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Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1945.

NOTE ON THE PROPOSALS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN CABINET COMMITTEE

AUGUST 5, 1945

1. The plan of the Anglo-American Cabinet Committee for the division of Palestine into Arab, Jewish and British zones, differs radically from the partition proposal in 1937 of the Palestine Royal Commission. It was an essential feature of that proposal that the Jewish and Arab areas should, respectively, be granted independence and established as self-governing states. Under the plan of the Cabinet Committee, which is more properly described as cantonization, provincial governments with very limited powers are set up, undemocratic in character and subordinated in every respect to the authoritarian control of the central British administration in Jerusalem.
2. Instead of a Jewish State, a small Jewish province is to be carved out consisting of a narrow zigzagging strip running along three valleys. The Jewish State to be established under the plan of the Royal Commission was small enough in all conscience - 2,000 square miles in all, or about one-fifth of Palestine west of the Jordan. From this area, the Cabinet Committee now subtracts most of Galilee despite the fact that since 1937 the Jewish population of Palestine has increased by 50%, while Jewish immigration needs are far more urgent even than they were.
3. On the surface the plan proposes a "federal" Palestine with "self-governing" Arab and Jewish provinces. In fact, we find neither federation (which implies representation at the centre of the constituent parts) nor self-government. In the words of the editorial in the Washington Post, of August 2, the plan "would introduce to Palestine the regime typical of British crown colonies where native chieftains selected by a British administrator and removable by him preside over 'district' or 'provinces' which are nominally 'self-governing.'"

4. On the crucial question of immigration, even in the tiny area of the Jewish province ultimate control remains vested in the British administration in Jerusalem. Once more the criterion of the "economic absorptive capacity" of the area is to determine the permissible extent of Jewish immigration. The final decision in this respect is to rest, as it has in the past, with the British High Commissioner. Experience has already shown how vastly different are British and Jewish estimates of Palestine's economic possibilities and how, without exception, the official view has been proved wrong. To place control of immigration once more in the hands of an administration which has shown itself consistently unsympathetic to the development of the Jewish National Home is to perpetuate frustration and conflict. Moreover, even so far as the immigration of the 100,000 is concerned, there is no guarantee - and no reasonable prospect - in the London proposals that the 100,000 will be transferred to Palestine in six months, in a year or in any determinate period. These proposals make the authorization of the 100,000 certificates dependent on Arab consent. Even if such consent were forthcoming which, on the face of it, is in the highest degree unlikely, everything is left to the discretion of the Palestine Government. That Government to whose negative attitude reference has already been made, is quite free under the London proposals (a) to use its economic powers so as to render immigration extremely difficult, or (b) to halt immigration outright on the ground that in its sovereign judgment the conditions are not favorable for further immigration.
5. Apart from the question of immigration, an examination of the "autonomy" to be accorded the provinces reveals clearly the undemocratic character of the provincial administrations, their complete subordination to the will of the British High Commissioner and the severely limited range of the matters with

which they are entitled to deal:

- (a) The provincial cabinets are appointed by the High Commissioner and are responsible only to him.
- (b) The Speaker of the provincial legislature is appointed by and responsible to the High Commissioner. His powers are wide and include even the right to prohibit discussion on any topic.
- (c) The High Commissioner's assent is required to all provincial legislation,
- (d) The powers of the provinces may at any time be superseded in whole or in part by the emergency powers of the High Commissioner.
- (e) The provincial courts are to be organized by and are responsible to the central British authority.
- (f) The same is true of the police force in the provincial areas.
- (g) Customs, the most important source of revenue in Palestine, is also to be regulated by the central government. Since this control presumably extends also to matters of import licensing, the central government is placed in a position without difficulty to strangle the development of the Jewish province and to make further immigration economically impossible.
- (h) Broadcasting is the exclusive prerogative of the central authority a serious interference with the cultural autonomy of the provincial areas.
- (i) The central government finally, with its extensive powers in various matters of vital importance to the provincial areas, in no degree represents the governments of those areas, but is an unfettered dictatorship of the British High Commissioner.

6. Reference has already been made to the exiguous area allocated to the Jewish province. It is worth recalling that originally the Jewish National Home promise applied to Palestine both East and West of the Jordan, an area of 44,000 square miles. In 1922, three-quarters of this area was removed from the Jewish National Home and assigned to Transjordan. The present proposal seeks to exclude a further 85% of Western Palestine, i.e. of the remaining quarter, from possible Jewish settlement. Bearing in mind that Arab lands already cover an area 1600 times greater than the whole of Western Palestine and that much of this land suffers from lack of population, it is difficult to reconcile the present proposal with the most elementary conceptions of equity. Stripped of its verbiage, the plan amounts to an attempt to continue all the essential restrictions of the White Paper. Just as under the White Paper, the Jews would be denied access to most of Palestine and their access to what remains would be controlled by the British authorities. Since the unlawful character of the White Paper regime under the League of Nations Mandate can no longer be hidden, the authors of the present plan seek to replace Britain's obligations under the Mandate by another document under which the same restrictions would be in order.
7. The financial section of the London proposals seem calculated to add insult to injury. The public funds of the United States are to be allocated to the extent of \$300,000,000 for Arab development in Palestine and for the appeasement of the Arab League. For the Jewish survivors of Nazi aggression and the Nazi extermination policy no firm provision is made at all and the burden is once again thrown primarily on the Jewish people.
8. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Cabinet Committee's report is the complete absence of that sense of urgency regarding the fate of large numbers of the surviving Jews of Europe, which was a dominating feature

of the Report of the Anglo-American Committee. By making the transference of the Nazi slaughter dependent on acceptance of their scheme by both Arabs and Jews, the Cabinet Committee, in effect, abandons the Report of the Anglo-American Committee and indefinitely postpones the salvation of the distressed survivors of the Nazi slaughter. The work of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry which had heard witnesses in four continents and had made a thorough examination on the spot has been brushed aside and superseded by a body whose American members have, after the briefest study and with no previous acquaintance with the subject, been designated "experts". To judge by its conclusions, the American members of the Cabinet Committee have, in fact, approached their problem without understanding, without imagination and without heart; they have fallen into the very trap which British officials desirous of putting an end to Britain's commitments in regard to the Jewish National Home had prepared for the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, but which the members of that body had been careful to avoid. It is a report which will bring neither peace in Palestine nor help to the tortured Jews of Europe.

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