

PALESTINE AND PARTITION

THE PEEL PLAN REJECTED

COMMISSION'S REPORT

A Blue-book published last night contained the report of the Palestine Partition Commission which was appointed last March to explore the practical application of the principle of partition proposed by the Royal Commission presided over by the late Lord Peel. The report is a document of 310 pages and in addition has a number of maps (Stationery Office, Cmd. 5854, price 5s. 6d.).

The Partition Commission consisted of Sir John Woodhead (chairman), Sir Alison Russell, Mr. A. P. Waterfield, and Mr. T. Reid.

Below is a summary of the main conclusions reached by the Commission:

THREE PLANS

THE ROYAL COMMISSION AND AFTER

Three plans of partition, called A, B, and C, besides certain Jewish proposals, are examined by the Commission.

PLAN A

In plan "A," which is the Royal Commission's plan with the boundaries adjusted for purposes of defence, the figures of population and land are—

	Population	Land (sq. miles)
Arab (including Beersheba sub-district)	485,500	294,700
Jews	7,200	304,900
Total population	492,400	599,600

Of the land in the proposed Arab State over 7,000,000 dunams (1,750,000 acres) are in Arab hands and 37,000 in Jewish. In the



Plan A.

proposed Jewish State 1,854,700 dunams are owned by Arabs and 1,140,200 by Jews, and in the Mandated enclaves Arabs own 1,044,600 dunams and Jews 78,800.

"TRANSFER IMPOSSIBLE"

By their terms of reference the Partition Commission were required to recommend boundaries which would necessitate the inclusion of the fewest possible Arabs and Arab enterprises in the Jewish State and vice versa. A plan for a Jewish State in which there will be nearly as many Arabs (295,000) as Jews (305,000) and four-fifths of the land will be owned by Arabs is, the Commission report, plainly inconsistent with this requirement, unless there is a reasonable prospect that the problem thereby created can be solved by exchange or transfer of most of these Arabs to the Arab State. It was a fundamental assumption of the Royal Commission's plan that this could and should be done. The Partition Commission find, however, that this is impossible.

In general, the Commission's conclusions on the possibility of transfers and exchanges of population and land between the proposed Arab and Jewish States are pessimistic. Well-pondered experiments in the Beersheba region have been disappointing; the irrigation of the Jordan valley presents serious and complex technical problems; Transjordan and the hill country of Palestine provide little or no scope for closer settlement; there are possibilities (given enough good water) in the Gaza sub-district and 4,000 more persons might settle in part of the Beisan plain; but markets must be assured before schemes for bringing large new areas under cultivation can be described as practicable.

THE PEEL PLAN

Further, the Commission find that Galilee should not anyhow be included in the Jewish State, because—

- (a) The population is almost entirely Arab and the land almost entirely owned by Arabs; its inclusion would, therefore, be plainly inconsistent with the Commission's instructions.
- (b) The Arabs will resist inclusion in the Jewish State by force. The use of force to compel this homogeneous body of 90,000 Arabs to accept Jewish rule cannot be justified.
- (c) Even if their resistance were crushed, pacification would only be temporary and Galilee would remain a running sore in the bosom of the Jewish State. The Commission therefore reject plan A.

JEWISH TAXES AND ARAB BIRTH RATE

The Commission point out that the cessation of military conscription under British Mandatory Rule, anti-malarial control and other sanitary measures have brought about a combination among the Arabs of Palestine of a high birth rate and low death rate. "It is indeed an ironic commentary on the working of the Mandate... that this result, which... has almost certainly hindered close settlement by Jews on the land, could scarcely have been brought about except through the appropriation of tax-revenue contributed by the Jews." The Report adds that the Arab peasant will be no better off unless they learn to cultivate more intensively and also find supplementary employment in the towns, neither of which can be brought about without the assistance of Jewish taxable capacity and Jewish capital. As regards non-agricultural settlement the Arabs would be faced with the prospect of worse hardship were Jewish immigration closed down than if it were allowed to continue.

PLAN B

DILEMMAS OF MAJORITY AND MINORITY

Plan B is Plan A with the exclusion from the Jewish State of Galilee and the small and predominantly Arab area at the southern extremity of the Jewish State. The Commission recommend that the latter area should be included in the Arab State, but the majority of them reject the rest of Plan B, because—

- (a) Galilee cannot be placed under Arab control without endangering the security of the Jewish State.
- (b) Its retention under Mandatory control is open to strong objection because the Arabs

of Galilee would thereby have to be denied their independence in order to ensure the security of the Jewish State.

- (c) Haifa, the only deep-water harbour in Palestine, could not be included in the Jewish State without serious detriment to Arab interests. Similarly it could not be included in the Arab State without serious detriment to Jewish interests.
- (d) Even with the exclusion of Galilee and the area in the south from the Jewish State, the number of Arabs in that state would still be very large, 188,000 Arabs as compared with 300,000 Jews.
- (e) In the portion (excluding Haifa) of the Jewish State which runs from Haifa east to Beisan and then north to the Palestine frontier, the Arabs are in a majority, the Jews only forming 24 per cent. of the population. The Commission consider that a plan of partition which brings under the political domination of the Jews large numbers of Arabs in an area where the Jews are not already in a majority, will be opposed by the Arabs and will not lead to peace.

JEWISH PROPOSALS

The Commission reject certain Jewish proposals for the inclusion in the Jewish State of



Plan C.

part of Jerusalem, and of certain other areas outside the Jewish State as outlined by the Royal Commission.

PLAN C

ONLY THE CENTRE PARTITIONABLE

The majority of the Commission put forward Plan C as the best they have been able to devise. The map of this plan shows Palestine divided into three parts—

- (i) a northern part to be retained under mandate;
- (ii) a southern part (the Negev) to be retained under mandate;
- (iii) a central part to be divided into an Arab State, a Jewish State and the Jerusalem Enclave.

The argument for Plan C is summarized thus—

- (i) The Northern Territory cannot be partitioned without injustice to either Arabs or Jews, nor can it be handed over intact to either side.
- (ii) It is impossible to hand over the Negev to the Jews, and unfair to the Jews to hand it over to the Arabs while any reasonable prospect remains of Jewish settlement therein without prejudice to the rights of the existing inhabitants.
- (iii) Both these territories must, therefore, be retained under mandate.
- (iv) Only the central part, therefore, can be partitioned. Here the boundaries of the Arab and Jewish States and the Jerusalem Enclave will be identical with those in Plan B except for slight changes across the Carmel Ridge, and on the Negev boundary.

"TILL BOTH RACES AGREE"

The political future of both the Northern and Southern Territories, the Commission insist, must be clearly defined so that both races may know under what form of government the inhabitants will live henceforth. The Mandate for the Northern Territory should continue in being till both races in the territory agree to ask that it should be surrendered and the territory be given its independence either as part of an existing Jewish or Arab State or as a separate Palestinian State. By "agreement" it is meant that the majority of one race in the territory must agree with the majority of the other.

But Haifa and Acre can only be granted independence provided this can be done safely considering the special responsibilities of the Mandatory for the protection of the Holy Places and the new States against external aggression.

THE SOUTHERN BEDOUIN

In the Southern Mandated Territory, also, no independent State should be set up in opposition to the wishes of the minority, unless the minority is so small that its wishes ought not to be allowed to prevail, and the Mandate should continue for at least 10 years. The Occupied Area (explained below) will anyhow not be made an independent State if the majority of the Bedouin, assuming their numbers and territorial disposition are much as at present, object.

The Arab inhabitants of both the territories will, therefore, have a binding assurance that they cannot possibly be placed under the political domination of the Jews against their will.

The Jerusalem Enclave will, as proposed by the Royal Commission, be retained under a permanent mandate.

The figures for the land and population under plan C are—

	Arab State	Jews	Total
Population (dunams)	444,700	8,200	452,900
Land (sq. miles)	63,800	6,800	70,600

	Arab State	Jews	Total
Population (dunams)	54,400	226,000	280,400
Land (sq. miles)	2,100	115,100	117,200

	Mandated Territory	Jews	Total
Population (dunams)	502,800	157,200	660,200
Land (sq. miles)	6,156,200	811,200	6,967,400

JEWIS AND MANDATES

CONTROL OF SETTLEMENT

To control Jewish acquisition of and settlement on the land in the Mandated Territories the Commission recommend that—

A.—THE NORTHERN MANDATED TERRITORY

- (i) The Mandatory should be empowered to prohibit the transfer of land to any person in any part of the Mandated Territories, and in Galilee should immediately prohibit the transfer of land by a non-Jew to a Jew, but not Jewish residence.
- (ii) After ten years this prohibition should be reviewed but not withdrawn or relaxed unless Arab opinion favours such action.
- (iii) Haifa and Tibrias and any other urban area approved by Government should be declared "free areas" in which the transfer of land to Jews should not be prohibited.
- (iv) Elsewhere the transfer of land to Jews should be prohibited except—

- (a) Transfers with Government approval for the consolidation of existing Jewish holdings, &c.
- (b) Any other transfers respecting which Government are satisfied that—
 - (1) there are possibilities of closer settlement on the land;
 - (2) adequate provision has been made for the resettlement of the cultivators;
 - (3) save where Government are satisfied that conditions make it impracticable, any surplus land resulting from closer settlement will be shared equitably between Jews and Arabs.
- (c) Government should be prepared to spend additional sums on agricultural development and agricultural research, experiment, and

education. While this expenditure, funds for which it is proposed should be provided by His Majesty's Government, would benefit both Arabs and Jews, its primary object would be to facilitate Jewish settlement.

B.—THE JERUSALEM ENCLAVE

All these recommendations apply to the Jerusalem Enclave except that it will probably not be necessary to create a "prescribed" area such as Galilee. The urban area of Jerusalem should be declared a free area.

C.—THE SOUTHERN MANDATED TERRITORY

This area should be divided into an Unoccupied and an Occupied Area, the latter being the portion which the Bedouin tribes are accustomed to cultivate, and the former the rest.

- (i) UNOCCUPIED AREA:—This should where necessary be declared a public domain and leases of such parts as Government think fit granted to a Jewish company for development.
- (ii) OCCUPIED AREA:—This should for the present be declared a prescribed area in which Jews would be prohibited from acquiring land. The survey and settlement of this area should be undertaken as quickly as possible.

The goodwill of the Bedouin should be obtained before experiments are undertaken for the purpose of developing this area, and they should be shown that they themselves will be the first to benefit by development. When this has been done, the Jews should carry out the greater part of the experiments with Government approval.

GOVERNMENT DUTY

IF THE BEDOUIN OPPOSE

If closer settlement should prove possible, the Commission recommend that the quantity of surplus land should be estimated in consultation with the Bedouin and the Jews.

The Bedouin, considering their exceptional poverty, should have the first claim to benefit from the improvements in order to provide them with a reasonable standard of living.

As soon as Government are satisfied that the reasonable needs of the existing inhabitants will be met, the prohibition on the Jewish acquisition of land should be withdrawn.

If the Bedouin from the outset oppose development, the experiments should be carried out by Government themselves. When the results of the experiments are available, the matter should be re-examined and it is hoped that the Bedouin will change their attitude on realising that otherwise they cannot expect money to be spent on improving their position.

FUNDS FOR AGRICULTURE

The Commission recommend that, provided that the Arabs will cooperate, His Majesty's Government should provide funds for agricultural development within the following limits—

- (i) on non-recurrent expenditure such as grants for development in whatever form in the Mandated Territories, including the Huleh excision scheme, not exceeding £1,000,000;
- (ii) on recurrent expenditure on agricultural services, including land settlement operations in the Southern Mandated Territory, not exceeding £75,000 a year for 10 years.

IMMIGRATION

REGULATION IN MANDATED TERRITORIES

Immigration into the Mandated Territories should be regulated thus—

- (i) The rate of immigration should be decided upon political, social, and psychological, besides economic considerations.
- (ii) Among intending immigrants from outside Palestine and Trans-Jordan preference should be given to Jewish immigrants.

(iii) Persons of whatever race habitually residing in the rest of Palestine and Trans-Jordan should be free to enter the Mandated Territories for short or casual visits but not to reside habitually therein without Government permission. Permission to reside habitually should be granted to such persons within the limits of an "intra-Palestine" quota, with preference to Arabs wishing to leave the Jewish State.

(iv) Article 4 of the present Mandate should not be reproduced in the new Mandate, but before fixing the immigrant quota the Mandatory should consult with representatives of both Arabs and Jews and with experienced opinion independent of Government and both races.

FINANCE

A SUBVENTION REJECTED

On the subject of the subvention which the Royal Commission proposed should be paid by the Jewish to the Arab State the Partition Commission are concerned that neither Arabs nor Jews could fairly be expected to accept such an arrangement. The Arab Press rejects what they describe as a bribe to induce them to assent to partition while the Jews in giving evidence objected to paying what they described as an annual tribute simply as the price of partition. Such a payment would inspire feelings of resentment and humiliation on both sides. The Partition Commission doubt whether any such arrangement could prudently be made the foundation of a permanent settlement.

The forecasts of revenue and expenditure show that on the existing standards of administration and without making any provision for defence the budgetary prospects under Plan C will be—

- (i) For the Jewish State a surplus of about £P 600,000. This state alone of the new Administrations will be able to balance its budget, and that with the handsome surplus of nearly £P 600,000 per annum, equal to about 66 per cent. of its estimated expenditure on the present basis.
- (ii) The Mandated Territories will be faced with a deficit of about £2,450,000 per annum, of which £1,000,000 if Transjordan is included in the Arab State, which will have to be made good by the Mandatory itself out of United Kingdom funds.

(iii) The Arab State, far from being able to balance its budget, will have an annual deficit of about £P 550,000, or £P 610,000 if Transjordan is included, amounting to more than the whole of its estimated revenue, and 71 per cent. of Transjordan is included.

Under Plan C, therefore, and under any other conceivable plan of partition, the Arab state will be far from self-supporting in the strict sense, and the Government of the territories to be retained under Mandate will be unable to balance its budget without a very large amount of assistance from the Mandatory Power. If partition is carried out Parliament must be asked to provide the necessary financial assistance from United Kingdom funds.

(iv) The capital payment of £2,000,000 recommended by the Royal Commission is not recommended. If assistance takes the form of a direct subsidy, financial control will be necessary, and the Arab State could not then be called self-supporting. The United Kingdom must also provide the means of balancing the Mandated Territories' budget, including the proposed cost of development.

Another partition would cost the United Kingdom, say, £1,250,000 annually, whereas the Jewish State would have an annual surplus of, say, £600,000, excluding the cost of defence in either case. The result would be much the same under any conceivable plan of partition.

TRADE OUTLETS

OBSTACLES TO A CUSTOMS UNION

On the questions of customs and tariffs under Plan C, the Commission report—

The Arab State cannot survive economically without access to the markets of the Mandated Territories for the sale of its agricultural produce. Access to the Jewish State also, although not essential, would be advantageous.

If the Jewish State is to provide employment for additional immigrants in large numbers it must expand industrially and it cannot do so without an assured market larger than can be provided within its own territory. It must therefore have an outlet for its manufactures in the Mandated Territories. An outlet in the Arab State also, although not essential, would be advantageous.

The interests of both states demand that the three areas should constitute a single customs union, but this, though advantageous, is not essential to the Mandated Territories. A customs union would give the Jewish State an assured market in the whole of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, and it would be reasonable to require that state in return to enter into a financial arrangement which would improve the financial position of the Arab State. Any such arrangement would tend to reduce the pressure of the partition must impose on the British Exchequer.

But a customs union between a mandated territory and an independent state or states would create serious constitutional difficulties. His Majesty's Government could not be expected to approve a scheme which would deprive them of the right to insist on changes in the fiscal policy of any member-state which they may think necessary, on revenue grounds, as a condition of their continuing to vote assistance to enable that member to balance its Budget. A customs union between the Mandated Territories and the Arab and Jewish States would therefore be impossible except under conditions which would be inconsistent with the grant of fiscal independence to those states.

"THE ONLY REAL SECURITY"

PEACE AND PARTITION

The political aspects of partition are discussed in the final chapter of the Report. After pointing out that the recommendations of the Permanent Mandates Commission that a solution of the Palestinian problem should deprive the Arabs of as little as possible and allot the Jews areas capable of dense and rapid settlement and enjoying numerous economic advantages are entirely irrealisable, the Commission discuss the attitude of Arabs and Jews towards Plan C. The attitude of the Arabs they admit is a matter of conjecture. They did not take the Jewish Agency into their confidence and were unable to say what the Jewish reactions were likely to be. As regards the compulsory transfer of the Arab minority in the Jewish State, the Commission consider necessary by the Royal Commission, His Majesty's Government have not accepted the proposal, and a voluntary transfer of population would not solve the problem.

As to defence, "the Jewish State under Plan C, though small, is compact and defensible, but no boundary line in the Jordan affords a satisfactory strategic line." "The most that can be done under any partition scheme is to find a line which is tactically defensible against rifle and machine-gun fire... the only real security for any partitioned area in Palestine is to live at peace with its neighbours."

As to the growth of population the Commission believe—

- (a) That under partition the high rate of Arab increase is unlikely to diminish save through positive starvation.
- (b) On this account the economic situation of an Arab State left to its own resources would become increasingly serious.
- (c) This makes it more necessary to provide opportunities for supplementary employment for the surplus Arab population in the Mandated Territories.
- (d) Such employment can only be provided in sufficient quantity through the importation of Jewish capital brought by the Jewish immigrants into the Mandated Territories in North and South Palestine.

But apart from political considerations, the question whether partition is practicable or not concerns chiefly finance and economics, the Commission say in their conclusions. Taking into account the latter considerations, the Commission conclude that if they were to adhere strictly to their terms of reference they would have no alternative but to report that they were unable to recommend boundaries for the proposed areas which will give a reasonable prospect of the eventual establishment of self-supporting Arab and Jewish States.

They therefore put forward a suggestion for a modified form of partition, which they call economic federalism. Under this both states would be required, as a condition of the surrender of the Mandate, to enter a customs union with the Mandated Territories in which the fiscal policy would be determined by the Mandatory after consulting both states. The Customs revenue would be collected by the Mandatory, and the net surplus after meeting



The original partition proposals.

certain common charges would be distributed between the three areas according to an agreed formula, subject to periodic review.

The Commission suggest that initially each area's share should be one-third. To enable the Arab State to balance its Budget without subjecting the Commission to external financial control, it should receive a supplementary share out of the share of the Mandated Territories, under conditions which will entitle it to share in an expansion of customs revenue resulting from an increase of prosperity in the rest of Palestine. The arrangement could be extended, if desired, to cover internal communications—railways, posts and telegraphs—thus removing certain obvious administrative difficulties consequent upon partition.

While this arrangement withholds fiscal autonomy from the Arab and Jewish States, it seems to the Commission to offer to certain reservations to form a satisfactory basis for settlement, provided His Majesty's Government are prepared to accept the very considerable financial liability involved.

SOME RESERVATIONS

In a note of reservations Sir Alison Russell, while agreeing that plan A is unacceptable, considers that plan B is preferable to plan C. He holds that a Jewish State of the small size proposed in plan C is not in accord with the obligations to the Jews. He agrees that the financial position of the Arab State under plan B is much the same as under plan C, and that under plan B there is no reasonable prospect of the eventual establishment of a self-supporting Arab State.

In a note of reservations Mr. Reid, while agreeing with plan C, the best that can be devised under the terms of reference, considers that both plans B and C are impracticable. He classifies his reasons under the following heads:—(a) Absence of consent; (b) absence of equity; (c) absence of security; (d) dismemberment of Palestine; and (e) absence of solvency.

RECEPTION IN PALESTINE

CRITICISM OF NEW POLICY

MUCH OPPOSITION

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JERUSALEM, Nov. 9

The first impressions about the Government's statement of policy are unfavourable among Arabs and Jews alike. Both declare that the statement of policy is a misnomer as it contains no policy and means the continuance of the present struggle and unrest. The abandonment of partition is regarded by Arabs not as a virtue, but because it has proved to be impossible, and they consider that its rejection shows that the Arab revolt is justified. The very idea of a conference is rejected by Arabs because in their opinion it would mean recognition of the Balfour Declaration.

THE ARAB LEADERS

Apart from the question of principle the terms of the proposed conference are considered to be worse than similar proposals in the past because of the reservation of the Government's right to exclude Arab leaders regarded as responsible for the rebellion. The Mufti of Jerusalem, who is obviously the person referred to, is still considered to be the leader with overwhelmingly the strongest support in Palestine, and no Arab in such circumstances would dare to accept an invitation to attend a conference, not so much because of fear of terrorists but because the idea itself is held to be unsound. Any attempt to hold a conference without the Mufti would be useless unless the delegates from neighbouring States enjoyed stronger support in Palestine than he does. This they do not, and, consequently, it is held to be highly unlikely that delegates from neighbouring countries would accept an invitation to attend.

After the optimistic reports brought by Seyyid Tauliq-Sawaidi, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs, from London, to-day's announcement convinces the Arabs that the British Government have yielded to recent Jewish and American pressure.

REPORT "PREPOSTEROUS"

A prominent Jewish leader describes the Report of the Partition Commission as a travesty of justice, and considers that it is preposterous and cruel, and shows that the Commission had no real understanding of the Palestine problem and Jewish rights in this country. He finds that the British Government's statement of policy is merely pathetic after the visits of two Commissions and 2½ years of incalculable strain and economic deterioration.

He points out that the Jewish Agency a year ago proposed that there should be a round-table conference, and is always ready to meet the Arabs to discuss the future on the basis of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. If the British Government intended to consider the opinions of Arab States the Jews would insist that the opinions of the United States and of Poland should also be heard.

ECONOMIC FEDERALISM

JEWISH AGENCY'S CRITICISM

THE REPORT REJECTED

In a statement issued last night in London, which is described as not being a complete or detailed analysis of the new policy, the Jewish Agency declares that there can be no question of the Partition Commission's Report serving as a basis for any negotiations either between Jews and Arabs or between the Jewish Agency and the British Government. The Jewish Agency states that it can be a party to further discussions only on the basis of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.

The Jewish Agency observes that last year, after the publication of the Royal Commission's Report, the Agency asked the Government to convene a Jewish-Arab conference, but that this request was refused. The Agency's statement continues—

"But we cannot conceal our grave apprehensions as to the procedure proposed to be adopted of bringing in the neighbouring Arab States. Those States have no special status in regard to Palestine. In so far as they are members of the League of Nations their rights are no greater than those of other States Members of the League or of the United States of America. Discussions with these States alone are hardly to be reconciled with the welcome assurance that H.M. Government will keep constantly in mind the international character of the Mandate with which they are entrusted and their obligations in this respect."

"The Agency remarks that the Partition Commission's rejection of the Royal Commission's scheme is the result, not of new facts discovered by them, but of their interpretation of the terms of reference given to them by the British Government as being a priori at variance with the Royal Commission's recommendations. The following additional observations on the Partition Commission's Report are offered for the present:—

- (1) The Commission... propose to dismember the existing Jewish settlement by excluding from "the Jewish State" the greater part of Jewish land-holdings and the most important areas of Jewish colonizations. This "State" comprises an area of less than one-twentieth of the whole of Western Palestine, 300,000 acres in all, and is less than one-hundredth of the area indicated by the Royal Commission as having been intended, in 1917, for the National Home. This is a travesty of the obligations undertaken on behalf of the League by the Mandatory Power.

- (2) Having broken up the existing National Home the Partition Commission proceeds to abolish, so far as nineteenth-twentieths of Western Palestine is concerned, the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish National Home provisions of the Mandate.

BRITISH CASUALTIES IN PALESTINE

JERUSALEM, Nov. 9.—Lance-Corporal Redpath, of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots, was killed, and Corporal Roger and Private Hallyburton of the same battalion were seriously wounded to-day in an engagement near Tulkarm, in which Ibrahim Amuri, a rebel leader, and 18 other Arabs were killed. Earlier in the day Private Matthew Winter was killed near Qalqilyeh.—Reuter.