

On Palestine

RECOGNISE IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE

Equal Rights For Arabs And Jews

(The Anglo-American Commission on Palestine set up at the end of last year has just submitted its report; this report has naturally created a furore in the Arab world because it repudiates independence for Palestine and also advocates immigration for 100,000 Jews.

We give here the memorandum submitted by P. Piratin, M.P. and Jack Gaster on behalf of the Communist Party of Great Britain to the Commission—which gives a sane and balanced picture of the real issues involved and the way out and thus in itself is a 'damning indictment of the Commission's report.—EDITOR).

1. Scope Of The Inquiry

THE COMMUNIST PARTY welcomes this opportunity to give evidence before the Committee, which is sitting to enquire into two problems which the Communist Party has consistently declared to merit the urgent consideration of the United Nations and for the solution of which we have put forward definite proposals.

At the same time, however, we feel it necessary to place on record our disappointment that the authority and the scope of the Committee have been limited by confining membership to the representatives of only two of the United Nations.

This is all the more surprising in view of the close concern of many European Governments with the problem of succouring the Jews, and in view of the proved record of the U.S.S.R. in the past in dealing with precisely those problems with which the present Committee is concerned.

2. The Roots Of Anti-Semitism

WE feel that it is necessary, by way of introduction, to emphasise the historical fact that anti-semitism is NOT an ideological peculiarity of Fascism.

Anti-semitism was a disturbing and malignant social trend in a number of countries long before Fascism rose to power in any country, or was even a recognised political trend.

Excesses committed against Jews have varied in degree in different countries at different times. But it would be possible to show how, at every historical stage and in every society in which anti-semitism has most violently appeared, there have been in that society social and economic stresses and conflicts which threatened to unseat the economically powerful ruling classes.

These conflicts within society have not in essence been between the Jews as such and other sections of population, but it has been convenient for those whose dominant economic position has been threatened by rising popular discontent to divert attention away from themselves by making the Jews a scapegoat.

Anti-semitism is, therefore, not a natural phenomenon but has always been consciously fostered by certain sections of society, especially at times of social discontent.

But it was Fascism which perfected this technique and saw the monstrous potentialities of anti-semitism as a means of diverting the attention of the masses of people away from the real social issues and mobilising their energies in support of the aggressive ambitions of the ruling Fascist clique and its financial backers. With Fascism, anti-semitism became an organised system and an acknowledged part of state policy.

The Communist Party, therefore, urges the Commit-

tee to recognise that, whilst the defeat of the Fascist States has removed the most violent, bestial and organised forms of anti-semitism in the world to-day, nevertheless anti-semitism still lives and will continue to be a danger so long as its causes are not removed.

3. Is Zionism A Solution?

IT is important for the Committee of Inquiry to note the political character of Zionist Movement today.

The Communist Party understands the traditional religious significance to Jewry of Palestine as the Holy Land; and it deeply regrets that this sincere feeling has been used by politicians within Jewry to cloud the real nature of the problems that must be solved on a world basis, to secure to the Jews those democratic rights that are the essential characteristics of all citizens living as equals in free societies.

Problem Of The Jews In Europe

We understand how the terrible suffering of Jewry, particularly in Europe, has led thousands of Jews, as an immediate reaction to those sufferings, to believe that they can only find refuge away from their homeland. It is, however, necessary to note that political Zionism, which is of comparatively recent growth, by its activities and propaganda in no way serves to solve the problems of Jewry to combat the growth of anti-semitism.

Additional distress will be unnecessarily caused to thousands of Jews who mistakenly follow the lead of Zionist politicians.

We ask the Committee to consider carefully as one of the political factors which have contributed to the present situation the real effects of the Zionist claim that the Jews must be set up as a nation in their ancient homeland of Palestine.

In our view, political Zionism has to a certain extent contributed towards an intensification of the sufferings of the Jews:—

- (a) Because Zionist policy necessarily denies the possibility of solving the problems of the Jews along the lines of democratic development and full equality of rights within the countries where they live.
(b) By declaring that the only solution must be mass immigration to Palestine, Zionism suggests that anti-semitism is a natural and inevitable evil, and thereby gives support to the contention that the Jew is a "foreigner" in the country of his birth.
(c) By implying a self-imposed alien status upon Jews in the countries where they live, Zionism undermines the consciousness of, and consequently their willingness to fight for, their democratic rights as equal citizens.
(d) By its claim to Palestine as a

Jewish national state, Zionism, puts the Jewish people in the position of being the instrument of international and imperialist power politicians in the Middle East.

4. The Jews In Europe

(In SECTION 4 the memorandum deals with the problems of the Jews in Europe, including the Jews displaced from their original homes by Nazi persecution. It suggests that the real solution for their happiness is not immigration into Palestine but:

- (1) Full rights of citizenship for Jews in all countries of which they are nationals, and material assistance to ensure them a decent livelihood.
(2) Attempts to persuade, after a course of rehabilitation and employment, displaced Jews, to return to the countries of their origin.
(3) If these attempts fail, entry must be allowed, "not under surfrance but as honoured guests with full and equal liberties, to all the free countries of the world." For this purpose obviously—both the American Immigration Law and British arrangements would have to be changed.—EDITOR).

5. Palestine

IT is the view of the Communist Party that the problem of European Jewry and the problem of Palestine are two entirely separate problems.

Any attempt to make the so-

asking what was the Communist view of the reasons for the failure to find in 1948 democratic and representative institutions in Palestine.

Mr. Gaster replied: "It was anticipated in the White Paper that there would be something in the nature of representative and democratic institutions within ten years. We are now reaching towards the end of that ten years, and I think it is correct to say, and you will no doubt ascertain this more fully when you visit Palestine, that there is not an adequate system even of local government based on an adequate democratic franchise recently elected and effectively in operation in many parts of Palestine.

"So far as Palestine is concerned there are causes for the differences and disputes between Arab and Jew that have not yet been adequately brought out, and I would point to this vital factor, that Palestine is not a country of two contending parties. There is a third party there which has not been adequately referred to or adequately considered, and that is the British Empire. Now I might add possibly additional American interests.

These interests have helped to create circumstances in which relations between Jew and Arab have been unable to develop within the ambit of a free Palestine.

"I am suggesting that the fact that Palestine is not a free country has contributed to these conditions."

In the circumstances we declare that no country or countries have the right to impose upon another country that is not free or able to express an opinion through its democratic representative institutions, the acceptance of immigrants.

Nor do we believe that it would be in the interests of Jewish Displaced Persons that they should be persuaded to exchange their citizenship of a free country for that of colonial status.

It would be entirely at variance with the declarations

that while in some measure improved services have partially benefited the Arabs, on balance the Arabs have some reason to feel that their economic interests are jeopardised by the present uneven development.

Even prior to this development the Arab peasant had no security of tenure and had difficulty in securing a living from the land by the use of outworn methods. The Jewish development has in fact contributed to the creation of a large mass of landless Arabs who are unable to find a place in Arab industry, which has not been developed to a like extent as Jewish industry, and who are to a large extent excluded from Jewish industry and agriculture by the Zionist policy of the Jewish exclusiveness of labour.

It is to be noted, however, that Jew and Arab work alongside on government installations, and the development in recent years of Arab trade unions is of great importance for the future free development of Palestine on the basis of an equality between its Arab and Jewish inhabitants.

We would draw the attention of the Committee to what we believe to be an important new factor in the present situation, namely, the existence of organised groups within both the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine who are aware that the solution of the problems of Palestine depends upon Arab-Jewish co-operation within a free Palestine.

Terminate Present Mandate

It is our belief that a just and democratic settlement of the problem of Arab and Jew in Palestine can be found only when the present Mandate is terminated and Palestine achieves the promised goal of independence.

It is our belief that a declaration by the Committee in favour of such independence, the guarantee of equal rights for Arabs and Jews in the future State, and the insistence that points of difference should be left for settlement freely and democratically by the people of Palestine, would immediately help to create the conditions most favourable for co-operation between Arab and Jew.

We suggest that as an immediate step the United Nations Organisation should be asked to assume the responsibility for the interim control of Palestine and should organise the immediate creation of basic democratic units of local government in Palestine which could assist in the preparation of a new constitution for a free Palestine State.

We submit that the Committee should recommend to the Economic Committee of UNO that such financial aid should be granted to Palestine as may be necessary immediately to assist in the development of Arab agriculture and industry so as to correct the present lack of balance in the economic development of that country.

We are convinced that given this basis, there will be no hesitation on the part of the Arabs, on the basis of agreement with the Jews of Palestine, to admit refugees from Fascist persecution as freely as other free countries admit refugees to their shores irrespective of race or religion.

of the United Nations that questions profoundly affecting the future constitutional, political and social structure of Palestine should be decided upon now by anybody other than the people of Palestine themselves.

In our opinion, therefore, the future of Palestine is something for the people of that country, Jews and Arabs alike, to determine; and the Committee is only called upon to recommend the machinery for them to do so.

Arab-Jew Differences

We are aware of the sharpness of the conflict between Jew and Arab in Palestine today and that this makes difficult that cooperation and mutual confidence that are essential for a people democratically to determine their own future and settle their differences. Nevertheless these differences owe their origin, or have been encouraged to persist, precisely because of the colonial status of Palestine and the absence of democratic machinery for settling differences.

The community of 600,000 Jews in Palestine today has in many ways developed the economy of Palestine. This community has earned the right to live in Palestine in peace alongside the Arabs, and to be free to develop their new home as free and equal citizens of Palestine. New methods of irrigation and agriculture have been introduced, power plants built, and a considerable measure of industrialisation introduced. This has largely been done by the introduction of British and American capital, both Jewish and Gentile.

It must, however, be noted