

CHAPTER VIII

JEWS, ARABS AND GOVERNMENT**"The State within the State"**

1. The Jews have developed, under the aegis of the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi, a strong and tightly-woven community. There thus exists a virtual Jewish non-territorial State with its own executive and legislative organs, parallel in many respects to the Mandatory Administration, and serving as the concrete symbol of the Jewish National Home. This Jewish shadow government has ceased to co-operate with the Administration in the maintenance of law and order, and in the suppression of terrorism.

2. Quite apart from the increasing strength of the terrorist gangs, which enjoy widespread popular support, there are many signs that fanaticism and nationalist propaganda are beginning to affect detrimentally the Jewish educational system. It appears to us wholly harmful that the obligatory period of one year's "national service," instituted by the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi, is now partly used for military training. The "closing of the ranks," moreover, which we noted above, has increased the totalitarian tendencies to which a nationalist society is always liable. To speak of a Jewish terror would be a gross exaggeration. But there are disquieting indications that illegal organisations and the atmosphere of conspiracy, which inevitably accompanies it, are having their corroding effects on that free democracy which has always been the pride of the Palestinian Jews. Every thoughtful Jew with whom we talked was profoundly disturbed by these symptoms. But none was bold enough to prophesy that they would disappear so long as the Palestine Administration carried out a policy which seems to every Jew to be in direct contravention of his natural rights.

Jewish Relations with Arabs

3. Not only is the Jewish community largely independent of and at odds with the Palestine Government, but it is also quite distinct from and in conflict with the Arab community with which, in many areas, it is territorially intertwined. In part this is a natural result of Zionist concentration upon the development of the Jewish community. If the Arabs have benefited, they have done so only in comparison with the non-Palestinian Arabs; whereas they have remained far beneath the Palestinian Jews in terms of national income, social services, education and general standard of living. This has made it easier for the Arab political leaders to keep alive anti-Jewish feeling in the minds of the Arab masses. The economic gulf separating Jew and Arab in Palestine has been widened, in part at least, by Jewish policies concerning the non-employment of Arab labour on land purchased by the Jewish National Fund and the refusal to devote Jewish funds and energies *directly* to the improvement of Arab standards of living. Efforts by the Jews in this direction might be quite as important for the growth and security of the National Home as the draining of swamp lands or the creation of Jewish industry.

4. But unfortunately there are signs of a hardening of the Jewish attitude towards the Arabs. Too often the Jew is content to refer to the indirect benefits accruing to the Arabs from his coming, and to leave the matter there. Passionately loving every foot of Eretz Israel, he finds it almost impossible to look at the issue from the Arab point of view, and to realise the depth of feeling aroused

by his "invasion" of Palestine. He compares his own achievements with the slow improvements made by the Arab village, always to the disadvantage of the latter; and forgets the enormous financial, educational and technical advantages bestowed upon him by world Zionism. When challenged on his relations with the Arabs, he is too often content to point out the superficial friendliness of everyday life in town and village—a friendliness which indubitably exists. In so doing, he sometimes ignores the deep political antagonism which inspires the whole Arab community; or thinks that he has explained it away by stating that it is the "result of self-seeking propaganda by the rich effendi class."

5. It is not unfair to say that the Jewish community in Palestine has never, as a community, faced the problem of co-operation with the Arabs. It is, for instance, significant that, in the Jewish Agency's proposal for a Jewish State, the problem of handling a million and a quarter Arabs is dealt with in the vaguest of generalities.

6. We noted, however, a few hopeful signs. Reference was made above to the proposals for co-operation with the Arabs made by Hashomer Hatzair and by the Ihud group. The Committee observed with pleasure the Arab-Jewish co-operation achieved on the Municipal Commission which governs Haifa, and in the Citrus Control and Marketing Boards, as well as the joint trade union activity between Jew and Arab in the Palestine Potash Company and on the railways. But such examples of co-operation are rare in Palestine; and they are far outweighed in Arab eyes by the exclusiveness of the General Federation of Jewish Labour in its trade union policy and of the Jewish Agency in its labour policy on land purchased for Jewish settlement.

The Jews and the Administration

7. We were profoundly impressed by the very varied experiments in land settlement which we inspected, ranging from individualist co-operatives to pure collectivist communities. Here, indeed, is a miracle both of physical achievement and of spiritual endeavour, which justifies the dreams of those Jews and Gentiles who first conceived the idea of the National Home. Of Jewish industry in Palestine it is too early yet to speak with confidence. There is boundless optimism and energy, great administrative capacity, but a shortage of skilled labour and, as a result, more quantity than quality of output.

8. As pioneers in Palestine the Jews have a record of which they can be proud. In Palestine there has been no expulsion of the indigenous population, and exploitation of cheap Arab labour has been vigorously opposed as inconsistent with Zionism. The failing of Palestinian Jewry is a different one. The Jews have always been in the biblical phrase a "peculiar people" which turned in on itself and suffered the consequences of its peculiarity. In Palestine, under the special conditions of the Mandate, they have regained their national self-confidence, but they have not been able to throw off their exclusiveness and tendency to self-isolation.

9. We believe that this failure is, in part at least, attributable to the relations between the Palestine Administration and the Jewish community since 1939, which have undoubtedly exaggerated the natural Jewish tendency to exclusiveness. Moreover, the Jews feel that they have enough to do defending their own position, without taking on the Arab problem as well.

10. A second factor of great importance is the failure to develop self-governing institutions. The Jews, like the Arabs, are completely deprived of all responsible participation in central government. Their democracy can only

work within the Jewish community, and to a limited degree in local affairs. Thus, they have not had the opportunity which self-government brings, to learn the lesson of responsibility for the good of the whole State. They have been driven back on themselves. This may in part explain the fact that at least one-third of the Jews who have settled in Palestine during the last 10 years have failed to apply for Palestinian citizenship. But nothing which we saw in Palestine gave us any reason to believe that, charged with the democratic responsibilities for which they are undoubtedly fit, the Jews of Palestine would not master the lessons of self-government.

Arab Leadership

11. The Arabs are divided politically by the personal bickerings of the leaders, which still centre round the differences of the Husseinis and their rivals; and socially by the gap which separates the small upper class from the mass of the peasants—a gap which the new intelligentsia is not yet strong enough to bridge. Consequently they have developed no such internal democracy as have the Jews. That their divisions have not been overcome and a formally organised community developed is in part the result of a less acutely self-conscious nationalism than is found today among the Jews. It is, however, also the outcome of a failure of political responsibility. The Arab leaders, rejecting what they regard as a subordinate status in the Palestinian State, and viewing themselves as the proper heirs of the Mandatory Administration, have refused to develop a self-governing Arab community parallel to that of the Jews. Nor, so far, have they been prepared to see their position called in question by such democratic forms as elections for the Arab Higher Committee, or the formation of popularly based political parties. This failure is recognised by the new intelligentsia which, however, is unlikely to exercise much power until it has the backing of a larger middle class.

Need for Arab Education

12. Many Arabs are graduates of the American University at Beirut; a few have studied in universities in Cairo, England, Europe and the United States; others have received higher education at the Arab College for men and the Women's Training College in Jerusalem, both of which are efficient but inadequately financed Government institutions. The Arabs are aware of Western civilisation and increasingly eager to share its benefits. But the numbers receiving such education are still miserably small, since the only university in Palestine, the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, teaches only in Hebrew. So too with secondary education. There are only some fifteen Arab secondary schools in the whole of Palestine, and one fully developed agricultural school—the Kadoorie School at Tulkarm which specialises in the training of teachers of agriculture for Arab schools. With only 65 places, however, it too is totally inadequate. The problem of teaching modern methods of agriculture to a population 80 per cent. of which gains its living by farming has not yet been solved by the Government or faced by the Arab politicians. Facilities for technical education are no better—a single school with some 60 places.

13. On the primary level the position is slightly better. The schools are under the control of the Administration and financed by public funds. As far as it goes, the primary education is well planned and administered. It is not merely a bookish education, but includes also manual training and instruction in agriculture, where the equipment is available. Some of the school gardens which surround the schools in the Arab villages are models of neatness and skill. But the fact remains that something less than half the Arab children who would

like to attend school can do so today. Even in a wealthy town like Haifa, we were told by the Municipal Commission that half the Arab boys and the majority of the Arab girls receive no education at all. In most of the country districts the situation is still worse, particularly with regard to the girls. Only one Arab girl in eight receives any education.

14. This is all the more tragic since the desire for education is now strong throughout the poorer classes, not merely in the cities, but in almost every Arab village. Indeed, some villages visited by the Committee had either built their own schools completely from voluntary subscriptions by the villagers or had contributed largely to their cost on their own initiative.

15. The lamentable condition of Arab education is a real cause for discontent. This discontent is increased by the contrast with the opportunities offered to the Jewish child. Jewish education in Palestine is financed by the Jewish community and by the fees which Jewish parents can afford to pay. Practically every Jewish child has the opportunity for primary education, and those who can afford the fees have ample opportunity for technical, secondary and university education in Palestine. The Government contributes only a small per capita grant in aid and exercises little control of the curriculum.

16. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the time has come for the Arab community to assume the same responsibility with regard to education as the Jewish. With advice and financial aid from the Government, and with a new sense of responsibility on the part of the Arab leadership, compulsory education could, we were informed, be introduced within the next ten years. This is not only essential from an educational point of view; there can be no real unity between a literate and an illiterate population.

The Administration

17. Palestine is administered by officials of the British Colonial Service. Subject to the provisions of the Mandate, all major decisions of policy are taken in London as they would be for a Colonial territory. As Mr. Churchill has said: "the suggestion that the High Commissioner either has a policy of his own in contra-distinction to that of His Majesty's Government, or that, if this were so, His Majesty's Government would permit him to carry it out, would be foreign to all the traditions of British Administration". Indeed, the administration of Palestine has probably less freedom of action than the administrations of some less developed territories, simply because the affairs of Palestine arouse more public interest, are the subject of more questions in the House of Commons, and must therefore be supervised more closely by the responsible Minister.

18. While admitting this difficulty, we must express the view that this system militates most gravely against the chances of reconciliation between Jew and Arab. A delicate situation—and the situation in Palestine is always delicate—cannot be met successfully by remote control. Within a general directive, the man on the spot, like the general conducting the battle, must be given the responsibility. If this is not done, the chance of reconciling the interests of the National Home with those of the Arabs of Palestine is small indeed.

19. In Palestine itself, we also found a tendency to centralisation which was criticised by the Peel Commission but which is in part at least another inevitable consequence of the dominant rôle of politics in the life of the country. Since every administrative question, however insignificant in itself, is liable to be transformed into a political issue by one community or the other, there is a

natural tendency for every action to be carefully scrutinised at the centre. The slowness of the Administration in dealing with matters not at first sight political, against which complaint is often made, is partly a result of this and partly of the fact that the Chief Secretary, through whose hands all important business must pass, is himself obliged to give much of his time to conducting relations of a quasi-diplomatic character with the leaders of the Arab and Jewish communities.

20. Palestine is a unique country, bearing no resemblance to most of the countries administered by the British Colonial Service. It may be questioned therefore whether an Administration of the Colonial type is the ideal instrument for governing two peoples each of which, in the absence of the other, would probably by now be enjoying complete independence. On the other hand, it seems difficult to foresee radical changes in the system so long as the division between Arabs and Jews compels British officials to assume so extensive a responsibility, and in view of the fact that their actions must be accounted for both to Parliament and to an international organisation, each responsive to a keenly interested public opinion.

21. What is not open to question is the patience and loyalty to their task of the officials on whose shoulders rests the main burden of this heavy responsibility. We were impressed also by the generally high standard of the district administration. It is difficult for those who have not visited Palestine to imagine the tension under which these officials—Arab and Jewish, as well as British—are compelled to live and work. We were especially impressed by the anxiety, loneliness and nervous strain to which many police officials are unavoidably exposed. It also seemed to us that the Civil Servants in Palestine were subjected to an additional anxiety which we could not regard as unavoidable or in the best interests of the country, as a result of the generally and sometimes pitifully inadequate salaries which they at present receive.