

## SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

## COMMUNICATION FROM DR. WEIZMANN RELATING TO PARTITION

The following letter has been received from Dr. Weizmann, relating to Partition.

The Daniel Sieff Research Institute  
Rehovoth  
Palestine

14th July, 1947.

The Chairman,  
United Nations Special Committee on Palestine,  
Jerusalem.

Sir,

During the June 8th session of your Committee, the distinguished delegate from Guatemala invited me to state why I regarded a federal or cantonal solution of the Palestine problem as less acceptable than Partition. In accordance with his request I have given further serious consideration to that question, and I herewith submit my reply for the consideration of the Committee and inclusion in its records.

1. It may be convenient if I first summarise my criticisms of the two federal solutions recently proposed by H.M. Government in the United Kingdom - and then explain why I consider the whole principle of federal or cantonal government to be unhelpful in the present situation.

2. The Morrison plan and the Bevin plan have the effect of excluding Jewish settlement from the greater part of the Mandatory area, without even assuring the Jews complete freedom in the small area remaining. The obligations imposed by the Palestine Mandate to "facilitate Jewish immigration" and to "encourage close settlement by the Jews on the land" applied originally to the whole of historic Palestine. Under the Morrison and Bevin plans those obligations become void in all but a minute fragment of the territory to which they applied (indeed in no more than 15% of Western Palestine).

3. Although both plans made provision for the immigration of 100,000 refugees (the Morrison plan within a reasonable period - the Bevin plan far too slowly), there is no assurance of free immigration thereafter. While the Arabs are entirely free to exclude Jews from their large area, the Jews are not entirely free to admit immigrants

/to their small ...

to their small province. Immigration prospects for the Jews are curtailed not only by the existence of controls applied by British and Arab authorities, but also by the exclusion, from Jewish settlement, of the country's underdeveloped and derelict areas which can be developed to absorb large scale immigration.

4. In the matter of land settlement the effect of both proposals is to perpetuate desolation of the Negev and the underdeveloped state of Galilee, since both areas are beyond access to the Jews, who alone have the incentive and the ability to develop them.

5. Neither scheme assures the Jews of the political status enjoyed by surrounding Arab countries - that of independence and U.N. membership. The Jews make a sacrifice of territory without compensation in terms of sovereignty. I should add that the Jewish areas in both schemes are so inadequate that even sovereignty would not make them acceptable.

6. Both schemes involve a continuation of Mandatory rule and the postponement of a final decision on the country's political future. The Morrison plan leaves the way open either for partition or a unitary state, and thus prolongs a dangerous uncertainty. The Bevin plan implies an Arab State with a permanent Jewish minority after a five year trusteeship; it is, therefore, bound to evoke the firm and justified opposition of every Jew. Such a proposal would not only be unjust; it would be utterly impractical. A strong Jewish community under the domination of a numerical Arab majority would be a source of constant trouble.

7. The question of the distinguished delegate from Guatemala invited me to imagine a federal scheme in which some of these difficulties are met. Let us assume according to this hypothesis that an area capable of absorbing large scale immigration is allotted to the Jews and that the Jewish provincial authority is armed with virtual freedom to admit immigrants into its area. I submit that even these improvements would make the plan less promising than a definite partition involving the immediate establishment of a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine, for the reasons set out in the following paragraphs.

8. A federal delimitation is not a final and lasting settlement. The Royal Commission wrote:-

"Cantonisation does not settle the question of national self-government. Cantonal autonomy would not satisfy for a moment the demands of Arab nationalism. Nor would it give the Jews the full freedom they desire to build up their National Home in their own way at their own pace, nor offer them the prospect of realising on a small territorial scale all that Zionism means. And in the background, still clouding and disturbing the situation from year to year, still intensifying the antagonism between the two races, would remain the old uncertainty as to the future destiny of Palestine ..."

/I fully ...

I fully concur in that criticism. Finality is an essential requisite of a peaceful solution; it is fulfilled by partition and denied by federalism.

9. A federal solution falls short of complete independence. A third party, in addition to the Arabs and Jews, appears at the center of government armed with powers of sovereignty and immigration control. Whether this third party is British or international, the effect is that Arabs and Jews depend on some external agency for the satisfaction of their needs, instead of cooperating as equals and depending on each other, as they would if a Jewish State were established amidst the surrounding Arab States. All federal solutions in practice involve a further period of foreign control.

10. Federalism does not offer the Jewish people a place in the United Nations. That is a grave disability for the Jewish people in its political life, and is also a disturbing factor in Arab-Jewish relationships. I tried to explain in my evidence that equality of status is an essential requisite of cooperation between Zionism and the Arab world.

11. Federalism cannot begin to work without a measure of agreement which is now lacking. Partition recognizes the present lack of agreement and creates the conditions in which agreement may develop. The Royal Commission wrote:-

"The drafting of federal constitutions is never easy. Complicated questions are involved in the structure of the central government and the division of function between it and the component units. There are constant dangers of overlapping and of rival claims on the same field of authority. In 'cantonised' Switzerland and most other federations, federation was the act of a number of separate units which bound themselves together for the furtherance of common objects. In such federations the community of interest and tradition which has supplied the motive for union will also supply that element of reasonableness and good-will by which compromises may be arranged and friction overcome. In Palestine no such element is present. The 'interference' of the Central Government would always be resented by both Arabs and Jews and, we fear, wherever possible hindered, as an alien and unwanted intrusion."

12. To sum up - federalism does not obviate foreign control, or establish Jewish equality and independence or create an atmosphere of finality in which Arabs and Jews may be liberated from their fear of domination by each other. Partition does fulfil all of these conditions.

The federal plans suggested so far are unsatisfactory not only in principle, but also and chiefly because their provisions in respect of Jewish immigration and the area of Jewish settlement are completely disproportionate to Jewish needs and rights.

/13. Apart from the ...



13. Apart from the advantages of Partition discussed in the preceding paragraphs, there is also a better prospect of international support for Partition than for Federalism. It is significant that during the past year when federal solutions have been under discussion, no Jewish or Arab support whatever has been expressed on their behalf. On the other hand, there are conditions in which Partition will secure Jewish acquiescence: and our experience has shown that such a solution because it is final, commends itself to many sections of Arab opinion. The United States Government withheld support from the federal plan, but commended the principle of the viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine (President Truman's statement, 4th October, 1946). The Statement of the Soviet Representative of the U.N. Special Assembly in June 1947 stressed partition and not federalism as the alternative to an agreed bi-national constitution. There is considerable support for partition in other international circles, of which General Smuts' recent letter to me is a good illustration. In these circumstances I trust the U.N. Committee will not abandon the principle of Partition in favour of a solution which has evoked no support from any interested party and which has been rejected by the Royal Commission and the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry.

14. The only sound way of applying the federal principle is to establish Jewish and Arab States and to encourage them to conclude customs agreements and arrange for joint currency, free transport and other joint services by free negotiation. In this way finality, equality and independence can be reconciled with economic unity and with cooperation between a Jewish State and as many Arab States as will wish to collaborate with it in regional institutions for the benefit of the area as a whole. These hopeful prospects, however, can only be realised if the area of the proposed Jewish State is adequate for speedy development and for the absorption of immediate large-scale immigration.

I am, Sir,

Respectfully yours, .

(signed) Ch. Weizmann