CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, 8th November, 1945, at 10.45 a.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. C. R. Attlee, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Sir Stafford Cripps, K.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade.
The Right Hon. Lord Jowitt, Lord Chancellor.
The Right Hon. Viscount Addison, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. G. H. Hall, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.
The Right Hon. Viscount Stansgate, Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. E. Shinwell, M.P., Minister of Fuel and Power.
The Right Hon. Aneurin Bevan, M.P., Minister of Health.
The Right Hon. John Wilmot, M.P., Minister of Supply and of Aircraft Production (Item 4).
Mr. G. Buchanan, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Items 5-9).

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. J. Chuter Ede, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department.
The Right Hon. Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.
The Right Hon. J. J. Lawson, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Minister of Education.
The Right Hon. T. Williams, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.
The Right Hon. P. J. Noel-Baker, M.P., Minister of State (Items 1-3).
The Right Hon. W. Whiteley, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (Items 1 and 2).
General Sir Ronald Adam, Bt., Adjutant-General to the Forces (Item 5).

Secretariat.
Sir Edward Bridges.
Mr. Norman Brook.
Mr. W. S. Murrie.
## CABINET 51 (45).

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1. The Lord Privy Seal reported the results of a meeting which he and the Minister of National Insurance had held the previous afternoon with the group of Government supporters interested in the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Bill. This meeting had discussed the situation created by the action taken by those Members earlier in the day in carrying an amendment against the Government in Standing Committee on that Bill. After a prolonged discussion the meeting had passed a resolution in favour of the Bill’s being passed into law, and had agreed that they would not press to a Division the remaining amendments of which they had given notice. They had further agreed that, if the Opposition declined to agree that any of these amendments should, after discussion, be withdrawn, they would vote with the Government in a Division.

The Lord President informed the Cabinet of the business which it was proposed to take in the House of Commons during the following week.

The Cabinet were also informed that a further Debate on foreign affairs was planned for the 21st and 22nd November. It was pointed out that, if the Prime Minister had not by then returned to this country, it might be more convenient that this Debate should be postponed, as there would otherwise be a demand for yet another Debate on foreign affairs after his return. The Lord President undertook to keep this point in mind in arranging Parliamentary business for the week beginning the 19th November.

2. The Prime Minister said that Mr. Churchill was asking a question that afternoon, by private notice, about the premature disclosure in the Press of information of the Government’s intentions in respect of a national hospital service. There had been other recent occasions on which the Press appeared to have obtained confidential information on matters under discussion by the Cabinet or its Committees; and he was seriously concerned about these apparent leakages of information.

After a short discussion the Prime Minister undertook to circulate a note stressing the need for discretion in relation to matters under discussion by the Cabinet or its Committees.

3. At their meeting on the 4th October the Cabinet had agreed to discuss further the choice of site for the headquarters of the United Nations Organisation. The Cabinet now had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (C.P. (45) 259) recommending that in the Preparatory Commission His Majesty’s Government should continue to support the view that the headquarters of the United Nations Organisation should be in Europe.

The Foreign Secretary said that, although the United States Government could not openly oppose the decision reached by the Executive Committee of the Preparatory Commission in favour of a site in the United States, they were not likely to be displeased if this decision was reversed in the Preparatory Commission. There could be no criticism of our conduct if we pressed strongly the desirability of a European site and, indeed, if we failed to do this we should weaken our position in the eyes of European countries who looked to us for leadership. Support for a site in Europe would not compel us to advocate Geneva.
In discussion the following points were made:

(a) The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he still thought there would be advantages in the choice of a site in the United States from the point of view of enlisting the support and interest of the United States in the United Nations Organisation. In any event, he would be strongly opposed to the selection of Geneva, which was associated with the failure of the League of Nations and was not likely to be acceptable to the Soviet Government.

(b) The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that of the Dominion Governments only Australia pressed strongly for a site in the United States. The Canadian Government, on balance, favoured Europe, though they would oppose the selection of Geneva. South Africa was strongly in favour of a site in Europe, while New Zealand had not expressed any definite view.

(c) The Minister of Education said that the location of the headquarters of the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation was being discussed at the Conference now being held in London and it would be necessary for His Majesty's Government to indicate their views on this matter. There was considerable support for a French proposal that the headquarters of this Organisation should be in Paris. The Minister asked for authority to support this suggestion, even though it was likely that the headquarters of the United Nations Organisation would be established elsewhere in Europe: there was much to be said for not concentrating in one city the headquarters of all the various international organisations which were being set up.

(d) The Minister of State said that, while there might be something to be said for a separate location for the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation, it should be the general aim to bring together in one place the headquarters of the various international bodies connected with the United Nations Organisation. This would reduce the risk that different parts of the Organisation would pursue inconsistent policies: it would make it easier to provide common services more economically and efficiently: and it would make for better reporting of the proceedings through the Press and radio. The fact that the headquarters were located together need not preclude the holding of conferences in different countries from time to time.

(e) Attention was drawn to the danger that the success of the United Nations Organisation might be prejudiced through the establishment of an excessive number of international bodies, and it was suggested that a comprehensive report should be submitted to the Cabinet on the number and functions of the various bodies which had been or were to be established.

The Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that the representatives of His Majesty's Government on the Preparatory Commission should press the arguments in favour of locating in Europe the headquarters of the United Nations Organisation, but should not press the claims of Geneva.

(2) Agreed that, if it became necessary to state on behalf of His Majesty's Government a view regarding the location of the headquarters of the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation, no objection need be raised to a proposal that the headquarters of this Organisation should be established in Paris for the time being.

(3) Invited the Minister of State to submit a report giving details of the various international bodies which were already in existence or were to be established in connection with the United Nations Organisation, together with information as to the steps which were being taken to prevent duplication among them. (See C.M. (45) 49th Conclusions, Minute 6.)
4. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Prime Minister (C.P. (45) 272) indicating the line which he proposed to take in his forthcoming discussions with President Truman and Mr. Mackenzie King about the international control of atomic energy.

A record of the discussion and of the conclusions reached is contained in the Secretary’s Standard File of Cabinet Conclusions.

5. The Cabinet had before them a report by the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General (C.P. (45) 207) on the release of doctors from the Armed Forces.

The Prime Minister recalled that he had asked the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General to examine the possibility of increasing the number of doctors to be released from the Armed Forces in 1945 beyond the 4,500 releases which had been planned. He had been greatly concerned at the disparity between the ratio of doctors to the civil population and the ratio of doctors to personnel in the Armed Forces, and he was convinced that, now the war was over, there was no justification for the retention of such large numbers of doctors in the Forces.

The Home Secretary said that it was proposed in the report that the doctors in the Services should be reduced by the end of 1945 to a number giving a ratio of two doctors per thousand. This would involve a net release of 7,745 in the period from the 18th June to the 31st December, and would, in his view, leave the Services with enough doctors to provide an adequate medical service even after allowance was made for a higher ratio in the Far East. The release proposed fell short by 1,125 doctors of the minimum demand made by the Minister of Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland and, including all doctors serving the civil population, did no more than bring the ratio for the civil population up to one doctor per thousand. There was a tendency for doctors released from the Forces not to revert to general practice and it was doubtful whether the ratio of general practitioners to civil population would rise above 0.47 per thousand. In order to achieve the releases proposed it would be necessary to depart to some extent from the principles of demobilisation by age and length of service and, in order to ensure that the right kind of doctors were released and that they should practise in the places where the need was greatest, the number of releases in Class B should be increased.

Points in discussion were:

(a) The First Lord of the Admiralty said that in the years 1929–33, when rigid economy was being practised in the Armed Forces, the ratio of doctors to personnel had never fallen below four per thousand. He had not been able to work out the full implications of the proposals made by the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General, but he believed that if 1,265 doctors were released from the Royal Navy it would not be possible to maintain a reasonable minimum standard of medical attention.

(b) The Secretary of State for War said that he also had been unable to give full consideration to these proposals. He felt, however, that if the Army had to surrender 5,600 doctors there was a grave risk that occupational troops in Germany would suffer seriously from the epidemics which were likely to arise during the winter.

(c) The Secretary of State for Air said that he was prepared to accept the proposal for the release of 880 doctors from the Royal Air Force. The proportion of doctors to personnel was already lower in the Royal Air Force than in the other two Services, despite the fact that there was a high accident rate in the R.A.F.
(d) The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that he fully supported the proposals made in the report, in view of the dangerous situation which had arisen owing to the shortage of doctors for the civilian population. There was good reason to believe that the services of doctors were wastefully used in the Forces, and there was a strong case for an investigation designed to lead to a more scientific employment of the doctors available to the Forces.

(e) The Minister of Health stressed the importance of taking steps to ensure that the proposals made in C.P. (45) 287 were promptly implemented. Progress reports should be submitted at frequent intervals showing the numbers released.

The Cabinet—

(1) Approved the following net releases of doctors from the Armed Forces in the period from 18th June to 31st December:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
<td>1,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.A.F.</td>
<td>880</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,745</strong></td>
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(2) Agreed that figures showing the progress made with the release of doctors from the Armed Forces should be included in the fortnightly statistical reports on the progress of demobilisation which the Minister of Labour and National Service had undertaken to supply to the Prime Minister.

6. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Home Secretary (C.P. (45) 242).

The Cabinet were informed that it had been decided in 1942 that organisations materially influenced or controlled by a political party, or run to serve the interests of a political party, should not be given official support, and that Ministers should consult the Home Secretary when any occasion arose which seemed likely to come within this decision. The only organisations which had, in fact, come within the terms of the Cabinet decision had been those influenced or controlled by the Communist Party. The question for decision was whether the policy laid down by the War Cabinet in 1942 should be maintained.

The Lord President said that in his experience it had been convenient for Ministers or Departments to seek advice from the Home Secretary when they were asked to lend their support to organisations about which there was some doubt. It was, of course, always open to any Minister who disagreed with the advice given to submit the matter to the Prime Minister or to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet—

Agreed to maintain the existing practice by which Ministers and Departments sought the advice of the Home Secretary when asked to give support or assistance to organisations likely to be under the influence or control of the Communist Party.

Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,
8th November, 1945.