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## SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

## VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING (PUBLIC)

Held at the Y.M.C.A. Building  
Jerusalem, Palestine  
Thursday, 17 July 1947 at 9:30 a.m.

## PRESENT:

CHAIRMAN:	Mr. Sandstrom	Sweden
	Mr. Hood	Australia
	Mr. Rand	Canada
	Mr. Lisicky	Czechoslovakia
	Mr. Garcia Granados	Guatemala
	Sir Abdur Rahman	India
	Mr. Entezam	Iran
	Mr. Blom	Netherlands
	Mr. Garcia Salazar	Peru
	Mr. Fabregat	Uruguay
	Mr. Simic	Yugoslavia

SECRETARIAT:	Mr. Hoo	Assistant Secretary-General
	Mr. Garcia Robles	Secretary

CHAIRMAN: I call the meeting to order.

The agenda for today's hearing contains two items: public hearing of representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, and hearing of representatives of the Palestine Communist Union. Do you adopt this agenda?

(No objection voiced.)

CHAIRMAN: The agenda is adopted.

The first item is the continuation of the hearing of representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Mr. Shertok, will you come to the table please?

(Mr. Shertok, representative of the Jewish Agency, took a seat at the table.)

/Mr. SHERTOK:

Mr. SHERTOK: Mr. Chairman, I said that status was an essential prerequisite of political peace. I think that this is so, in matters large and small. The problem of mutual adjustment in this country is an extremely difficult one. Its solution entails a sense of realities, a capacity to accept facts. And it is essential in the interest of peace, in the long run, that certain facts should be very firmly fixed and that any idea that they can be <sup>discarded</sup> ~~disregarded~~ or changed by threats, or by force, should be disregarded. I will illustrate by an example what I am trying to convey to you. I will take the case of the Municipality of Jerusalem. There is a Jewish majority in the City of Jerusalem. Yet there has always been an Arab mayor at the head of the <sup>Jerusalem</sup> ~~Jewish~~ Municipal Council. As time passed this became anomalous. The city kept growing, so did its population, and its services developed. The Jews came to play a very important part in the administration of the city's affairs, and they felt that it was to their detriment, and they also presumed to think that it was to the detriment of the city as a whole, that they should be denied their fair share of the city's Government. They felt that they should also have a chance of being at the head of the Municipal Council. Now, this problem engaged the attention of the Government and of both Arabs and Jews for a long time. Eventually the Government reached a certain decision and announced that decision officially. They worked out a scheme for the rotation of the Jerusalem mayoralty - a triple rotation - a Moslem mayor, a Christian mayor, and a Jewish mayor should serve in turn. The idea was not quite palatable to the Jews. It was particularly unpalatable because if you appoint as a Christian mayor a Christian Arab, then it means that the proportion is established of one Jew to two Arabs and the Jews are then in a way, in terms of time, <sup>if</sup> ~~not~~ in terms of space, relegated to the position of a minority. But the Jews realized, <sup>realize</sup> at least they tried to, the wider aspect of the problem, <sup>the unique</sup>

the unique character of the city of Jerusalem, the associations which it carried, and they decided to acquiesce and accept that proposal. They informed the Government accordingly. Though they were and are a majority and felt entitled to having the post of the mayor permanently, in view of the past tradition, in view of the present associations, they declared themselves willing to cooperate in the implementation of that scheme. They had certain additional desiderata which they formulated, but they made no condition in regard to those desiderata. They did not make their acceptance of the scheme contingent upon the acceptance of those desiderata; those were an expression of a desire. And they definitely stated in black and white that they accepted the scheme. Mind you, that was not in the process of preliminary soundings or informal negotiations; that was after the Government had definitely committed itself by announcing officially that that was their decision. The Arabs refused to cooperate. They rejected the scheme. They insisted on the office of Mayor remaining their exclusive possession - the exclusive possession of the Moslem community for all ~~the~~ future. The result was that the Government backed out - the Government retreated from the scheme - they dropped it. In retreating from the scheme they blamed their failure on both parties in equal measure. Unqualified rejection and ~~in~~complete acceptance with certain additional desiderata, were represented by them in an official announcement as ranking equal <sup>as if</sup> - both parties refused to cooperate. They proceeded to disband the Municipal Council. The Jewish councillors were ready to carry on. A Jewish gentleman was at the time acting Mayor and had been acting Mayor for years. There was no complaint whatsoever on the merits of the way he conducted municipal affairs. Yet, all the <sup>u</sup>municipal councillors, including the Jewish councillor were sent packing and a direct British rule was instituted in the City Hall of Jerusalem. For two years now Jerusalem has not enjoyed elementary municipal self-government. Municipal affairs are

being ruled by appointed British officials. Now what does it mean? It means a premium on intransigence - a definite discouragement to face realities and to develop a spirit of accommodation to those realities. It is a victory for boycotting tactics. We all felt that the Arabs took that uncompromising attitude only because they knew that by so doing they would wreck the scheme - that they would force the Government to retreat. If they had the conviction that the Government would stick to its decision and that what they would then be facing would be that the conduct of municipal affairs would be exclusively in the hands of the Jews, and they would be left completely out, they would think twice before deciding on the attitude which they ~~all~~ adopted. They would give in, and it would not mean in any sense sacrificing any legitimate rights. Although the Jews are a majority, the composition of the Council is fifty-fifty between Jews and Arabs, and they would have <sup>had</sup> their share of rotation of office of mayoralty. It would not mean any unwarranted concession - any undue concession on their part.

Well, to us that was a lesson. We are setting it as an example not to follow. I believe the same is true on higher planes.- on the highest plane of political affairs in this country with regard to settling the major political problem. I am convinced that once the Arabs realize they will have to face us in the United Nations as an equal partner, the whole complex of Arab-Jewish relations in Palestine and in the Middle East will be transformed. That will be a fact which they will not be able to disregard.

Actually, from our own subjective and selfish point of view, if you will, the fact that we are not in the United Nations is an intolerable anomaly. We wonder by what principle of elementary fairness our exclusion from that high international body can be justified. The answer is clear, we are not a State. But that answer only raises the question: why are we not a State? Why should we not be a State? How can anyone justify a position where nations assembled from all

corners of the world, of the civilized world, sit around a table and discuss a problem which most vitally affects the fate and future of a certain people infinitely <sup>more</sup> in any case than it does the fate and future of anyone of those who are around the table; <sup>and</sup> yet, that one people is excluded from the Council.

Mr. Chairman, some of my friends and I went through such a mortifying experience already in 1937. In 1937 Mr. Ben Gurion and I attended the session of the General Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva and the meetings of the Sixth Committee which <sup>discussed</sup> decided the mandates, including Palestine. We were sitting in the Press Gallery among the guests. On the floor of the house all the nations of the world <sup>as</sup> then organized ~~together~~ were assembled. A representative of Iraq and a representative of Egypt delivered frontal attacks from the rostrum of that Assembly against the Mandate, against Jewish rights in Palestine, against the status of the Jewish people in Palestine. Nobody answered their charges. Our case went by default. The way it was put it could only have been answered by a Jewish representative. But the Jewish representative being absent, the interests of the Jewish people remained undefended. In the Sixth Committee everybody who was anybody in the international arena got up and gave the world a piece of his mind, as he was perfectly entitled to, <sup>do</sup> on what the Jews did or did not deserve in Palestine, and <sup>we</sup> we felt how world policy with regard to us was being shaped before our very eyes. Only we, we alone of all those concerned, <sup>and we</sup> believed and did not think it was immodest ~~or~~ to believe that our fate was of more concern to us than to anyone of those who discussed the problem. ~~We~~ alone had to keep silent. Now that, <sup>in</sup> justice, was only partly remedied at the last Extraordinary Session of the Assembly at Lake Success. We deeply appreciate that partial remedy, but we cannot rest content with that form of admission, with our being admitted merely on sufferance. We must claim to be there as <sup>of</sup> right.

Can you imagine

/on the

on the supposition that there is a Jewish State and the Jewish State has a seat in the United Nations, the Arab States boycotting us the way they do now by official edicts of their respective Governments, publicly, officially promulgated and enforced in one of the countries to the point of the death penalty? Can it be conceived? We would then have in our hands most legitimate and perfectly peaceful weapons of self-defence. We would be able to retaliate as any State placed in our position would. We would be able to prevent the transit to Palestine of goods destined to the countries which would be boycotting us. We could withhold visas from the nationals of those countries if they wanted to visit Palestine. We could discontinue our purchases from those countries. And, finally, we could challenge them in open court, in the Assembly of the United Nations, for a flagrant violation of express provisions of the Charter - and of their trade agreements, their treaties with Palestine. All these potentialities of defence exist today. They are not in our hands. They are in the hands of an administration which does not care to use them. We are not admitted to the Arab countries. I do not want to become journalistic and refer to the developments of yesterday or the day before. You all know what is happening in connection with your forthcoming visit to the Lebanon and the way the Jewish press representatives are being discriminated against. Today anyone <sup>anyone</sup> from all neighbouring countries can visit Palestine. The Jews of Palestine cannot go to all the neighbouring countries. Today we still buy, and we are forced to buy, foodstuffs from some neighbouring countries at exorbitant prices. We could have obtained those foodstuffs at lower prices elsewhere. We must buy them where we are told. And nobody has so far in the Assembly taken up the cudgels on our behalf and challenged the unconstitutionality of this racial boycott practised by Members of the United Nations who swore allegiance to the Charter.

Now, I do not relish the prospect of such a clash - a snapping of all ties, the withholding of visas, discontinuation of trade, etc

nor do I think it would have actually come to that because the very knowledge that such would be the reaction to a boycott would act as a very powerful deterrent. The Arab States again would have thought twice under such circumstances before they would embark on a boycott, and having thought twice they would not embark upon it. The temptation to be aggressive would be nipped in the bud. It is defencelessness that invites aggression, and once the door to such counsels is closed other counsels begin to prevail - constructive counsels. After all, they are not merely nationalists - they are also heads of States. They have State interests to look after. They cannot be indifferent to interests of trade, to interests of communications. They must be realists. They must take it all into account. They may hate the Jews, but they cannot help their presence in the Middle East and the fact that they are a political power. Under this set of circumstances, which I am trying to visualize, by sheer impact of realities they would <sup>brought to</sup> realize that they need us just as we need them and that it is no use quarreling. Some modus vivendi, some modus<sup>co</sup>operandi would have to be worked out. Barriers of prejudice would then break under the pressure of common needs and of mutual interests. That is a process which a Jewish State and nothing but a Jewish State would set in motion. It would not be consummated overnight. It would take time to mature. But, slowly and surely it would mature.

Mr. Chairman, it is our conviction that the issue which I am trying to stress cannot be met by a federal arrangement. We would draw a very sharp distinction between two conceptions - two alternative possible conceptions of federalism - the conception of a federal state and the conception of a confederation of states. We would oppose the first. We would favor the second. We have not come here to live in isolation. We came here to be integrated, and confederation of states is one of the forms of integration. ~~It is true~~ that we observe today that the Arab League is not a federation - it is just a community of States loosely bound together for joint <sup>action</sup>.

action in certain matters. Even Syria and Lebanon, much closely connected countries, do not form a federation. That is to say they show no desire at all to give up a part of their sovereignty in favour of some central body. But we, in principle and a priori are not opposed to the idea of a federation of states, provided ~~that~~ it is a federation of independent states. Not only are we not opposed to it, but we see that a great deal of good may come of it.

What we do not think would meet the issue is a federal state; that is to say, our being a component part of a state which would rule over us and which would not leave us free and independent. Such kind of federalism would mean a continuous clash of divergent tendencies which would pull the state structure to pieces. And the only way to prevent the state structure from being pulled to pieces would then be <sup>to place</sup> ~~placing~~ at the head of the federation a very strong, very powerful umpire - a third party - and that third party would then become the receptacle for the concentration of power. ~~Power,~~ <sup>M</sup>ore and more power would be concentrated in its hands. In any case, with regard to what I might term the dynamic issues that would arise, the third party would have to have a decisive voice. That would mean denial of independence. The umpire would be subject to continuous pressure and counter-pressure on both sides, and the position would be bound to degenerate, as it has degenerated. The problem would remain unsolved; another committee would have to be appointed to re-investigate. The craving of the Jewish people for statehood would remain unsatisfied. And that craving would not be eradicated from the hearts of the Jews and would still constitute an international problem.

/The issue



The issue can certainly not be met by the adoption of a bi-national solution, a bi-national solution based on parity. Such a solution, to be operative, presupposes two collective wills acting by and large in unison. It is not a question of individuals combining on some minor matters. Individuals may combine across the barriers of race or community or religion, but on major matters, what one would have to face for a considerable time - heaven knows for how long - would be two national entities, each with a collective will of its own. And to imagine that such a state would be something workable is to presuppose a willingness to walk together on the part of those two national entities.

These prerequisites do not exist, and therefore the issue, I am afraid, is a purely academic one. If, for the sake of argument, I am to assume that it may be practical politics - which I do not - then I would have to say that it would either lead to a state of permanent deadlock on major matters, or that it would lead to the virtual abolition of independence.

/Again, in

Again, in order to save the situation from a state of pernetual deadlock, a third party would have to be introduced, either as a result of foresight or as a result of an esprit d'escalier. I do not think I am fully competent to judge the subject from the point of view of comparative constitutional law, but I am not aware of any precedent for such an arrangement. There are bi-national and multi-national states in the world, and in all of them, I believe, sovereignty in the ultimate resort is vested in the majority of the population or the majority of some elected assembly. In the last resort the majority prevails, and nowhere do you find two equally balanced communities set against each other. It would have been more logical to expect such arrangement in those countries than in a country like Palestine, because in those countries there are no such fundamental cleavages and no such diametrical divergences as we have to face in Palestine.

It is not a workable solution. I must stress again and again, the question is not whether Jews and Arabs can live together within the framework of one state. They can. They will. The question is whether they can operate a state machinery by pulling an equal weight in its councils. They will pull apart. The problem in this country is not how to compose the differences between two static sections of the country's population. If that were the case, it would not have been so difficult. The problem is how to reconcile independence with the dynamic development of the Jewish section and of the country. Perhaps I could formulate it a little differently, and that perhaps would be more correct.

The problem is how to make of independence an instrument of development and not a stranglehold on development. But if you assign equality to both statics and dynamics, then the statics will have the advantage.

Equality of veto will mean Jewish defeat. What can a Jewish veto do to the Arabs, vitally, crucially. The Arabs are here. Nobody in his senses would try to eradicate them; anyhow you won't do it by a veto. What positive act can doom the hopes of the Arabs to live here, to enjoy prosperity. But

an Arab  
 \* veto can and would prevent Jewish immigration, and that is the most fundamental issue for the Jews. And you do not solve the problem by taking immigration out of the context and entrusting it to some ad hoc authority. It cannot be taken out of the context. The problem of immigration is bound up with the whole machinery of Government, with economic policy, with fiscal policy. It is not merely a question of issuing visas and letting people in. It means absorbing these people, providing for them, so sharing the country's economic policy as to enable <sup>it</sup> ~~us~~ to absorb immigrants. No; if there is harmony between the ad hoc immigration authority and the state machinery, then it is all right. But if there is complete discord, the possibility of it, <sup>may</sup> the certainty of it, then it will not work, and the immigration powers which you might grant to the ad hoc authority would prove a delusion.

May I draw the Committee's attention to ~~the fact that~~ in our memorandum called "The Political Survey 1946-47" - I know how voluminous is the material that you are expected to read, and therefore I permit myself to draw your special attention to one chapter in the memorandum, and that is the chapter called "Solutions" - the last twenty pages of the memorandum, n. 49-71, where we have made an attempt to elaborate on all the proposals that have been heard, discussed them analytically and critically.

Again, in a bi-national state - if I may continue - we shall be irresistibly driven to the installation of a third party with all the negative results - primarily, no independence. Moreover, the whole approach which leads to bi-nationalism misses the real point at issue. When people talk of bi-nationalism their starting point is the country of Palestine; how to solve its problems. Here is a country with two peoples. But that is not the real starting point of the problem. The real starting point is the position of the Jewish people. The problem of Palestine is nothing but a function of the Jewish problem. Had there been no Jewish problem, there would have been no problem of Palestine today. What is called technically the Palestine problem - if you go even a little beneath the surface - you will find it to be the

Jewish problem. That is the core. You cannot solve the problem if you disregard its roots in history, if you do not project it into the future. You will not solve it if you restrict its scope to present-day Palestine, if you ignore the world position of the Jewish people on the one hand, and the international position of the Arab world today, on the other hand. And what we believe must be realised is to what extent and with what intense determination Jews all over the world have set their hearts on Palestine; the urge of hundreds of thousands to get in, the urge of the entire Jewish people, so far as it thinks and acts and wills collectively, to achieve statehood in Palestine. The full, wide international scope of the problem and its historic import must be taken into account. The international aim must be to try to cure the world of that peculiar malaise, a world malaise, which is called "the Jewish Question".

There is today a great upsurge of Jewish consciousness throughout the world, not only in the countries where the Jewish position is still very precarious, but also in the countries, and perhaps particularly in these countries, where Jews are fairly firmly entrenched in economic and social life and enjoy complete <sup>equality of rights.</sup> ~~independence.~~ In so far as they do not completely dissolve in their environment - and the vast majority does not - in so far as they care about the future of the Jewish people, they become more and more drawn to the banner, more and more active in trying to solve the problem of their people <sup>through Palestine.</sup>

There are two momentous developments in contemporary Jewish history, the effect of which is cumulative: the extermination in Europe and the renaissance in Palestine. They are like two poles which between them galvanise Jewish national will into action. They generate that will. And they make it more and more <sup>active.</sup> ~~acute.~~ The urge is to ensure the consummation of our renaissance in order to prevent a recurrence of extermination - at least to provide one secure haven, secure by being the possession of the Jewish people.

There can be no permanent stability, there can be no permanent contentment in Palestine, or in the world, insofar as the Jewish position is <sup>concerned</sup> ~~affected.~~

unless and until that elemental craving is satisfied. If not, tension will continue and explosive situations will continue, repression will continue with all its tragic results. We are fully aware of the force of opposition which we have to face, but we believe that once that craving is satisfied, as far as it can be humanly satisfied, opposition will die down. The force of facts, <sup>the</sup> convincing and compelling force of facts, is bound to assert itself. If a certain stage has been reached and passed, beyond that stage opposition will lose point. It will have no further prospect. The opposition is fed by the belief that it can succeed in preventing a certain consummation. Once it is there, it cannot be changed. And there is nothing really vital behind that opposition, no interests of life and death are behind that opposition. It is not a matter of life and death for the Arab world to keep the Jews out of Palestine. It is a matter of life and death for the Jewish people as a people, ~~at least~~ -- I am not now talking of individuals -- to establish itself in Palestine. If you satisfy the constructive urge you set a limit to the period of turmoil and difficulty. If you yield to obstruction you prolong indefinitely the period of turmoil and of unsettlement.

Just as the 650,000 Jews have been accepted today by our neighbours, near and far, so will the Jewish State be eventually accepted. Arab fears may be, in the subjective sense, genuine. They are none the less irrational. To conceive that the wellbeing of Palestine Arabs, that the independence and integrity of the Arab <sup>countries</sup> ~~country~~ around us, are likely to be threatened by the creation of a Jewish State is just morbid fancy. The fears will be dissipated by the realities. Just as the terrifying visions which were conjured up in the very recent past, as to what would happen if a couple of hundred thousand Jews <sup>more</sup> entered Palestine, the way the Arabs would be turned away from their soil, transformed into bands of homeless vagabonds roaming over the country and taking to the profession of highwaymen, the way the Arabs would be driven out, would be completely subjugated, etc. etc., just as all these terrible visions have been dissipated, so will <sup>be</sup> the fears that are still being

/entertained.

entertained. The question is whether these imaginary fears are to prevail against ~~this~~ dire need which the world has to face today, and against considerations of international justice. The question is whether Palestine's function in history is to be perverted under the threat of brutal reactionary force. We are convinced it is an empty threat. The verdict of international conscience will not be defied, certainly not in the long run.

But I have <sup>to</sup> stressed again that the starting point is the position of the Jewish people, and the concrete link between that position and the problem of Palestine is immigration, the right to return. If that is acknowledged, the rest follows automatically. If that right is acknowledged, the one corollary is that there must be ample territorial scope for settlement, as ample as possible, and you know that ~~ever~~ the whole of Palestine is not too large a country.

Another fundamental corollary is sovereignty, Jewish sovereignty as the only effective ultimate guarantee of entry. ~~And what~~ <sup>we</sup> must strive to attain is an international sanction for something which is deeply imbedded in Jewish consciousness in that regard. For in the matter of the return of the Jewish people to Palestine, the Jewish people has always considered itself sovereign.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, at the risk of abusing your patience I feel I must very briefly recall the fact of that boatload of Jews who, in 1942, went down to the bottom of the Black Sea. I do so not in order to harrow your feelings; I do so because in that one tragic event was exemplified, was epitomized the whole political situation which is the crux of the problem. That boat stood <sup>two months</sup> ~~too much~~ in Istanbul. It stood there crying out for mercy, ~~and~~ for refuge, for salvation, to the entire civilised world. What civilised state, allied or neutral, did not have its representatives in Istanbul? The whole world, therefore, saw the boat. The whole world knew what was at stake. And the whole world let those people perish.

No, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, please do not misunderstand. It is not

were staggered by  
that we minded so much the death of another 764 people, men, women and children. At the time the war was raging around us, not only throughout the world, but the enemy was at <sup>our</sup> the gates. Even we in Palestine had our war losses. Scores of us, ~~many scores~~, perished as a result of enemy air-raids. Hundreds of our sons and brothers fell on the battlefields of Africa and Europe. On one occasion a whole boat carrying Palestinian troops was sunk by the Germans in the Mediterranean. Several of our young men and women, the flower of our youth, the pride of the Yishuv, volunteered to be dropped by parachute behind enemy lines, and were executed by the enemy in Dachau, in the prison yard of Budapest, in the Nazi posts of Slovakia. We mourned them all, but we were proud of them. They went down fighting. It is not the fact that 764 more died. It is the way they died that affected us. Can you conceive such a fate befalling the members of any other people? Can you imagine it happening, let us say, to a transport of Polish refugees, of Czech refugees, of Greek refugees, of Yugoslav refugees, refugees belonging to any European or American or Asiatic nation under the same conditions? That they should flee from death and find the doors of all lands barred and locked in their face -- first and foremost, the doors of the land which the whole world promised would be their home. Any such group would be accommodated somewhere, wherever it may be; just as in this part of the world, before our eyes, Greek refugees were accommodated in Palestine, Yugoslav refugees in Egypt, Polish war refugees in Iran, in Palestine, in East Africa. They were given temporary shelter. They were given that shelter on the understanding that as soon as the war was over they would go back to their respective countries. The sovereignty of their peoples, although submerged temporarily at the time, but which the world was certain would re-emerge, was a guarantee of their eventual repatriation and therefore was an instrument of their immediate rescue.

That decree of death that was passed on the "Struma" because of the lack of any refuge over the entire face of the planet was something reserved for Jews alone. What national representative ever had to plead with such

and suppressed race for mercy, for commiseration on behalf of his hunted and doomed brothers; when failing to obtain admission for the whole transport, to climb down and entreat at least that children should be admitted, and ~~to fail even in that~~ <sup>falling that</sup> -- because the permission came too late -- that mortification was also reserved for Jews alone. Now would not every one of you <sup>after such experiences,</sup> take a holy oath to fight to his last breath for the restoration of his people's statehood and sovereignty, so that there should be one territory on the face of the earth, an adequate, a secure territory, the people's own country where it would be free to receive its persecuted sons and daughters without having to resort to any one else's permission?

And now, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, may I say that the tale of the "Struma" did not end with that disaster. It then only just started. And it goes on today. It still goes on. The camps of Europe are full of potential passengers of the "Struma". The camps of Cyprus are full of them. There are quite a number of them already in the settlements in Palestine. You have devoted such time and energy and physical strength to the visiting of our towns and settlements. Please complete the programme. I am making this appeal to you on behalf of the Jewish Agency. I am sure I am making it on behalf of the people directly and physically concerned. Please visit the camps. Those people are an integral and organic part of your inquiry. It is their plight and the historic position of the Jewish people which has made that plight possible that is the real subject of your investigation. You saw them here reviving under the spell of new hope and the very hard, hard but productive work which they are doing. You should see them there, how they are going under in enforced idleness, deprived of any hope except today this new faint glimmer that may be as a result of your investigation and your recommendations, that they will be rescued and rehabilitated before it is too late. We know your time is very short and your task is formidable, so make a very rigorous selection, but please visit a few camps, and also at least one typical centre of Jewish life in post-war Europe where, outside the camps, the prospects



for Jews are as black as inside the camps.

In conclusion, I have one more request to address to you on behalf of the Jewish Agency. In about six weeks you will be addressing your recommendations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for transmission to the annual session of the Assembly. The session of that great body will take many, many weeks, may be a few months. In the meantime, the homeless Jews of Europe will be facing their third post-war winter in the camps, a third winter of mental anguish, of physical suffering. The Yishuv, the Jews of Palestine, will still be in the throes of their struggle against the suffocations of the White Paper regime.

/Please

Please, therefore, preface your report with an emergency recommendation to the Assembly that, pending its consideration of an adjudication upon the major problem which, even within the session of the Assembly, must take a little time, the Assembly should decide on an immediate alleviation of the position in those two respects. It should insist on the immediate removal of all the bars and bans imposed by the White Paper, and on the immediate large-scale admission to Palestine of homeless Jews. This should be the first and immediate installment of the solution of our problem. But do not delay the solution. Do not recommend that it should be delayed by the Assembly.

As to the solution itself, we pray, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, for your wisdom and for your courage.

CHAIRMAN : I thank you, Mr. Shertok.

Does any Member wish to ask any questions of Mr. Shertok ?

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) : Excuse me, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Shertok, for insisting on a problem of an educational character. In the memorandum presented by the Administration of Palestine, it is stated : "The regions of cultural activity in which common ground might be found are definitely narrowed by the co-existence of separate systems of community education. Without doubt, the training in a common culture of children with the very variegated background of those of the Jewish community has presented a complex and difficult problem." The memorandum speaks of an undue concentration on nationalism of an assertive and exclusive quality in the community education system.

Do you think, Mr. Shertok, it will be possible in the near future to establish a system of common schools-- in Spanish we say escuelas comunes-- for all the children, without discrimination, in the country ? Do you think that is possible ?

/Mr. Shertok

Mr. SHERTOK : I do not think so, sir. I do not think that will be possible, nor do I think that will be desirable. I think that to throw Jewish and Arab children into one educational pool will raise an <sup>insoluble</sup> ~~unsolvable~~ problem, the problem of language and the problem of national culture. You cannot educate unless you do so against the background of a certain national culture. And you certainly cannot educate unless you have a certain language as a medium of instruction.

Now, I would not like to see Jewish children assimilated to Arab language and Arab culture, nor would I like to see Arab children assimilated in the opposite direction.

CHAIRMAN : May I enlarge on the question of Mr. Fabregat. Do not common schools exist where Arab and Jewish children are educated together ?

Mr. SHERTOK : There are some ~~missionary~~ schools attended, among others, by some Jewish and some Arab children. I am not now dealing with the religious aspect of the question-- there is no question of any direct conversion going on in those schools. They are schools, and some of them are very good schools, as schools go. But I would regard it as a first-rate national disaster if all Jewish children were educated in such schools, because <sup>then</sup> ~~there~~ would be ~~no~~ no hope of any cultural revival of the Jewish people, of any independent cultural life. And I believe that a race so educated would be culturally sterile. It would not be creative.

I am rather grateful to Professor Fabregat for having drawn my attention to that paragraph in the report. I think I remember it. It is a very curious paragraph. The Government of Palestine complains that children are being educated separately. How <sup>does</sup> ~~did~~ it propose they should be educated ? The Government

/of Palestine

of Palestine in that paragraph complains that Hebrew and Arabic are official languages, and they say--they do not use the word nuisance, but that is what they very nearly imply--that it is a great handicap to have to translate speeches at common meetings in those two languages. The underlying conception seems to be that the country must exist for the convenience of the officials, and not the officials for the convenience of the country. The underlying conception seems to be that it is a pity that both Jews and Arabs have their national language, that they have some cultural heritage to carry on and t

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hand down to the coming generations. Why shouldn't they all speak plain English? English is a very good language and a very rich language, but it is not theirs. It does not have roots in their hearts, it does not have roots in their memories, it does not have past associations; therefore it offers no possibilities of creative self-expression for either.

I think that is an astounding paragraph, and so is the implication which it carries. This country harbours two peoples, two cultured peoples. They have their languages, and they are determined to go on developing them. It is very useful to know English. It may be useful to know French. I think it is very useful to know Spanish. And English is being taught in our schools.

By the way, if it is a question <sup>here of</sup> ~~of~~ again reducing the disparity, practically in all Jewish secondary schools and in a large number of elementary schools, Arabic is taught. Hebrew is not taught in a single Government school. Why is that? That would bring Jews and Arabs a little closer together.

I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that it must be the policy in this country to increase, as far as possible, the number and the percentage of ~~the~~ bi-lingual people, bi-lingual in Hebrew and Arabic. Those who have the time and can afford to learn a third language, by all means let them do it. But it is very important that <sup>the</sup> ~~a large~~ number of Arabic-speaking Jews and Hebrew-speaking Arabs is increasing: with the Jews as a result of concerted effort, as a result of conscious policy; with the Arabs simply because many Arabs find it useful to know a little Hebrew. I am sure this process will develop in the course of time. Just as in Switzerland. In French Switzerland, education is based on French, but German is taught. In German Switzerland, education is based on German, but French is taught. This, I think, should

/by the policy

be the policy of Palestine.

CHAIRMAN: Do you have any further questions?

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay): No, thank you.

CHAIRMAN: That is all I want to ask.

Mr. GRANADOS (Guatemala): In paragraph 10 of the Administration Blue Book, already mentioned by Professor Fabregat, it is said -- I am not quoting because I do not have the document here, but the sense is more or less this: that if the Agency had limited itself to the accomplishment of certain functions this situation would be different, but that the Agency has not complied with the terms of reference.

What have you to say about that statement?

Mr. SHERTOK: I will answer you in a minute. I would like to look up the paragraph and refresh my memory. I think I remember seeing it. It is also a paragraph to which we must take very strong exception. I think it contains an attempt at a post-factum <sup>rationalization</sup> realization with regard to something that was originally conceived in an entirely different spirit.

The main point, ~~I believe, is this:~~ <sup>was</sup> That the Jewish Agency was sanctioned by the Mandate but ~~it was~~ not created by the Mandate. The Mandate recognized the Zionist Organization as the Jewish Agency. Now, the Zionist Organizations existed before the Mandate. Maybe, if there had been no Zionist Organization, there would have been no British Mandate over Palestine. The Zionist Organization rested on its own strength. It was already, before the First World War, the chief Jewish colonizing agency in Palestine. During the war, it made itself responsible for ~~ensuring~~ ensuring the survival of the Jewish community. During the war again, it was instrumental, through its leaders, in obtaining the Balfour Declaration. When the British Government, through the Mandate, conferred that status <sup>of</sup> the Jewish Agency, on the Zionist Organization, it did so not merely in the full knowledge of the facts, but because of its knowledge of the facts. <sup>Because</sup> it knew that that was a strong party, a national representative body, that it appeared worthwhile to the British Government to accept it as a partner in the undertaking. Otherwise, such

partnership would have been of no value, and most certainly, the presumption was that the Jewish Agency should continue to act as an independent instrument of development.

I remember the phrase that was very currently quoted in those days, <sup>at</sup> the San Remo Conference, when the Supreme Allied Council decided to entrust Great Britain with the Mandate. Mr. Lloyd George met Dr. Weizmann and communicated to him that decision, and when he finished his official communication, he said this: "Now you have been given a start; it is up to you to make good". "To make good" did not mean merely to cooperate with the Palestine Administration. It meant to accept responsibility for the bringing over of immigrants, for settling them, for planning and development, for mobilizing finance.

It just occurred <sup>s</sup> to me, suppose the Jewish Agency had failed. Suppose it had failed miserably and very conspicuously. Suppose the land it had acquired had not been put to proper use, had been wastefully cultivated. Suppose the Jewish farms were miserably vegetating units. Suppose there was large unemployment in Palestine, a tremendous backwash of re-~~em~~<sup>e</sup>migration, and so forth. I am sure then that this Blue Book would not join issue with the Jewish Agency as to why it had done all these things at all. It would have ~~enjoined~~<sup>blamed</sup> the Jewish Agency ~~on the score~~<sup>for</sup> of its failure. Now that we have not failed -- it is not ~~up to~~<sup>for</sup> me to say to what extent we have succeeded; I know we have not succeeded up to our expectations -- the very basis of our existence is challenged in this document. It is not an attack on the Jewish Agency. It is an attack on the Mandate and on the basic premise on which the Mandate was built.

CHAIRMAN: Does any other Member wish to ask any questions?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN: Then I thank you, Mr. Shertok.

Mr. SHERTOK: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN: The hearing is suspended for ten minutes.

(The hearing was suspended for ten minutes)

CHAIRMAN: I call the meeting to order. The item we are going to take up now is the hearing of Representatives of the Palestine Communist Union. I understand that Mr. Preminger, Dr. Marchand, and Miss Zabari are going to speak for the Union. Will you please come up on the platform.

(Mr. Preminger, Dr. Marchand, and Miss Zabari took their seats on the platform.)

CHAIRMAN: We have granted you a hearing which is supposed to be an address for you, all together, for a half hour. The reason why we have granted you this hearing is because you have a specific solution that you favour. What we expect now is to hear your proposals about that solution. We do not expect you to go fully into all these other questions which have been debated by other organizations, immigration and so on.

Mr. PREMINGER (Member of the Central Committee of the Palestine Communist Union): Yes, I understand.

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Committee, I am very glad to have the opportunity to greet you in our country and to present to you the proposals of the Palestine Communist Union. Seventeen enquiry committees have visited this country before you. Common to all of them was that they were appointed by the British rulers themselves to investigate their own deeds. The British Government was plaintiff and defendant at the same instance. At the last - the Anglo-American Enquiry Committee - the U.S.A., which has her own interests in this country, participated - and therefore it is evident, that this Committee could not serve the true interests of the country and its peoples. We, and with us the whole Jewish Yishuv in Palestine, greet you not as the eighteenth committee of this sort but as the first enquiry committee of UNO. The Jewish Yishuv knows that among you are members who themselves took part in the liberation movements, and in the struggle for national independence against the enslavers of their peoples, and this fact

/gives us



gives us the conviction that the aspirations of an oppressed people fighting for its national independence will find a deep echo in your hearts and will be given expression in your findings. The Jewish Yishuv, groaning under the yoke of colonial enslavement, chained under a dictatorial regime which denies it the basic democratic rights, the Jewish Yishuv, struggling for its very existence as a nation, has brought before you the evidence of its struggle and aspiration to independence.

The aspiration to freedom and national independence is common to the great majority of witnesses who appeared before you. But unlike many of them we, the Hebrew Communists, wish to stress our deep conviction that no people gains its freedom as a gift from anybody.

We, the Hebrew Communists, present to you our democratic proposals which will contribute towards the deliberations of your committee and the decisions of UNO, since we greatly value your help in our struggle against colonial oppression and for national independence. For the elucidation of our proposals we would like to point out that for the realization of a democratic programme the mass struggle of the nation fighting for its independence is necessary. Only the combination of these two elements - democratic programme and popular mass struggle - will be able to convert the desire for liberation from colonial rule and for the establishment of independence from a dream into reality.

The passive resistance and struggle of the Jewish Yishuv's masses has abated recently due to political miscalculations of various circles still occupying a position of leadership of the Yishuv. You have heard that the inhabitants of Nethanya surrendered to the overwhelming numbers of troops who poured into their town. Yet, not always such has been the sequence of events. One instance may be sufficient. In September, 1946, curfew was imposed upon Haifa in order to cover the use of gas and truncheons against the immigrants - thousands of the inhabitants of Haifa broke the curfew

/and actively

and actively resisted the oppressive laws. People streamed out into the streets, even though they were aware that the soldiers had been given orders to shoot at every curfew-breaker. As a consequence 3 people were murdered by the soldiers, among them a young girl of eighteen, who, together with her mother, went out into the streets in order to outlaw and prevent the realization of the dictatorial rule. This was not an isolated instance.

We reject the method of individual terrorism which is pursued by certain groups within the Jewish Yishuv. Nevertheless, everybody knows that within the Jewish Yishuv are dormant vast and consequent forces of liberation, which will fight untiringly against every oppressive regime until national liberation is achieved. Not we alone, but wide masses of the Yishuv know that freedom and independence are not bestowed as a gift but gained through mass resistance to all legislation of the Police state and the struggle for the realization of the democratic proposals we wish to present to you.

A programme guaranteeing the interests of both peoples of Palestine. A programme for which every honest patriot among both peoples can be enlisted. A programme which, if recommended by the UNO, would be able to render the utmost help to our enslaved country and to its peoples striving for independence.

Our proposals are based upon the recognition of the just rights of both peoples to full national sovereignty and complete independence of any foreign factor, the defence of which is the foremost and noblest duty of UNO.

The main difficulty of the Palestine problem is the false argument that in Palestine there exists a contradiction between right and right. It is argued that each of the peoples aspires to a status of majority and exclusive rule. The opposition to political parity is put forward under the pretence that it <sup>creates</sup> a deadlock. In connection with this stands the question of immigration. There are many who fear that an Arab majority will deny our right of immigration.

Let us examine the question of majority. The Hindus constitute the majority in India, but does this fact guarantee their independence? The Arabs

in this country can learn from their own experience that they did not attain sovereignty in spite of being the majority. In connection with this has to be considered the problem of immigration. The Arabs have no economic or social arguments against immigration, their opposition springing mainly from the fear of political domination.

What we need is a political settlement that will safeguard both peoples against the danger of domination and will solve the problem of majority and minority - and will certainly also guarantee the right of the Jews to immigrate.

From these considerations becomes evident our opposition to set up Palestine as a one-national state. We do not wish to enter here into the complicated problem of ensuring justice to both nationalities and only want to point out the impracticability of such a state.

The setting-up of Palestine as a one-national state would mean:

- 1) The denial of sovereign rights to one of the nations.
- 2) The complete mobilization of the other nation against such a state.
- 3) Economic and political boycott up to armed uprisings, bloodshed and mutual massacres.

It must also be taken into account that a wronged people will be ready to assist war-mongers inciting them to a new world war, hoping thus to rise from its downtrodden position.

The second proposal, partition, seems just and practical. But actually it is quite unpractical and leaves most problems unsolved. For in the proposed "Jewish" State conditions will be as follows:

a) The Arabs will still constitute a third of the population, so that the difficulty of majority and minority as existing in the non-partitioned Palestine will remain (although in this case the Jews will be in the majority and the Arabs in the minority).

b) As regards land ownership, more than two-thirds of the lands will be in the hands of the Arabs.

c) The problem

c) The problem of development, though, will be more difficult because the raw materials (oil, Dead-Sea resources) as well as water resources are distributed in such a manner as will prevent their being exploited under conditions imposed by any partition of Palestine into two separate states.

d) Industry, even now suffering from marketing difficulties, will altogether suffocate, being boycotted by surrounding antagonistic countries. For it has to be remembered that partition, which can only be forced on the peoples of the country against their wish, will not minimize, but intensify tension between the two peoples.

e) Such a state will, of necessity, turn into a typical police-state, as it will have to suppress a large national minority.

f) Lastly, what is most important, is that, after partition, none of the two nations will be independent, and both will serve as pawns in the hands of foreign imperialist powers. It is therefore no coincidence that all the various partition plans were born in the British colonial office. Partition, according to a local popular saying, gives the hair to the Jews, the nails to the Arabs and the body to the British. This scheme does not offer a final solution, and certainly - as shown by India's bloody experience - it will not improve relations between the neighbouring peoples.

There also are proposals of another nature, they seem "idealistic" but they are much more realistic than those of the first category. They recognize that in Palestine there exist two nations and they take into account the just rights of both peoples in one way or another. Yet these proposals are not consequent, since they are not based on the principle of the recognition of the right of both peoples to national self-determination up to secession, the principle which alone can bring about co-operation free of any fear of domination or deprivation of rights.

Therefore, the authors of these proposals built upon trusteeship or even a British Mandate in order to "educate" the people towards co-operation. We

/reject

reject any proposal designed to bring in any third factor, whose task will be to conciliate as it were between the peoples. A bi-national proposal of this kind does not grant in fact sovereignty to any of the peoples.

Our plan is based on the principle of territorial federalism:

It seems to us that the best means of using national sovereignty for the good of both nations in order to ensure economic success and the absorption of the Jews desirous of entering Palestine, consists in the creation of an independent, democratic united State, common to both Jews and Arabs, built on full national and political equality for both its nations and on full democratic rights for all its inhabitants. The form of government ensuring political equality will have to be based on parity. We do not here wish to enter into a detailed constitutional description of the future Palestinian State for we think it early to discuss its constitution so long as the basic principles on which cooperation between the peoples depends have not been guaranteed. If, on the other hand such principles are accepted, the representatives of the two peoples will be able to work out the details for their constitution according to the interests of the two nations.

We wish again to emphasize that, as the experience of the Soviet Union and other multination states (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, etc.) has proved, it is only the right of self-determination up to secession that can serve as a sufficient guarantee to each nation that no danger exists of the other nation dominating it.

Nevertheless we stress that it is in the interest of both peoples not to make use of the right to secede because only the united bi-national form of government will be able to secure free economic development, peace between the peoples, exercise of the national right of the Jews to absorb immigration and settle on the land, and a rising of the standard of living of the two peoples.

A Joint Government can be established when both peoples understand that their interests demand a united State and an agreement on a united government. No outside power has the right to force this form of government upon the peoples. Therefore, in order to enable them to reach a settlement, the fear

of domination should be removed, sufficient guarantees against national domination should be given.

We have already shown that such a guarantee is inherent in the right of self-determination up to secession, in the right of each nation to create a State of its own. This right can be exercised only on a territorial basis. Therefore, we think that the joint State of Jews and Arabs should be composed of territorial districts possessing regional authorities of their own, being equally represented at the supreme Government institutions.

The cancellation of the colonial political and economic restrictions is to be regarded as a pre-condition of the establishment of a bi-national regime based on parity. The Ottoman law, to this day the basic law of Palestine, has to be abolished as well as all the extraordinary and "defence" regulations which were issued by the Mandatory Government. Furthermore, the existing system of property qualifications for voting should be liquidated as well as the undemocratic taxation system which is a heavy burden upon the wide masses of the people, on the one hand, and bars them from the right of voting, on the other.

Under the supervision of UNO, democratic local institutions should be established in all regions.

In one-national regions these organs should be elected by direct democratic vote. In bi-national regions these organs should be constituted on a parity basis, but elected democratically by both Jews and Arabs. A parity Constituent Assembly, elected democratically by the two nations of Palestine, should be convened and proceed to demarcate, under a special commission elected by the September General Assembly of the UNO, the territorial regions and work out the future constitution of Palestine.

The right to absorb immigration and to settle on the land is one of the fundamental national rights of the Jewish Yishuv. To try to deny these rights is tantamount to striking at the national independence of the Jews, since

/every

every nation has the right to choose its own way in all questions, especially more so regarding such a vital question as the admission of Jewish brethren, the remnants of the terrible destruction of the Jewish people by Fascism. Our members who were sent to Europe have, on their return, reported on the terrible plight of those pitiable remnants of Jewry that are now in the camps. We, and the Jewish Yishuv as a whole, would like you gentlemen of the Committee, to visit those camps, as well, the Cyprus concentration camps and the middle-aged prisons existing in this country until this very day. After the Kishinev pogrom, 43 years ago, our national poet wrote of "Revenue such as Satan could not have" - and those that do burst through and succeed to enter the country, are thrown out with rifle fire and tear-gas and expelled to Cyprus. A girl and her dog arrived on one of the ships - the dog was granted permission to land and sent with a soldier to the girl's relatives, but the girl was thrown out. Government permits only the landing of the bodies of those immigrants which it has murdered - those that remain alive are sent away.

On the other hand, immigration should be carried out in such a way as not to strike at the right of the existing population of Palestine. Therefore, within the framework of the bi-national State, large-scale immigration can be carried out only on the basis of a development plan for the whole of Palestine, especially of the sparsely populated regions, the object of which will be the exploitation of the national resources of Palestine (oil, potash, irrigation, etc.) The development plan can be carried out with the aid of UNO so that it will be able to ensure both the absorption of immigration by the Jews and the rising of the standard of living of the Arabs.

These fundamental principles, if applied to the solution of the problem of Palestine, will be able to create in this country the best conditions for both its peoples, avoiding the defects inherent in other plans and laying the foundations of a free national and political development of the nations of Palestine. A solution based on these lines is in agreement with the spirit

/of the UNO

of the UNO Charter and could bring about the conversion of Palestine from a country endangering the peace of the world into a peaceful State, contributing to the strengthening of peace throughout the world, as an equal among equals within the framework of the United Nations Organization.

It has to be kept in mind that in order to carry into effect the solution of the problem of Palestine on the above-mentioned lines, a period of transition may be necessary, during which, with the aid of the above-mentioned special commission of UNO, this settlement, which will secure the national independence of the two peoples in a free Palestine, will be carried out.

Our proposal guarantees to each people the inalienable right of secession and creation of a separate state, and therefore our proposal of territorial federalism is based not on force and compulsion but on the free will of both peoples of Palestine to unite.

The advantage of our proposal rests upon the fact that in the very structure of the federal state sufficient safeguards are provided for the sovereignty of both peoples and conditions for free association are provided. Thus there is no need of the interference of a third party. There is no danger of deadlock, since the right of secession will compel both peoples to agree. The vital interests of the two peoples of Palestine specially demand the territorial integrity of Palestine (as we have proved regarding the possibilities of development, immigration and the realization of its true independence). From all that has been said it is easy to see that this plan, the principles of which we have here expounded, embodies all the advantages of the other plans (including the partition plan), excluding their shortcomings. For whilst our proposals recognize the right of each of the peoples of Palestine, to form its own State and make use of its sovereign political rights, they do not deprive the other people of its rights and do not strike at the territorial integrity of the country, the possibilities of its development and absorption of immigration.

/Two conditions



Two conditions are imperative for the realization of this plan.

The immediate termination of the British Mandate, abolition of the foreign administration, the evacuation of all British forces and liquidation of their military bases in this country without delay.

The intention of the leaders of the British Empire at the time of the Balfour Declaration was not consideration for the needs of the Jewish people, but the creation of a national minority in the Middle East which would serve them as an excuse to fight the aspirations of national independence of the Arab nations. The strengthening and the national consolidation of the Jewish Yishuv have uncovered the unbridgeable contradiction between our people, an oppressed colonial people striving for its freedom, and the intentions of the Empire's leaders. Thus was born the struggle of national liberation of the Jewish Yishuv.

By its policy of "Divide and Rule", and the fostering of national hatred and with the help of the reactionary leadership among the peoples, imperialism has succeeded to turn the justified fight against itself into a fight between the peoples of this country. Today, though, wide sections of the Yishuv realize more clearly every day who is their real enemy. It becomes apparent that under the skies of Palestine there is no room both for a flowering and developing Jewish Yishuv and British rule. That is the source of the mass resistance movement which grew in the Yishuv. Realizing this fact, the leaders of the British Empire have started a campaign of repression against the Jewish Yishuv in order to destroy it as a national entity, as a nation. Such a campaign is aimed to destroy the economic basis of the Jewish Yishuv, strike at its political life, and undermine its morale.

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Commission, I will not tire you with a description of the systematic destruction of the Yishuv's economic existence, I shall only show three examples.

(1) The estimated

1) The estimated income of the Government for the year 1947-8 is £23.5 million. Of this only 2.5 millions are from income tax, whereas 10.5 million come from taxation of the population's essential commodities.

2) The only commercial institution, seemingly a very poor one that is exempt from duties, tax or any other obligations is the British Oil Company, I.P.C., in the concession of which we read as follows: "...to carry out and establish on the territory of Palestine bureaus, pumping stations, workshops, ... means of transportation on the land, on the sea and in the air, telegraph and telephone installations ...Refineries ...Income free from any tax, duties or any other import taxes on all goods, tools. Only the company will have the right to impose postal dues, lighting dues, on ships entering the coast of the company. To keep an armed force...not only for the case of mutiny, disturbances, war, but also for the case of strikes and lock-outs...." This company which fulfils no obligation whatsoever towards the state, which lets its by-products flow into the sea, to prevent the growth of any chemical industry that might compete with I.C.I. - has in these last days obtained special permission of the Government to increase the price of kerosene by a further 9 percent.

That the inflationary trends are caused by the Government's policy of buying in dear markets, may be proved by the fact that while the general high cost of living index is 276 points, the index of cereal prices for 1946 was 374, that of fodder 502, and of cattle for slaughter - 554 points.

As we have already pointed out, the political regime intends to break the power and might of the Yishuv. Here also are a few facts:

A) Discrimination in Government employment. A Jewish supernumerary policeman gets 16.688 pounds per month; the allowance for wife and child is 3.512 pounds, while the same allowance for a British policeman whose

man whose wife and child have been transferred to England is 25 pounds apart from his pay!

B) Discrimination before the law. According to regulations published in the Palestine Gazette of January the 28th 1946 - page 152, extraordinary issue No. 1470 - the death penalty is incurred by any person who is a member of "... any group...of persons, any one ...of whom has committed...terrorist activities..." On the other hand only two days ago the murderer of Esther Tobi (a soldier who, without any reason shot and killed a girl of 18 standing in a bus queue) was sentenced to five years imprisonment, and even this is an isolated case where the authorities were forced to find out the identity of the murderer. The case of Major Farran uncovered all the rot of the form of Government in the country, the existence of "special squads" among the police, the system under which any soldier or policeman may, without having to account for his actions, decide the fate of people. The boy Rubowitz was murdered during a "voluntary investigation" by Major Farran, as exactly any inhabitant of Palestine may be arrested any day on any corner, and then murdered during "additional investigation".

During the last two days we have been witnesses to martial law and curfew in Nathanya, attempted rape of a girl by soldiers in Tel Aviv, alarms in Jerusalem. Is it not obvious that underlying this system is the clear will to break the morale of the Yishuv?

C) All this happens at a time when death-sentences have become a daily occurrence (just now the death sentence on three youths has been confirmed, and as is noted by the "London Tribune", at a time when Kesselring, the murderer of thousands of people, had his sentence commuted; these three youths, who had tried to free prisoners, have not received a pardon.) It happens at a time when Jews, who, under tremendous difficulties and untold suffering, reach the shore of the country and are again sent to concentration camps - with tear-gas, baton-charges, and rifle fire. /These things

These things happen following a long tradition of persecution of people because of their political views. Had it been true that all these repressive measures are being carried out in order to stamp out terrorism, how is the persecution of people (investigations by the C.I.D., taking of fingerprints, etc.) who have nothing to do with terrorist activities to be explained, as, for instance, in the case of the leaders of the Yishuv, or of members of our organization, the Palestine Communists Union, explained?

That this tradition is one of long standing, and has been well established long before there were any acts of terrorism is evident from the fact that Miss S. Zabari, who is sitting next to me, serve five years in the jails of Palestine, and our President, Meir Sloni was imprisoned for six years. In our written memorandum, submitted to the Committee, we extensively described the political regime and the legislative and executive activities of the Palestine Government.

From the aforesaid it clearly appears that any rectification of the present situation and the realization of a democratic plan can only be based upon the abolition of the dependence of Palestine upon Britain, in whatever form. This is to be achieved by fulfilling two conditions:

- a) The liquidation of the British Mandate, the withdrawal of British troops, bases, police and administrative apparatus.
- b) The international recognition of the independence of Palestine and of the right of its peoples to national self-determination up to secession (this point has been elucidated in paragraph 3 above.)

At the time the various proposals were put forward, there have been a great variety of calculations as to the supporters and opponents of those proposals. But in most cases those calculations did not materialize.

We Hebrew Communists regard ourselves as one of the most loyal champions of the Hebrew working class in Palestine. Among the

working class, within the General Federation of Jewish Labour, only 60 percent expressed themselves in favour of the "Biltmore" programme, the political programme of the Yishuv's leadership, while 40 percent were, and are against this plan. Forty percent of the Jewish working class, as found expression at the last elections, desire a solution in the spirit of a national democratic programme, in the spirit of recognition of the neighbouring people and of alliance with the democratic forces the world over.

We do not claim that all those accept our programme as put forward to you. We only wish to stress that they all have a common basis and a common fundamental attitude to the problem.

If the recommendations of the Committee be in the spirit of what has been proposed by us in the foregoing, that will undoubtedly help to consolidate the democratic forces within the Yishuv to strengthen those who honestly seek the way towards a just and democratic solution of the problems of Palestine.

Due to the un-democratic ban of the Jewish Agency Executive upon the appearance before the Committee of the opposition parties, the Hashomer Hatzair and the Ahdut Avoda, we think that, notwithstanding the differences between our specific position, as has been expounded here, and the position of the above-mentioned parties, we did service to our common cause.

We hope that your activities will advance the solution of the problems of our much suffering country, and help our Jewish brethren, who have been driven to the verge of desperation by the Anglo-Saxon rulers of the various occupation zones, and who regard Palestine as the only place of their redemption. The Jewish Yishuv increasingly comes to see this struggle for its national independence as the decisive struggle, a question of life and existence. We are sure that in this struggle the Yishuv will be victor and not surrender, just in the same manner in which its brethren in every quarter of the world have held out through many years of persecutions and darkness, carrying forward the light and hope of freedom.

CHAIRMAN: I thank you. You have filled up all the time allotted to you, and therefore I think we shall go on to the questions and answers.

How many members are there in your Union?

Mr. PREMINGER: Nine hundred.

CHAIRMAN: Have you a paper?

X Mr. PREMINGER: We have a weekly paper.

CHAIRMAN: How many copies are printed?

Mr. PREMINGER: It is printed in 3,000 copies.

CHAIRMAN: How many do you reckon your followers are - the followers of your Organization?

Mr. PREMINGER: Some thousands.

CHAIRMAN: You put forward a scheme for a federal state. The working of a federal state depends very much on the sifting out of powers between the different states and the federal government. Which special questions had you thought would be reserved for the federal government?

Mr. PREMINGER: All the questions of development, relations with other countries, financial questions; also the working out of a scheme of development which can enable the absorption of large grant of Jewish immigration.

CHAIRMAN: No more functions for the federal government? I mean, in the federal state you have to make up your mind which functions you will give the partition stated and which functions you will reserve for the federal government. What I ask is, whether the functions you mentioned were the only ones you thought would be left to the federal government?

Mr. PREMINGER: I think they are.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands): In the statement we have just heard there are several places where it speaks of federation of a bi-national state organisation, with free and equal rights of all inhabitants up to secession. We have heard that the idea is that

there will be Jewish districts, Arab districts, and mixed districts. I should like to know how could secession be materialized in mixed districts?

Mr. PREMINGER: We think the question is a broad one because there are only two possibilities. The right of secession - the right of self-determination including the right of secession - is the only guarantee which can convince each of those peoples that there is no possibility of domination on behalf of the other people. So if both peoples agree to accept that guarantee and agree to live together in one united state for their own good, for their own development, because they think that the partition scheme is worse, then there is a possibility of establishing the above-mentioned federal state. But in the other case, if those elements which are opposing a common solution of the Palestine problem are on top of the peoples, there is no question that then there will be partition.

There are only two questions, two possibilities. Either both peoples will agree to live together under the guarantee of the right of secession, or there must be partition. I think it is obvious; there is no third possibility. But we think both peoples will recognise their own good. They will recognise that the partition scheme will only bring new and harder oppression than before and they will agree to accept that guarantee of the right of self-determination, including the right of secession, and will unite in one common Palestinian State.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands): Do I understand that you would have a referendum letting the people themselves decide whether they will live together in one bi-national state or have a partition?

Mr. PREMINGER: We think that the immediate steps which we are proposing before the Committee are, to decide in the September Assembly to abolish the Mandate, to evacuate the foreign troops and to hand over the question of Palestine to a provisional assembly elected by Jews and Arabs on a parity basis, which, with the help and assistance

and assistance of a special committee elected by the above-mentioned assembly, together with the help of the United Nations, will decide all the other questions. I agree with you that the Palestine peoples will be against a solution like this. We think it is impossible to influence the power of the United Nations. We think the solution of the problems of the peoples is a matter first of all for the peoples themselves, but we hope that if the United Nations Assembly in September reaches a decision like this, it will give an opportunity to the democratic elements in both peoples to rise, strengthen their forces and to convince their peoples that it is better to decide in favour of a united state than in favour of a partition scheme, which will only bring a lot of harm, disturbances, murder, etc., for both peoples of Palestine.

CHAIRMAN: I think Mr. Blom's question aimed at something else. His question was, assuming that there is going to be a state of the structure that you propose, but later on when other states want to secede, how is that going to be brought about?

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands): That was my first question.

Mr. PREMINGER: I am sure that in case, after the establishment of a united state, a question of separation should arise, then we will be in the same situation as we were in before the establishment of the united state. Then certainly both nations must decide to vote democratically within both nations; either they want to be together, or they want to be two separate states.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands): My second question was how they think the first decision will be taken; whether they want to have a referendum before the United Nations decides on what form of state is to be established.

Mr. PREMINGER: If the United Nations Assembly will decide in favour of our proposals, we think the United Nations must ask the peoples themselves, and there is no doubt that then there must be elections or votes between the two peoples in Palestine. But furthermore, we are sure that such a decision of the United Nations will



will give the possibility to the democratic forces to rise and to convince their peoples in favour of a common solution. On the top of both nations in Palestine there have been people who were against such a solution and who were in favour either of a one-nation state or of a partition scheme; but we think that the opportunity may be given to the British Government to incite the peoples of the two countries, one against the other, the opportunity to back those reactionary leaders in both sections. We have many examples of such a backing; for instance, in the past when a mayor of Tel Aviv was elected about twelve years ago, Mr. Chlouch, the Government decided in favour of another mayor of Tel Aviv and they put in Mr. Rokach, and since then the Government did all it could to prevent any new elections in Tel Aviv and aided the reactionary rulers in the Tel Aviv Council to prevent those elections. But we think such a decision of the United Nations will help to democratize the inner life of both peoples in Palestine and will help to bring to the top those democratic forces in favour of our proposals.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands): Do you think the majority of the Jewish people; for example, will vote in another direction from the one in which they have voted now when elections such as you visualize are put through?

Mr. PREMINGER: In the last election to the largest and most important organization within the Jewish Yishuv, the Jewish Federation of Labour, the majority party, Mapai, who favours mostly now a partition scheme or a scheme of one-nation state, got only about 53 percent of all the elections. On the other side, the opposition parties, the Hashomair Hatzair and the Ahdut Avoda, got about 40 percent. That was the situation in Palestine before the decision of the United Nations. But I am sure that in case of such a decision, the peoples of Palestine, especially my own people, the

/Jewish Yishuv,

Jewish Yishuv, must decide, and must decide either in favour of a scheme which does not give it anything but harm, as I told you before, or in favour of the possibility of establishment of a state which will grant the national independence of my own people, the Jewish Yishuv. So I think it will be possible for the democratic forces to convince the Jewish Yishuv in favour of such a proposal as we put forward to you.

CHAIRMAN: Any more questions? Then I thank you.

We have now gone through the agenda and the hearing is adjourned. If there are going to be more public hearings it will be announced in the proper way.

The hearing is adjourned.

(The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.)