Marcus Richard Samuel, 3rd Viscount], who just died [15 October 1986]. I don't remember whether this one died or not [?]. This was the one who is certainly dead [1948], I know. Second Lord [2nd Viscount] or Third Lord. He wrote a letter to the Jockey Club, no, to the Turf Club, of which he wanted to be a member. And if they made him a member, he would contribute a thousand pounds and he was to promise never to go there. They replied quite – the head of the standing committee said, if he hadn't offered the money, and said he wouldn't go, he might not have been made a member. After that, it was impossible. An awful [*and unclear*] story.

GC Terrible.

IB Of course it's terrible. Just a show.

GC Now, going back to New York, your other activities and contacts were other minorities.

IB Yes

GC Catholics, Irish, Italian, Polish: was it organisations?



IB Not Irish, no. Catholics as such, Mormons ...

GC Mormons?

IB Mormons, yes. *Zion's Herald*, whom I used to correspond with. There were Mormons, and dissident Mormons, in Colorado, who broke away from the Mormons in Utah.

GC Now, they were probably of importance, otherwise you wouldn't have wasted your time ...

IB Everybody was of importance. The idea was, everybody who could be ...

GC Did you decide, or did you get directives?

IB No, I think I was left fairly free. But I knew that my business was to leave out the Baptists, the Protestants, and concentrate on Catholics, Jews and other unfashionable ...

GC Non-unionists.

IB Non-union.

GC Now, was there something interesting in this field that you think – were there circles that were interested in ...

IB No. I used to meet – occasionally I used to meet members of the Catholic papers in New York, who were on the whole perfectly decent people. There was a very good Jesuit paper, whose name I can't remember. What was it called? *Commonwealth*, could it be, or *America* [yes]? I can't remember. Chief Jesuit paper in New York – was very liberal. Well, I used to see – talk to Reinhold Niebuhr and people like that, you can imagine. Natural friends of the British, and the Jews.

GC And universities were in your ...

IB No.

GC Were they at all – did anybody else ...

IB Yes, there were groups. There were pro-British groups in some universities. They communicated with I don't know whom. Probably with – for example, with Charles Webster, when he was head of the British Information Office. Probably he used to come to Harvard and see his old pupils, like John Fairbank. I don't think – there may have been contacts with pro-British ...

GC They were probably ...

IB There were contacts, probably. Boston Consul.

GC In Boston, I don't know.

IB That's right. Consul General. I think so. I had nothing to do with that.

GC Were you invited to speak in campuses?

IB Never.

GC Never?

IB I wasn't known to exist. No. Nobody thought of me as academic in that sense.

GC And later, when you were in Washington.

IB Nor then.

GC But when you were in Washington, you knew some philosophers, actually I think many philosophers.

IB No. Far from it. The only philosopher I knew was Quine. He worked in the Navy Department. And him I used to meet once in two months, in three months, and we used to chat about philosophy.

GC There was no problem to persuade him about the war effort.

IB He was in the government.

GC He knew England?

IB No, I don't think he had ever been here. He had been to Vienna. Carnap and Wittgenstein. Not in England. No. Freddie Ayer was there, in the Intelligence.

GC [*unclear*] SOE.

IB SOE, I mean.

GC In Washington?

IB No, in New York. New York had a combination of SIS and SOE. It's the only place where they were together. Under [William] Stephenson. And he was there, and another don, called [Gilbert] Highet, was there, and Bill Deakin was there.

GC Bill Deakin was in New York?

IB Absolutely, yes. I used to see him there.

GC Ah. So he went to Cairo later?

IB He went to Cairo later. From New York. He was in New York at the time of Pearl Harbor. End of 1941. And, oh yes, they had quite a lot of work in their office. I used to see him in New York, when I was in New York, quite a lot.

GC You mean Freddie or Bill?

IB Bill. And Freddie. Together. They were great friends. Oh, we used to meet. He was quite amusing, Bill, about his work. There was a – people like the Lithuanian [Ukrainian] bishop, who was suspected of being a Nazi agent, who was arrested in the end by the Americans. But in his bag, when they looked through it, there was nothing but pornography. He was called Archbishop [Ivan] Bučko.

Some kind of Ukrainian Uniate [GC *laughter*], or something like that. Father Bučko. [*laughter*] Those kind of stories circulated quite a lot.

GC What?

IB Those kind of stories.

GC Yes, I'm sure.

IB And that's when I met Halpern, who was a British agent. There was a man called Alexander Halpern. Interesting man, whom I made friends with. Halpern belonged to a Russian Jewish family. One of the seven – six or seven families who were members of the gentry. They were not barons like [Joseph?] Günzburg. That was unique. But they were *dvoryany*, that is, they were members of the official gentry, of which Jews were not. The highest Jews could get to, under that, was being – the very rich Jews were made hereditary honorary citizens. Which was done for merchants, but not for gentlemen. That was my great-grandfather [Shaya Berlin]. And therefore, by inheritance, my grandfather, my father, myself.

GC That was in Riga?

IB In Riga, yes. We didn't have trouble about living anywhere.

GC You mean you inherit such a ...

IB Yes. It was a very, it wasn't a noble status.

GC Not noble, all right.

IB It was given to rich merchants.

GC But it's worth ...

IB It's called hereditary, that's why it's inherited – a hereditary honorary citizen. And that meant you enjoyed certain privileges. The police couldn't arrest you, you would live where you liked, you could do what you liked. Perfectly easily. Like any Russian merchant.

GC In Moscow, or ...?

IB Wherever you wished. And that's because my pseudo[i.e. adoptive]-great-grandfather was a very rich man. Must have contributed to charity. That's how Günzburg also got his title in the end. But anyway, in the end he got it. Now, Halpern was better than that. His father was an eminent lawyer who used to plead cases before the Senate, things like that. Galpern. There were one or two other people. Jewish judges. In Russia. One or two there were ...

GC Judges?

IB Yes, one or two, nothing very much. There was a man called [Yakov] Teitel, T-e-i-t-e-l, who was a judge, but that was exceptional. Now, the great leader of the Liberal Party was [Maxim] Vinaver. [Pavel] Milyukov was head of the Kadets. He was not a hereditary honorary citizen. He was not [?]. He was just an ordinary Jew, for these purposes. That is uncommon. Now, Halpern was the lawyer; his father and he were lawyers for the British Embassy. He was left-wing. I don't know if he was a Bolshevik, but he certainly was a socialist. He knew all the socialists, and mixed in those circles, and in 1917 he became the Assistant Secretary of the provisional government. The Secretary was a man called [Vladimir] Nabokov. He was his deputy. Nabokov was once described by Trotsky in his book as a 'starved Anglophile'. Nabokov resigned for some reason – probably didn't agree with some policy – and Halpern succeeded him, and his assistant was a man called Mark Wolff, who died about three months ago in London, aged ninety-four. I knew him very well, an international lawyer. Very nice man. These were the Petersburg Jews. Alexander Yakovlevich Halpern; his father was Yakov. In 1917, when he knew Communist [?] people very well, when the Bolsheviks came in, when the Naval Attaché of the British Embassy was assassinated by Bolsheviks, probably Bolshevik sailors, on the steps of the British Embassy, I think Halpern decided, as [someone] loyal to the British Embassy, that life was not very secure for him, and he escaped. His father might have died by then [d. 1914]. He came to London, set up as an international lawyer, with Wolff as his partner. What he did then I don't know. I met him in 1941, but the point was that he was probably a little bit in the British Intelligence. I can't believe that he didn't. Well, probably in

London, too. Was rather a snob. He was a man of great charm. He mingled in White Russian circles, but he was also tremendously to do with ORT,<sup>1</sup> which was a Jewish thing. He became more or less chairman of ORT in London.

GC That's amazing [?]. He was the chairman for many years. Until ...

IB After the war.

GC I think later, I think ...

IB Whenever you like.

GC I don't remember.

IB Yes, exactly.

GC I think Aline knew him.

IB Oh, she knew him because I knew him.

GC But not ...

IB She knew him because I knew him – but wait ...

GC I think she knew him through you.

IB Because I gave him, we gave him, because Aline's husband, before me, gave [him] his house and didn't charge rent. Oh, yes. Anyway, he was in New York in 1941. I was introduced to him by [Leo] Istorik.<sup>2</sup> Istorik was head of the Jewish Colonial Trust. Russian Jew.

<sup>1</sup> Originally a selective acronym of the organisation's original Russian name, 'Obshchestvo remeslennogo i zemledel' cheskogo truda', 'The society for trade and agricultural labour [amongst Jews in Russia]'; later 'Society for the dissemination of labour'. Also known as the Organisation for Rehabilitation through Training.

<sup>2</sup> A general manager of the Zionist Bank, at that time called the Jewish Colonial Trust. PI3 309.

GC Istorik?

IB Istorik.

GC Sephardi?

IB No. He was a melamed in Moscow not ... [*laughter*]. He became the head of the Jewish National Bank, and Mrs Weizmann always called him Montagu Norman [Governor of the Bank of England 1920–44]. He was always boasting about his contacts with important British bankers. He was an ugly young man and had an awful son called Eric Esterik, with an E. Istorik means historian in Russian. He knew me, I don't know, from London, or something. Must have met me in Zionist circles. Anyway, he telephoned, said, 'There's an interesting man, I'd like you to meet him, I'm sure you'll make friends.' So I was introduced to Halpern. By that time Halpern was married to a Georgian princess, who knew all the poets of Petersburg in 1910. Mandel'shtam was in love with her. She knew Stravinsky, she knew his wife. She was a famous hostess and a beautiful lady. And she married him in the 1920s [1925], and she was with him in New York, and so I used to visit them. Officially he came for ORT, but in fact he was in Bill Deakin's office, and Bill Deakin knew him intimately. And he always called [him] the Presidente, because he looked like the president of a Latin American Republic [*chuckle*]. He was a highly intelligent man, who knew a lot about the Slavs. I don't know what he did, but he was paid for it quite officially, part of that Stephenson office. But he moved to the left, as the war went on, and his wife was always rather leftish. When they came back to London, they practically became fellow travellers.

GC Really?

IB Yes. All Soviet writers could call on them, without a letter of influence [introduction?]. Particularly after he died. While he was there, he was a Jew, and that wasn't – [it was] slightly against him. But after he died, I made the 'hesped' [eulogy] in the Golders Green Crematorium. I had to – he was an interesting man, highly civilised. Great charm. Old-fashioned, highly educated, cultivated, interesting Russian Jew. Tremendous gentleman.

GC Now, such a Jew, would his second language be French or German, or English?

IB His language was English. He could speak French absolutely freely, completely freely. German, I'm not so sure.

GC And did he have yiddishkeit at all? Did he know about ...

IB He knew who the Jews were.

GC I thought so.

IB He knew the Beloff family, he knew all these people.

GC But not ...

IB But not much of a Jew.

GC Not much tradition.

IB No. He knew a few words, perhaps.

GC When you meet such a man during the war, [*some unclarity*] problems arise.

IB Never.

GC Never.

IB I saw it was no good. He didn't take the faintest interest. He was a tremendous Anglo-snob. The people he knew were English bankers, and he liked moving in their circles. For these purposes, he was a kind of distinguished White Russian.

GC And yet such a man moves to the left to the extent that he ...

IB Well, Wolff became the Secretary of the Humanitarian Trust, which was founded by [Michael] Pollack, which was sending all its money to Israel. He was more Jewish, the partner.



GC The Humanitarian Trust was founded by Pollack.

IB Founded by Pollack in England. He was strictly – and then taken over by his nephew, who was a man called Ginsburg. And he, Pollack, was ferociously anti-Zionist. He was in Haifa, made a lot of money, but he wouldn't contribute to a single Zionist organisation. Weizmann used to – he was very useful to Israel, or to that Palestine, but didn't hold for the Jewish State or anything like that. But when Weizmann used to ask for money, he would say in Russian, 'We are villagers, you know. We are ignorant people. We are illiterates. We don't know about that kind of thing.'

GC And so what were the aims of the Humanitarian Trust?

IB It was set up in London, and spent money on whatever they wanted – by him, by a lawyer called Idelson, who was even more anti-Zionist than he was. Ginsburg was not anti-Zionist, the nephew. The nephew inherited it from the uncle and made me a member of it. And he – the heirs [of?] Pollack contested it, contested the entire inheritance. Ginsburg became very rich. Of course Pollack became a millionaire. The money was the Rothschilds'. He did – Ginsburg lived in Paris and Switzerland. And he died and in turn his nephew inherited his money, and he and Jacob Rothschild and I are the trustees of the Humanitarian Trust [?]. And it sends 80 per cent of what it does to Israel. The money was made in Israel.

GC In Palestine?

IB In Palestine. Pollack died before the war.

GC Cement.

IB Neshet.

GC But he made his real money, I think, from the oil of Baku.

IB Yes, but he didn't have very much left. He was a Rothschild agent in Baku, at least until he left Russia. Well, he went to see my father-in-law. He went to see [Baron Pierre de] Gunzbourg, Aline's father,

whom of course he knew, who did – and when he went to see the Baron Edmond, he said, ‘You know, I have no money left, I am totally ruined. I absolutely – I left Russia with no money. I have no money whatever.’ And Edmond said to him, ‘You have quite a lot of money in the bank’, and gave it to him. Elegant gesture. ‘No, no, it is not true,’ he said. ‘You have money in the bank. I can tell you how much. It’s on that [that] Nesher was founded. Indirectly Edmond, again. He always was [unclear].’

GC Now, again, in one of the meetings ...

IB He said, ‘I am a completely poor man.’ And Edmond said, ‘You are not. Something like that. ‘You are mistaken.’

GC Who put you on the committee, Halpern? For the Humanitarian Trust.

IB Halpern had nothing to do with it.

GC I’m sorry, Ginsburg?

IB Ginsburg. He was called – what was his name?

GC He’s also related to Aline?

IB No. He and a man called Yevnin were the trustees.

GC I don’t know the name.

IB Oh, he’s a Russian Jew, and he and Ginsburg served in the same Russian regiment before the war. That was the connection. And – what was Ginsburg’s name? I’ve forgotten. Yes. Some Russian name.

GC One of those Russians who left Russia afterwards.

IB Yes.

GC And then to England.

IB He went to Paris probably, but his money was in England. He never did any business, he was [?] a rich man. He may have worked for his uncle, Pollack. But aside from that, I don't know what he did. He lived in England, yes. His wife died, and he inherited – he adopted his nephew. I don't think he had children of his own. I think he was called Mathee[?], Matthew Ginsburg.

GC Matthe[w]?

IB Mattveh [?], his nephew.

GC That is Matityahu.

IB Matityahu.

GC Mattveh?

IB Yes.

GC Mattveh. Now, let's go back to your ties with the Hebrew University.

IB Well, there were none. I was made a member of the Friends of the University, by Bentwich.

GC In 1934.

IB Yes. I sat, as I described in the book [PI3 134?], on a committee to appoint a Professor in English Literature and Institutions. The other members of the committee were Bentwich, Namier and [Walter] Adams, who was then the Secretary of the London School of Economics, and a member – chief organiser of the committee of refugees. So he was very pro... – Bentwich worked with him on getting academic refugees. It was called [the] Refugee Assistance Council. Academic Assistance Council [yes].

GC Getting them out of Germany.

IB Yes.

GC And getting them to ...

IB To England.

GC In England.

IB Yes. Gombrich etc. All these people. Claus Moser. It was all done that way. Not Moser, because his father was a businessman, I think, but everybody who came then. And we had candidates who gave lectures in English, Jewish [?] lectures in English universities. Not very many. Namier sat there. We had no chairman, just the four of us, and they [would] glare at these people, and say, 'Mr Levy, after we took all your details, your age, your occupation, your prospects, why do you want to come', etc., we would say 'Mr ...' – I told this story in my life of Namier, my article on Namier [PI3 134]. 'Mr Levy, can you shoot?' He would say, 'No, I don't think so.' 'Because if you go to Palestine, you will have to learn to shoot, because if you do not shoot our Arab cousins, they will shoot you. Etc.' Every single candidate was a Jew. No appointment was made. The man who became it was somebody whose name – I can't remember it. There was a man. [Adam] Mendilow.

GC Ah yes, of course, that's when you appointed Mendilow.

IB We didn't. I don't know what happened.

GC Ah.

IB Nothing to do with us.

GC He went to India.

IB Nothing to do with us.

GC And he was appointed after 1948.

IB Yes. Very likely. I have no idea what happened. Anyhow, his – that was the job to which we failed to appoint.

GC Literature.

IB Literature and Institutions. At that time. It's changed probably to – just to Literature.

GC You are right.

IB I never met him, I know nothing about him.

GC Aha.

IB Anyhow, that's how I became associated with the University. Then I went – when I went to Israel in 1934, I met – I did not meet [Judah Leon] Magnes. Nor did I particularly wish to. Who did I meet? Several people. Leon Roth, of course, whom I knew more or less from England. He introduced me, took me to dinner with Shmaryahu Levin, where there was Scholem, and who else did I see? Let me see, who else? I don't remember now. One or two people at the University. [Michael] Fekete, who taught Mathematics. The great mathematician, what is his name?

GC [Abraham] Fraenkel.

IB Fraenkel I met then.

GC There were not many.

IB I didn't meet Sambursky, no. Well, I just met them casually, like that. I think, probably, I did not meet the Professor of Philosophy, what's-his-name, the chief one?

GC Who was the chief one?

IB [Hugo] Bergmann.

GC Ah, Bergmann, of course.

IB. I met him afterwards, in Harvard. Who else could I have met? I remember meeting – I met, I'll tell you who, Baneth, who was an orientalist, and who was not – not sure if he was the head of the library or not.

GC Possibly. Bergmann was the first, and then Baneth.

IB Could be. I met Reichenberg[?], because he married Mrs Lubavitch, who was of course related, a friend of my aunt.

GC A friend of your aunt.

IB All the Lubavitches come from Riga. They were all friends of my aunt. A very close link. They are called Leibovitch because that's the German translation. In Russia they called them – in Riga – Lubavitch.

GC She's a Leibovitch, I know.

IB Certainly. Esther Reichenberg. Is she alive?

GC Yes.

IB Yes. He told me that marvellous story about Einstein and – now I've forgotten – about Einstein and what's-his-name, I can't remember his name, I'll remember immediately. The President of the Hebrew University.

GC The President of the Hebrew University?

IB Yes.

GC You don't mean Magnes?

IB Yes, I do. There was a meeting of the Friends of the Hebrew University in about 1929. Einstein was a Friend. There was a meeting. In the course of the meeting – and Reichenberg was there – Magnes said 'In view of the very generous contributions of the American Friends, might the number of trustees or members of the council, or whatever it is, or the Friends of the University be increased?' To which Einstein said, 'Professor Magnes, I'm terribly sorry. I'm afraid I'm getting rather deaf. It's a great obstacle to me. Sometimes I don't quite hear what people say, and I may have gotten you wrong. If so, I wish to apologise in advance; I hope you will not

hold it against me. Did I understand you to say that if the contributions of our American Friends decrease, the number of American Governors should be cut?' After that Magnes did not return to the subject. Quite a funny story. [*both laugh*]

GC Then you were acting as ...

IB Not Friends – Governors was the point.

GC In this field, he was active, Einstein.

IB I'm sure.

GC Now, until 1939, were you involved in any other activity? Concerned with the University? I mean in England. Committees, academic appointments.

IB For the Hebrew University? No.

GC Now, who else was active? I mean there were others, probably.

IB I've no idea. I'll tell you who, for example; yes, the man who made the report on the University, whom as a matter of fact I knew. What was his name? There was a report on the University, in the 1930s. There was Redcliffe Salaman, for example. He was on that committee [Committee of Inquiry on the organisation of the Hebrew University]. [Philip] Hartog. It was the Hartog report. I knew him. When he was appointed to a kind of search committee – not search, a kind of visiting committee, to make a report, it was quite tough. Hartog, Redcliffe Salaman, who was pro-Zionist, certainly. He knew about potatoes. He wrote a great book, it's called [*The History and Social Influence of*] *the Potato*. He was a brother, sort of mehutan [father of child's spouse], of Herbert Samuel. His daughter married, no, his son married Samuel's daughter. Then, let me see, I had nothing to do with any of this.

GC And in 1939, I see ...

IB I used to go to the meetings of the Friends. There I used to meet people like Hartog, who talked to me.

GC Were there other Oxford dons, friends, in the Hebrew University, before 1939?

IB I've no idea. I should think it highly unlikely. I should think it highly unlikely that anyone in Oxford or Cambridge had the faintest connection. I may be wrong. But the number of Jews then in Oxford was only minute, and the number of gentiles, of goyim, who took an interest in Jerusalem – I knew of nobody.

GC The number of Jews was still very minute?

IB Very minute I wouldn't say, but the number of undergraduates – I can't tell you how many.

GC No, I mean ...

IB Probably. Dons? There were German refugees. That was a special class. Mainly scientists. There were some ancient historians: [Felix] Jacoby, [Paul] Jacobsthal, [Eduard] Fraenkel. There was an economist called [Jacob] Marschak. There was [Ernst] Cassirer for a short time, on philosophers. Who was there among the scientists?

GC [Raymond] Klibansky.

IB There was Klibansky for a time. He's back again now.

GC Is he here now?

IB Yes, a Fellow of Wolfson. Some kind of special position, yes. There's a [*unclear*]. There were Simon, who was a famous physicist, at Christ Church. There was Kuhn, there was – he was still about [?]. I can mention six or seven. the refugees. But if you were talking about English Jews, I mean normal people, not Germans. However, there were no Fellows except me.

GC You were the first?

IB No, I was not.



GC In All Souls you were the first?

IB Yes. Very much so. And remained one [sc. so] until after the war. After me, the next one was Joseph. Keith Joseph. Then again, nobody. For a long time. I'm trying to think who were there, Jewish teachers. There was a man called [Ephraim] Lipson, who was not a Fellow and not a Lecturer, who taught economic history. People used to have to go to his house in North Oxford. He was a kind of melamed, I mean he had no real position. He may have – Herbert Loewy, who was in Hebrew Studies, he was a member of the Common Room at Exeter. Cecil Roth was not a Fellow of anywhere, but he was a member of the Common Room at Merton. Ettinghausen was a Lecturer at Queens, but not a Fellow. I'm trying to think. There may have been others, unknown to me.

GC In New College, in your time, nobody?

IB In my time, certainly not. No. In All Souls not. In Corpus Christi, certainly not. Who could there be? [Arthur L.] Goodhart was.

GC Goodhart?

IB He became Professor of Jurisprudence in 1931.

GC In 1931?

IB Yes, he was very much not a Jew. There wasn't [?]. He became one as a result of Hitler. His wife wasn't and his sons aren't. Member of Parliament, one of them, but nothing to do with Jews. All Church of England. So they were brought up. But he was one. A cousin of [Henry] Morgenthau [Jr], a cousin of [Herbert] Lehman, what could he do? But he didn't – was never referred to as one. There was no Jewish organisation known to me, before the war.

GC When was Max Beloff elected?

IB Max Beloff became – was a Price [?] Fellow for a year or two in Corpus. During the war he was a Lecturer in Manchester. He did become a Fellow of Nuffield, not long after the war. Not before the

war. Prize Fellow maybe, [David] Daiches was the Prize Fellow of Balliol. That meant two years, three years. So it happened.

GC [*unclear*]

IB Yes. That happened. Jews could become sort of temporary Fellows, but no Tutors. Fellow or Tutor was the basic office, or Lecturer. Let me see, there may have been one or two others.

GC So the main breakthrough came in the 1950s?

IB Yes. Certainly not before that. That's right. I'm trying to think of who then became Fellows. Lots of people. A man called [D. M.] Bueno de Mesquita in Christ Church, a man called Lewis in Christ Church. Who was the first Jewish Fellow of All Souls after Joseph?

GC When did [David] Daube come? That was later.

IB About – Daube came in the [*tape ends?*]