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Jabotinsky, Vladimir, including 1928 "Memorandum on the proposed formation of a Representative Assembly in Palestine by the League of Zionist Revisionists", 1928.

UNION DES SIONISTES REVISIONNISTES

BUREAU CENTRAL

12. RUE BLANCHE, 12 - PARIS (IX')

ברית הצה"ר

המשרד

PARIS June 1928. פאריס

Nº

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

Cleveland.

Dear Sir,

I take the liberty of sending you copy of a Memorandum dealing with the question of a Legislative Council for Palestine. The Memorandum has been sent to leading friends of Zionism, both within the Zionist Organisation and outside it, and to members of the Zionist A.C.; its circulation is not for the present intended to mark the beginning of any political action, the purpose being merely to explain all the danger to Zionism involved in the scheme.

I wish especially to emphasise the point dealt with in one of the introductory paragraphs of the Memorandum - the fact that the danger is real and urgent despite any assurances to the contrary that may be gathered from London official circles. Neither the sincerity nor the benevolence of those circles is by any means questioned. But recent experience, especially in the case of the proposed commercial treaty between Palestine and Syria, has shown that the activities of a colonial bureaucracy can sometimes spring upon the Home Government a situation amounting to an all but accomplished fact, which is then very difficult to undo.

I remain,

Yours faithfully

V. Gaboriusky.

M E M O R A N D U M

on the proposed formation of a Representative Assembly
in Palestine.

By the League of Zionists-Revisionists.

Paris, June 1928.

Jewry throughout the world feels seriously alarmed at evidence of renewed endeavours to bring about the formation in Palestine of a representative body, hereinafter called the Assembly. Whilst no details of the new scheme have, as yet, been divulged, it is known to present three essential features :

1) The Assembly is to be endowed with important functions partly legislative, partly advisory;

2) the Assembly is to include an elected section, conspicuous enough to be considered as the morally predominant part of the whole institution;

3) The Assembly as a whole, and its elected section in particular, is to contain only a small minority of Jewish members, the bulk of elected representatives being Arabs.

His Majesty's Government should be earnestly requested to reject any such scheme if and when submitted.

Gravity of the menace to Zionism despite the Home Government's reassuring attitude.

It is not suggested that His Majesty's Government have in any way authorised or encouraged the re-opening of this question:

there is, on the contrary, some evidence that London official circles do not for the present consider such activities opportune. But the fact remains that these activities enjoy, in Palestine, the unhidden backing of persons of high official standing. Even when these act in a private capacity, their rank is enough to justify, on the part of their Arab disciples, the assumption that the attempts to revive the Assembly scheme bear the hall-mark of

authorative, if semi-official origin. Should such assumption be suffered to spread and deepen unchecked, it might soon prove awkward to disillusion those Arab disciples, still more awkward to disavow their exalted British promptors.

It should, therefore, be impressed on all friends of the Palestine Mandate that the menace of Zionism contained in the Assembly scheme is both real and urgent. Its gravity depends much more on the intensity with which that scheme is being promoted in Jerusalem than on the coolness with which it may, at present, be viewed in London. Steps should be taken before there arises the dangerous situation just alluded to, euphemistically, as "awkward".

Formal aspects of the question: the Mandate.

It can hardly be affirmed that the establishment of an Assembly at the present juncture constitutes an obligation under Article 2 of the Mandate for Palestine ("The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home as laid down in the Preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions"). Where two parallel obligations are imposed, the second one is obviously not to be suffered to hinder the execution of the first. If a certain step in the direction of self-government is likely to endanger the establishment of the Jewish National Home, Article 2 may evidently be quoted only as authority against, not in favour of, any such measure.

Furthermore, the Mandate obviously leaves it to the Mandatory to determine at his own discretion the time when "self-governing institutions" should be initiated, as well as their kind and scope. The very term "development" suggests that the principle should be applied gradually. Thus, for instance, municipal institutions can afford the population a healthy ground for training in self-government without raising serious apprehensions as to the other issues involved in the Mandate.

Formal aspects of the question: the Government's previous proposals.

Nor can it be admitted that His Majesty's Government is still formally bound to its own previous proposals to establish representative institutions. All such proposals have since been officially withdrawn in the dispatch of H. M. Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner of Palestine, dated November 9th, 1923, and worded in its main portion as follows:

"They (H.M. Government) have now made three successive proposals with a view to closer association of Arab community with administration of Palestine, viz.: - (1) Establishment of Legislative Council on which Arabs would have been represented by ten elected members: (2) Reconstruction of Advisory Council so as to secure effective Arab representation; and (3) Recognition of Arab Agency with functions similar to those assigned to Jewish Agency under terms of Mandate. Towards all these proposals Arabs have adopted same attitude, viz., refusal to cooperate. His Majesty's Government have been reluctantly driven to conclusion that further efforts on similar lines would be useless and they have accordingly decided not to repeat the attempt". (Palestine. Proposed Formation of an Arab Agency. Correspondence with the High Commissioner for Palestine. Cmd. 1989, Nov. 1923).

The above dispatch, embodied in a White Paper of November 1923, evidently cancels any statement to the contrary that may be contained in any White Paper previously published.

His Majesty's Government, accordingly, appear, both legally and morally, to have a free hand in dealing with this particular question.

The proposed Assembly as instrument for obstructing the progress of the Jewish National Home.

Apprehensions concerning the Assembly scheme centre around the "elected section" which, under the

present conditions, is anticipated to have an overwhelming Arab majority. One may hope that the bulk of Palestine's native inhabitants will eventually realise the benefits accruing to them through the immigration of Jews. Yet it would be useless to ignore the presence among the Arabs of an anti-Zionist fraction whose influence, so far, has always been paramount. There is no telling which of these two tendencies is destined to dominate among the elected members of the Assembly, and for how long. Experience, however, does not encourage any too sanguine forecasts; and in the not improbable case of the elected Arabs' belonging to the anti-Zionist fraction, the Assembly would inevitably become a powerful instrument for obstructing the progress of what is the essence of the Jewish National Home - the Jewish immigration and settlement.

Against such obstruction, no precautionary measure in the constitution of the proposed Assembly would be of any positive avail:

a) It would be useless to require from the Arab organisations a "recognition", silent or even explicit, of the Balfour Declaration. In politics it is a usual manoeuvre to grant a principle lip-service in order to fight it afterwards on points of restrictive interpretation.

b) Equally useless would prove the exclusion of matters "concerning immigration of Jews" from the statutory powers of the Assembly. The absorbing capacity of a country is least of all determined by regulations directly affecting the admission of immigrants. Such capacity (-insofar as it can be influenced by legislation) mainly depends on conditions of a more general character: laws governing the transfer of lands, protection of industries, taxation facilities, etc. These laws would in any case remain within the Assembly's legislative or advisory competence, and they can easily be so framed as to hamper the progress of the new settler;

more readily so in Palestine where the Jewish immigrants characteristically create new branches of economic activity.

c) As to the partly advisory character of the proposed Assembly, or to the presence of official members counter-balancing the elected element, neither feature would prove an effective safeguard against obstruction. Representative institutions of this kind are not created for the purpose of constantly overriding the elected section: on the contrary, the main purpose of the scheme is to conciliate the local population. The logic of this purpose must unavoidably handicap the Government in passing through the Assembly, or carrying out in practice, measures objected to by the majority of elected representatives; in other words - measures intended to help Jewish colonisation.

It might be contended that the above apprehensions, based on the assumption of an anti-Zionist bias, would prove futile if, among the Arab electors, the pro-Zionist section should prevail. Whilst hoping that such may be the case some day, one should avoid reliance on sanguine anticipations never, so far, confirmed by experience. Yet, in any case, the Mandatory's obligation to further the establishment of the Jewish National Home should be kept above all such guess-work, optimistic or otherwise. Great Britain has accepted the Mandate of her free will: its execution cannot be subordinated to the chance of elections held in an Oriental atmosphere of excitement and uncertainty.

World Jewry as virtual
"taxpayers" of Palestine.

The above considerations express the practically unanimous feeling, not only of the Palestinian Jews actually engaged in the work of reconstruction, but also of those Jewish multitudes at large whose financial contribution constitutes one of the important sources of Palestine's wealth. That contribution, totalling under various forms

at least L.E. 10.000.000 between 1920 and 1926, does not compare unfavourably with the total revenue of the Palestine Government, for the same period, from actual taxation of the country's inhabitants and resources (L.E. 11.500.000) World Jewry act as though many of them were, virtually, "taxpayers" of the Holy Land; "taxpayers" whose concern, and whose claim to be heard, in questions affecting the future of that country should not, in justice, be disregarded.

Moreover, any measure so profoundly endangering the prospects of Zionism as the one objected to above, would produce among all sections of the Jewish people a most unhappy effect, would shake their faith in the great pledge given them in 1917, and would lead many of them to the conclusion that further effort to assist in the Palestine reconstruction work might no longer be of any practical value.

Objection to the scheme here discussed and opposed does, of course, not imply any disrespect of the self-government principle. But, however, valuable the principle, it is only fair to demand that its application to a country intended to absorb immigrants should be either so adapted or else so timed as not to interfere with the main purpose of the Mandate. Adaptation may not be impossible: modern statesmanship may prove able to evolve a system under which both the interest of the population on the spot, and that of the colonising community as a whole, would be justly represented and balanced. So long, however, as no such scheme has been authoritatively proposed, the introduction of institutions purporting to represent all those entitled to call Palestine their Home should be postponed. Its time will come when such a body will be likely to bear, in its very composition, a safe guarantee of helpful cooperation with the Mandatory and the Jewish Agency for the fulfilment of the purpose laid down in the Preamble of the Palestine Mandate.

(Signed) V. JABOTINSKY

for Central Committee.