

It Will Have to Be Coerced

Weizmann, however, was under no illusion as to the inevitable failure of all such efforts to bring about a reconciliation with the majority of the Arabs of Palestine.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the Zionist leader was determined to turn Palestine into a Jewish country. Alarmed by Zangwill's statement that the 'Arabs ought to be removed to Syria leaving their land to the Jews of Palestine', Herbert Samuel⁹¹ remarked (in the course of a meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Palestine Office) that 'If we (Zionists) were to go to Palestine to oppress other people it would be an unspeakable disgrace'.⁹² Weizmann then spoke with considerable frankness regarding the impending Inter-Allied Commission, and the unpleasant implications of a Zionist policy in Palestine:

Will the British apply self-determination in Palestine which is five hours from Egypt or not? If not it will have to be coerced. Yes or no: it amounts to that.⁹³

Weizmann then asked for preferential treatment and for state lands to settle 40,000 to 50,000 Jews per year. Ormsby-Gore accepted Weizmann's arguments and was in favour of granting his requests. He was in favour of encouraging non-Muslims, Europeans and Jews, to develop and stabilise the Near East in view of the fact that Islam was the main danger. Since the Zionist Organisation provided the required human element to man the Palestinian output in Europe's fight against Islam,

It is in the interest of England to assist the Zionist Organisation and any other organisation which may cooperate with them in the practical development of Jewish colonisation in Palestine.⁹⁴

To Ormsby-Gore, as well as other major British political figures, Zionism and the Balfour Declaration's policy of a Jewish national home in Palestine was a *chose jugée*.

A week before the Inter-Allied Commission arrived the Muslim-Christian Society of Jerusalem proposed to issue a circular regarding their views which they intended to put forward before the Commission. The circular stressed the unity of Syria and affirmed that Palestine — southern Syria — was an inseparable part of Syria. As far as the Zionist issue was concerned, an enlightened differentiation between native Jews and foreign incoming Zionists were made.

We completely refuse to allow Palestine to be turned into a national home for the Jews. We also do not admit any Jewish immigrant into our country and energetically protest against the Zionist movement. The native Jews who are previous inhabitants of the country, should be considered as native and possess privileges and misfortunes as we do.⁹⁵

General Allenby, however, considered the circular undesirable and withheld permission to issue.

For reasons which go beyond the scope of the present study, the French and the British failed to participate in the Inter-Allied Commission. Eventually, it was decided that the American members of the Commission should proceed and make the necessary investigations on their own. The implications of the absence of the other powers that were to participate in the Commission could not have failed to leave an adverse reaction among the Arabs, but Clayton could have been right when he informed the FO that

It is conceivable that the leaders of the people may feel themselves more free to express their real feelings being unembarrassed by any fear of offending either Great Britain or France, both of whom are considered to be interested parties.⁹⁶

The King Crane Commission

In his meticulous study⁹⁷ on the Inter-Allied Commission, known later as the King Crane Commission after the two American Commissioners, Harry Howard delved very deeply into the formation and findings of the American investigators, and there is no need to go over the same ground again. The Commission arrived on 19 June and lost no time in ascertaining the opinions and desires of the whole people. Before they left Palestine the Commission heard evidence and received petitions from all kinds of political groups in the country.⁹⁸

Summarising their findings the Commission reported:

Judging from the evidence which had been presented to the Commission during its short visit to Palestine, June 10-25, only the Zionist Jews, about one-tenth of the total population favoured the establishment of a Jewish National home in that country! The rest of the population — Moslem and Christian Arabs alike, desired to preserve the unity of the country with Syria of which they considered Palestine to be both historically and geographically a part.⁹⁹