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**WAR CABINET.****JEWISH POLICY.***Note by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.*

I HAVE been much concerned at recent trends in the policy which is being pursued by the Zionist organisations. There is every indication that it is becoming daily more extreme and it is liable, I fear, to cause us considerable embarrassment.

2. When Dr. Weizmann came back from the United States two months ago, he told me that after the war it would be necessary to find room in Palestine for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million Jews spread over the next twenty years. A little later Mr. Ben Gurion of the Jewish Agency told me that the figure would have to be 3 million in ten years. When I said that he could hardly expect British bayonets to force Jews on to Arabs at the rate of 300,000 a year he said: "We should not need *British* bayonets. If you do not interfere, the Jews will see to it that their compatriots are landed." (There are now 28,000 Jews under some form of training in Palestine.) A week or two ago Dr. Weizmann, in a speech, endorsed Mr. Ben Gurion's figures. He said: "We shall have on our hands a problem of at least 3 million who have to be absorbed, and absorbed comparatively quickly. That can only be done in Palestine and on one condition: that we have a Jewish State." The annual convention of the Zionist Organisation of America recently adopted unanimously a resolution demanding the restoration of Palestine within its "historic boundaries" as a Jewish commonwealth.

3. At the end of the last war there was a Jewish population of about 60,000; there are now some 460,000. Meanwhile the Arab population, by natural increase alone, has increased from about 650,000 to 1,050,000. It is estimated that it is doubling itself every 27 years. Palestine is far from being an empty land.

4. I have every sympathy with the plight of the Jews and I am sure we must give our minds seriously to a solution of their problems. But the more I think about it the more convinced I become that Palestine alone cannot provide the solution. There are at present some 8 million Jews in Europe. Dr. Weizmann calculates that the number will be reduced by at least 1 million owing to Nazi persecutions and that of the remainder perhaps half will be able to settle down again in Europe. It is thus that he arrives at his figure of at least 3 million would-be immigrants into Palestine. I question his reasoning on two grounds:—

- (1) The economic problem of finding new homes and establishing new industries for immigrants on such a scale in an infertile area about half the size of Wales would surely be found insoluble.
- (2) Even if the proposal were economically practicable, I cannot see how 3 million immigrants could be settled in Palestine unless the whole of the Middle East is to be held down by British arms. At the time of the Palestine disturbances, which were largely due to the fact that immigration had recently been of the order of 30-60,000 (not 300,000) a year, it took two divisions, 4 air squadrons, and units of the fleet many months to restore order.

5. The idea of "Arab federation" has attracted a good deal of attention lately and it may be argued that, even if 3 or 4 million Jews could not be accommodated in Palestine as things are at present, room could be found for them if Palestine formed part of a larger federation of Arab States. The idea is attractive, and it may be that the future of Palestine lies in closer association with her neighbours. But I doubt very much whether the number of Jews who could be introduced into the country would thereby be much increased, or the numbers of British soldiers required to keep them there be much reduced. Neither does partition offer any better solution on this question of numbers.

6. Are we then really prepared to employ an army in the Middle East to force 3 million Jews into Palestine? If so, there may be no objection to the kind of language that the Jewish leaders have recently been using. If, on the other hand, we have any doubts about our desire—or ability—to do so, some action seems called for, for our continued silence will be held to imply acquiescence. Jewish speeches of this kind are bound to have an unsettling effect in the Arab world. They provide a constant stream of material for the Axis radio stations. More important for my present argument is the fact that it encourages the Jews throughout the world to concentrate on Palestine and to neglect all other possible solutions. The Zionists now definitely reject any alternative home and quote former experience of settlements in the Argentine and elsewhere as evidence that a settlement in any other part of the world is bound to fail. I do not think that this view is sound as the present sufferings of the Jewish people offer an incentive to find new homes which did not exist at the time that the earlier schemes were launched. We ought therefore to be thinking of other possibilities. There will surely be devastated areas in Europe where large-scale resettlement must be undertaken. The examples set for us by the Nazis in transferring German populations into Poland and the Baltic Provinces suggest a retransfer to enable substantial Jewish enclaves to be provided. South America and Madagascar are other possibilities which should be examined. For these reasons I think we should be wise to try to restore to the Jews a greater sense of reality.

7. I do not think it would be expedient at the present moment to make any fresh statement of policy on Palestine matters. But I think a private warning should be conveyed to Dr. Weizmann. Perhaps the Prime Minister would be disposed to see him. Otherwise, I suggest that I might have authority to tell him that recent statements are only calculated to mislead the Jewish people and to raise false hopes, while at the same time they are embarrassing to us in that they provide first-class material for Axis propaganda.

8. At the same time, it would undoubtedly be very useful if we could introduce some new solvent into the Palestine situation. I suggest that we might borrow from the example of the National Defence Council recently set up in India. What I have in mind is that we should invite selected Arabs and Jews to serve on an Advisory Council, which, if successful, might eventually be developed into a legislative body. I am consulting the High Commissioner about this idea, but I believe he accepts the principle. It is, indeed, a logical development of certain informal consultations that have already taken place. To avoid the difficult question of the number of Arab and Jewish representatives, my idea is that there should be no fixed membership, but that individuals should be invited to attend discussions on subjects on which they were qualified to advise. If the High Commissioner thinks that there is any chance of this proposal being accepted by both sides, we will initiate preliminary soundings.

9. In any case, I think that a warning on the lines suggested in paragraph 7 would be valuable. It would prevent the Jewish Agency taking our silence as evidence of consent to their increasing claims. It would encourage them to look elsewhere for other schemes to supplement Palestine, and it might also induce them to work for an agreed settlement with the Arabs.

This paper has been discussed with, and agreed by, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of State and the Secretary of State for War.

*Colonial Office, S.W. 1,  
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