

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Following the receipt of information from various sources regarding the distressing situation of the Jewish victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution in Europe, I wrote to Mr. Attlee on August 31 bringing to his attention the suggestion in a report of Mr. Earl G. Harrison that the granting of an additional 100,000 certificates for the immigration of Jews into Palestine would alleviate the situation. A copy of my letter to Mr. Attlee is being made available to the press. I continue to adhere to the views expressed in that letter.

I was advised by the British Government that because of conditions in Palestine it was not in a position to adopt the policy recommended, but that it was deeply concerned with the situation of the Jews in Europe. During the course of subsequent discussions between the two Governments, it suggested the establishment of a joint Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, under a rotating chairmanship, to examine the whole question and to make a further review of the Palestine problem in the light of that examination and other relevant considerations.

In view of our intense interest in this matter and of our belief that such a committee will be of aid in finding a solution which will be both humane and just, we have acceded to the British suggestion.

The terms of reference of this committee as agreed upon between the two Governments are as follows:

1. To examine political, economic and social conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein and the well-being of the peoples now living therein.
2. To examine the position of the Jews in those countries in Europe where they have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution, and the practical measures taken or contemplated to be taken in those countries to enable them to live free from discrimination and oppression and to make estimates of those who wish or will be impelled by their conditions to migrate to Palestine or other countries outside Europe.
3. To hear the views of competent witnesses and to consult representative Arabs and Jews on the problems of Palestine as such problems are affected by conditions subject to examination under paragraphs 1 and 2 above and by other relevant facts and circumstances, and to make recommendations to His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States for an interim handling of these problems as well as for their permanent solution.
4. To make such other recommendations to His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States as may be necessary to meet the immediate needs arising from conditions subject to examination under paragraph 2 above, by remedial action in the European countries in question or by the provision of facilities for emigration to and settlement in countries outside Europe.

It will be observed that among the important duties of this committee will be the task of examining conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration. The establishment of this committee will make possible a prompt review of the unfortunate plight of the Jews in those countries in Europe where they have been subjected to persecution, and a prompt examination of questions related to the rate of current immigration into Palestine and the absorptive capacity of the country.

The situation faced by displaced Jews in Europe during the coming winter allows no delay in this matter. I hope the Committee will be able to accomplish its important task with the greatest speed.

(OVER)

The text of the letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Great Britain by the President, under date of August 31, 1945, follows:

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Because of the natural interest of this Government in the present condition and future fate of those displaced persons in Germany who may prove to be stateless or non-repatriable, we recently sent Mr. Earl G. Harrison to inquire into the situation.

Mr. Harrison was formerly the United States Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, and is now the Representative of this Government on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. The United Kingdom and the United States, as you know, have taken an active interest in the work of this Committee.

Instructions were given to Mr. Harrison to inquire particularly into the problems and needs of the Jewish refugees among the displaced persons.

Mr. Harrison visited not only the American zone in Germany, but spent some time also in the British zone where he was extended every courtesy by the 21st Army Headquarters.

I have now received his report. In view of our conversations at Potsdam I am sure that you will find certain portions of the report interesting. I am, therefore, sending you a copy.

I should like to call your attention to the conclusions and recommendations appearing on page 8 and the following pages - especially the references to Palestine. It appears that the available certificates for immigration to Palestine will be exhausted in the near future. It is suggested that the granting of an additional one hundred thousand of such certificates would contribute greatly to a sound solution for the future of Jews still in Germany and Austria, and for other Jewish refugees who do not wish to remain where they are or who for understandable reasons do not desire to return to their countries of origin.

On the basis of this and other information which has come to me I concur in the belief that no other single matter is so important for those who have known the horrors of concentration camps for over a decade as is the future of immigration possibilities into Palestine. The number of such persons who wish immigration to Palestine or who would qualify for admission there is, unfortunately, no longer as large as it was before the Nazis began their extermination program. As I said to you in Potsdam, the American people, as a whole, firmly believe that immigration into Palestine should not be closed and that a reasonable number of Europe's persecuted Jews should, in accordance with their wishes, be permitted to resettle there.

I know you are in agreement on the proposition that future peace in Europe depends in large measure upon our finding sound solutions of problems confronting the displaced and formerly persecuted groups of people. No claim is more meritorious than that of the groups who for so many years have known persecution and enslavement.

The main solution appears to lie in the quick evacuation of as many as possible of the non-repatriable Jews, who wish it, to Palestine. If it is to be effective, such action should not be long delayed.

Very sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN