

Letters to the Editor

October 24, 2002

A BITTER REMINDER

Sir, - The legal adviser to the Foreign Ministry, Alan Baker, has taken British Prime Minister Tony Blair to task (October 3) for not understanding the crucial difference between the United Nations resolution against Iraq, which is obligatory, and that relating to Israel, which carries a recommendation. There are a number of other relevant matters relating to Britain's behavior toward Israel in the past which a British prime minister might ponder before trying to dictate a policy for Israel.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has reminded Blair of the 1939 White Paper, whose implementation virtually shut the gates of the Jewish National Home to Jews fleeing the clutches of Hitler. The full facts are really far more chilling.

That White Paper was an illegal document. Britain did not own Palestine, and any changes in Mandate policy had to be approved by the League of Nations Mandates Commission. The British government duly submitted the White Paper for approval - and it was rejected by the commission as not conforming to the terms of the Mandate. This happened very shortly before World War II broke out.

The British government ignored that rejection and went on to implement the White Paper to the bitter end - with all its implications and horrendous consequences.

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