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SANITATION IN PALESTINE¹

THE Committee appointed by the Zionist Organization to study the subject has submitted a series of comprehensive and detailed reports upon the present and future needs of the Public Health Service of Palestine, with special reference to the conditions to be anticipated in view of the prospective influx of immigrants of various social conditions and from various lands.

The preface states that "the recommendations submitted lie in the line betwixt 'needful' and 'possible'. The authors know the Orient. They have gained their experience thereof in practical work." Upon this experience, fused with knowledge of scientific principles and methods, and with special consideration of the new problems raised by the results of the war, such as the Jewish migrations and the actual conditions in Palestine, their reports are based.

This is not the place for technical comment. It is quite possible that some of the suggestions made are open to modification from a theoretical viewpoint, and it is almost certain—more's the pity—that practical obstacles will prevent many of them from being carried out. It may be said, however, that every one of the reports exhibits first hand acquaintance with the situation; wide knowledge of the fundamentals of modern sanitary practice; full sympathy with the peculiar needs of all strata of the population, present and anticipated; recognition of the magnitude and complexity of the problems involved; insistence upon certain stern necessities that, for the sake of the general welfare, may require the suppression of pity for individual unfortunates—yet even in this, a humane appreciation of the human elements involved, that is too often absent from the administration of immigration laws. With proper regard for authority and discipline there is conjoined a wholesome impatience with bureaucratic complexities and futilities.

¹ *Aufgaben und Organisation des Sanitätsdienstes in Palaestina*. Gutachten dem Zionistischen Aktionskomitee erstattet von THEODOR ZLOCISTI, RICHARD MICHEL, W. BRUNN, A. SANDLER, E. AUERBACH, Regierungsbaumeister ALEX. BAERWALD. Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1920. pp. 268.

We can most heartily commend the study as a whole, and in its particulars, to the very serious consideration of the Palestinian government, and of all persons and associations concerned for the upbuilding of the Holy Land. It not only presents a clear view of present failings and future dangers—both those peculiar to the land and its peoples, and those common to human settlements everywhere—but its plans for the correction of existing evils, for the organization of a ministry of public health, and for the establishment and development of hospitals and allied institutions, are well thought out. It notes also the economic, agricultural, industrial, and educational factors of the health-problem.

Dr. Zlocisti's report deals with Immigration-hygiene, and has an appendix, with plans for quarantine stations, by Sanitary Engineer Michel. Dr. Brunn considers measures for the control of infectious diseases, and the best form of organization for the Palestinian Public Health Service. Dr. Standler treats of Sanatoria and Health-resorts. Dr. Auerbach's study of general hospitals has an illustrated appendix by State Architect Baerwald upon the architectural problems of hospitals and health stations in the coast and interior cities, and in the villages and colonies of Palestine.

Arabian investigators and scholars kept alight the torch of medical science amid "the darkness of the Gothic mediaeval night": and from them Jews, as well as Christians, learned much. But the Arabs have not held their place as world-teachers. Through their centuries of neglect, Palestine has become a horror of insanitation. Modern medicine, however, is deeply in debt to Jewish research-workers and authors. Hygiene is peculiarly a field in which, since the day of Moses, if not earlier, "the children of Israel" have excelled. Great Britain, for example, owes much of its sanitary progress to two moderns of Jewish blood—Benjamin Disraeli, whose constant iteration and reiteration of "*sanitas, sanitas, omnia sanitas,*" was neither a mere witticism nor empty lip service, but found concrete expression in laws and institutions; and Benjamin Ward Richardson, a genius in public health propaganda and organization. It would be worse than a tragedy, it would be an inefaceable shame, if Palestine under a British mandate and Jewish aid in its administration, should not be restored to the domain of advanced sanitation through an adequate and progressive health service, clothed with ample authority and provided with abundant means.

All the reports before us lay stress upon the need for money—indeed they go into quite detailed calculations on the subject. The total sum required is, however, by no means unattainable, and if the Palestinian government cannot furnish it, the Jews of the world can and should. Moreover Jewry can and will, if given opportunity, provide men able to carry out the work, and zealous to accomplish it—witness this well-grounded, thorough, far-seeing and practical report of the Zionist Committee.

Philadelphia

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