

WHAT NEXT ON PALESTINE?

By Moses Miller

HAVING established an eleven-nation Inquiry Commission and outlined its terms of reference, the General Assembly completed the first stages of its work on the Palestine question.

A number of points have clearly emerged which give us the basis for an evaluation of the General Assembly meeting. They indicate certain trends and pose certain tasks. It is now clear beyond doubt that when Great Britain turned the Palestine problem over to the UN it had no intention of giving up its hold on this strategic area. Certainly, Britain would not feverishly build fortifications, strengthen its naval bases and bring in more troops if it were preparing to leave Palestine. Its aim was to use the UN to gain a breathing spell. Nor does it take great political acumen to realize that Britain would not have brought the issue to the UN without the backing of the United States.

At the UN sessions the American delegation, and not the British, led the fight in behalf of British strategy. Senator Austin and Herschel Johnson, were in the lead of those who worked to limit the sessions to procedural questions, who prevented the acceptance of the Polish-Czechoslovak-Soviet proposal that the Jewish Agency be heard before the General Assembly and who led the opposition to the inclusion of the question of independence in the terms of reference.

There is no doubt that the Jewish people throughout the world and those who sympathize with the aspirations of the Jewish people were not much concerned with procedural questions, but were interested mainly in airing and reaching a solution of the burning issues which are plaguing the Jewish people. These millions of people could not easily understand why the United States delegation should oppose every proposal to enhance the status of the Jewish people and to reach a speedy solution.

There is no doubt that the United States and Great Britain won out on a number of major issues. But of equal and perhaps of greater import is the moral victory won by Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

Climax of the Session

The speech of Andrei Gromyko near the end of the General Assembly meeting and its overwhelmingly favorable reception throughout the world leave no doubt as to the sentiments and judgments of the people on the whole Palestine question. Thus, despite Britain's intentions and

America's maneuvers a number of results favorable to our interests have emerged from the presentation of the Palestine question to the UN. Although they do not guarantee an immediate solution, they do open up perspectives hitherto entirely absent. The presence of the problem within the framework of the United Nations provided and will continue to provide an opportunity to the democratic forces of the world to speak out on behalf of a just solution and to win over countless millions of people to such a solution.

The Gromyko speech, which all observers agreed was the dramatic highlight of the entire meeting, has profound significance and its effects are already being felt throughout the world. What did Gromyko really say? I shall summarize its salient points not only because of its general significance but also because partisan interpretations are confusing its real import.

The speech was anti-imperialist from beginning to end. The solutions offered were predicated upon an anti-imperialist approach. The abrogation of the mandate and the granting of full freedom and independence to the peoples of Palestine were basic to the utterance. From this orientation Gromyko pointed out that the aspirations of Jewish people for statehood were heightened because of the tragic inability of the Western powers to aid the Jewish people and were therefore just and should be fulfilled. In order, however, to achieve this statehood on a democratic basis, he said, Palestine must be recognized as a land of two peoples and the only real and lasting solution is a democratic Arab-Jewish state with both peoples achieving full national rights and statehood.

Gromyko further stated that, if it were definitely proved that conditions had deteriorated so far that it was impossible for Jews and Arabs to live together, then it would be necessary to consider the establishment of two separate, independent states. His contention was, however, that the only genuine solution is an Arab-Jewish state. And even the two separate states which Gromyko suggests as a possible expediency that may have to be considered under extreme circumstances, is a far cry from the partition proposals which Britain envisages and by means of which Britain would retain control of both the Arab and the Jewish sectors.

The universal acclaim accorded this speech flows from several fundamental considerations. First and foremost is the recognition that Gromyko, as the representative of one of the world's greatest powers, spoke out so thoroughly and unequivocally on the deep sufferings of the Jewish people and placed his government squarely behind the aspirations of the Jewish people. Thus the Soviet Union raised the Jewish question to a new level and placed it quite properly

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among the major international problems which the nations must solve.

In the second place, Gromyko brought to the fore the inestimable tragedy of the Jewish DP's and insisted that the problem raised by this tragedy be dealt with immediately by the United Nations in relation to the inquiry.

In the third place the Soviet delegate devastatingly shattered the arguments which had been going the rounds that the reason the United States and Great Britain hesitated to fulfill their promises to the Jews was because they feared that otherwise the Arabs might be catapulted into the Soviet camp. This argument, though based on a distortion of the facts, was quite prevalent and was used even in certain Zionist circles.

Effects of Gromyko Speech

There is no doubt that the Gromyko speech will also have a profound effect upon the Arab world. The leadership of the Arab world, as is well known, has been extremely hostile to the Jewish community in Palestine and to the problems of the Jews generally. The Arab delegates at the UN, most of whom are known to have had connections with the nazis, indulged in vicious attacks upon the Jewish people. These leaders are opposed not only to the aspirations of the Jewish people but of the Arab masses as well. They are a group of feudal and semi-feudal reactionaries who have consistently oppressed their own Arab masses and who have systematically combatted all democratic developments in their own countries. The Gromyko speech will no doubt accelerate the unification of the democratic and progressive elements in the Arab states and will help to clarify many issues upon which there has been much confusion.

Gromyko's position, as well as the UN session generally, poses a number of major problems for us in America. For our activities in the next few months can have a major effect upon the outcome of the Palestine deliberations.

What is American policy on Palestine? How is it shaped and what factors underlie such policies? What are the prospects for a democratic American policy? The Jewish community and Americans generally who are sympathetic to Jewish aspirations are deeply puzzled and disturbed by the present trend of government policy. They know that president after president and Congress and Congress have affirmed their full sympathy for the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. The people are aware that during election campaigns Republicans and Democrats vie with each other in delivering high-sounding pronouncements on the question.

Yet everyone knows that our government has contributed nothing concrete towards a solution. Our government has not made a single public protest against British terror in Palestine. Our delegate to the UN went out of his way to prevent the Jewish Agency from being heard. And most astounding of all, when General Marshall was asked to restate American policy on the Palestine issue, he declared that he was not prepared to say what the American position would be.

The Jewish press sought comfort in the fact that American delegate Senator Austin had successfully fought the Soviet proposal of inclusion of the question of Palestine independence in the terms of reference. They assumed that this indicated U.S. sympathy for the Yishuv. Yet, how much comfort may be derived from this is extremely questionable. And Jewish leadership is quite well aware of this. Opposition to independence might well work against Jewish as against Arab interests. For if America's interest in Palestine, as in the Middle East, derives from a policy of expansion and conquest, there is little hope that the aspirations of *any* people will loom large in its strategy.

Moshe Shertok, political director of the Jewish Agency, indicated his awareness of American imperialist interests in an article in the *Jewish Frontier* published prior to the special session. He wrote: "Moreover, America as a great power is becoming more and more interested in the Middle East, interested politically and interested economically, in a general sense and also in a more particular sense, through their interest in oil. This interest of America in Middle Eastern oil tells in certain directions, not quite favorable to us" (May 1947).

Despite this apprehension Shertok and other leaders of the Jewish Agency have since then and even since the conclusion of the UN sessions, clung firmly to their orientation of reliance upon the United States and Great Britain.

A much more intimate close-up of actual American policy is afforded by Bartley Crum in his book *Behind the Silken Curtain*. He tells two revealing incidents. The first is a conversation with Loy Henderson, chief of the Near East Division of the State Department. Henderson told Crum: "There is one fact facing both the United States and Great Britain, Mr. Crum. That is the Soviet Union. It would be wise to bear that in mind when you consider the Palestine problem." The second incident relates to a confidential file made available to the members of the Anglo-American Inquiry Committee by the State Department. "According to this file," says Crum, "since September 15, 1938, each time a promise was made to American Jewry regarding Palestine, the State Department promptly sent messages to the Arab rulers discounting it and reassuring them, in effect, that regardless of what was promised publicly to the Jews, nothing would be done to change the situation in Palestine."

American Policy Must Be Changed

Thus two features of American policy emerge which, if retained, will militate against fulfillment of solemn promises made to the Jewish people. The first is America's present adventure in "containment" of the Soviet Union and national liberation movements by bolstering fascist and reactionary regimes in areas adjacent to the Soviet Union with the Middle East as the major concentration point. The second is America's successful drive to gain major control of the world's oil reserves, with the Middle East, once again,

as the major objective since this region possesses the greatest oil potential.

In relation to Great Britain, the second feature makes for certain tensions and conflict. For while there is on the whole agreement between the two on the first, the second causes rivalry. Britain is not at all pleased with the prospect of being pushed out of the dominant position it has held all these years.

We need not, however, be defeatist. American policy is not firmly fixed and congealed. It can be transformed into a democratic approach on the Palestine question.

It is extremely significant that the United States government, despite its behind-the-scenes agreement with British policy in Palestine, has not dared to approve it publicly, let alone back it up with open military, political and economic aid.

The American government is treading warily in the face of the vast majority sentiment in favor of Jewish aspirations, a sentiment which the American government has helped to mold. The masses of American people traditionally oppose the sending of American troops abroad for conquest and would most certainly be hostile in the case of Palestine.

These sentiments, if quickly and properly channelized and translated into action, could be a powerful force in behalf of an immediate and democratic solution for the Palestine problem. There should be no illusions, however, as to the direction in which such organized pressure must be exerted. It must press for full participation by the United States in reaching a democratic solution in complete cooperation with Great Britain and the Soviet Union within the framework of the United Nations.

Any movement oriented on an American decision arrived at by itself alone or on the basis of a unilateral Anglo-American agreement will militate against Jewish interests and aspirations. Any decision which bypasses the Soviet Union and the UN will have no other aim but self-aggrandizement and domination.

A democratic approach must recognize that Palestine is a land of two peoples. Therefore the problem on which all else hinges is the effort to achieve Arab-Jewish unity. Without resolving this problem there can be no real hope for the fulfilment of Jewish aspirations. Anyone who attempts to build the future of the Yishuv on the premise that differences between Jews and Arabs are irreconcilable, dooms from the very start any hope for real security and freedom.

Similarly, it is important to recognize that any program, no matter who its proponent, which fails to recognize the two-people character of Palestine and insists on full power for one people as against the other, must inevitably aid in strengthening and continuing foreign rule.

Position of Jewish Life

From its very first issue JEWISH LIFE has consistently advocated and fought for a Jewish national home in Palestine but pointed out that this would be impossible

so long as imperialism remains master. That is why we have on all occasions advocated the abrogation of the mandate. We have similarly affirmed that there can be no just solution until both peoples are accorded their full full national rights. We have called for a democratic, independent Arab-Jewish state. We have also insisted that the establishment of such a state can not be left to the good graces of any imperialist powers, but that it must be the responsibility of the Security Council and particularly of the Big Three to assume collective responsibility to guarantee such a state and to insure that no one will violate the rights of either people.

Jews want a Jewish state not only in name, but with power, authority and sovereignty. We want no puppet state as in Transjordan, where Britain remains the real master. Nor do we want a state which will each day have to fight for its existence, politically, economically and militarily. We want a state in which Jews can prosper and develop in the fullest measure. Such a state is impossible under imperialist rule. Such a state is impossible unless there is Jewish unity with the Arabs of Palestine and of the entire Middle East.

It is evident that, if we are to influence our government before the next meeting of the General Assembly on September 15th, we must act with dispatch. Such action must take the form of resolutions, petitions, and mass gatherings which call upon our government to join hands with Great Britain and the Soviet Union for a just and democratic solution as outlined in Gromyko's speech.

Decisive action at this time for the establishment of a democratic Arab-Jewish state, will help realize the aspirations so deeply desired by Jews throughout the world.

A NAZI VICTIM



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