

REPORT ON PALESTINE: UNSCOP PARTITION PLAN IS OPPOSED,
BI-NATIONALISM URGED¹

Only yesterday I saw the full text of the report of the United Nations Palestine Committee, as printed in the *New York Times* of September 9.

I hope that what I am now writing may not be too late. According to statements in the Palestine press, practically all American newspapers, including the *New York Times*, are for the Majority report, which proposes the partition of Palestine. Mr. Marshall is also reported as having indicated the favorable attitude of the United States towards the Majority report for partition.

Nevertheless I feel it to be my duty to warn against adopting any such "solution." Partition will not stop the terrorist activities of Jewish groups. To the tension and warfare which now exist, partition will add the Arab front, which hitherto has been quiescent. Partition will arouse the resentment of large numbers of Jews, of almost all the Arabs of Palestine, and of the Arab world. The Majority report itself says that force "on an extensive scale may be necessary for some time . . . Imposing a solution on both Jews and Arabs would be a basic condition of any recommended proposal."

There is no other way of peace here and in the Middle East except through a clear-cut policy which fosters Jewish-Arab cooperation. This is easier to "impose." Here we are together, Jews and Arabs, and the attempt to hold us apart through artificial boundaries will indeed require extensive force.

There is much more good will and readiness to cooperate between Jews and Arabs than the Majority report seems to be aware of. Even the intransigent Jewish and Arab political leaderships have not been able to destroy this. The effort to arrive at cooperation and understanding in a unitary Palestine requires less force and is much more practicable and workable and less mechanical than drawing these elaborate borders and thus precipitating the irrepressible conflict, which today does not yet exist.

The UNSCOP majority admit that partitioning the country is not entirely to their taste. They seek to mitigate the evil by the formula: political partition—economic union. They call this "partial partition." Eco-

conomic union is indispensable. But so is political union. The one without the other is almost meaningless. The board which is to run the economic union is, for example, charged with establishing the tariff policy of the two hostile states. Who knows better than the citizens of the United States what basic political conflicts are at the bottom of every tariff policy? The Arab state will be primarily agricultural, the Jewish state primarily industrial – in that fact alone there are the germs of political conflict.

The UNSCOP majority admit that the Arab state is bankrupt from the very start. The Arab state begins, in accordance with the majority's figures, with a deficit of over £9,000,000 in a total expenditure of over £18,000,000. The Jewish state, therefore, will have to help cover this Arab deficit.

The UNSCOP majority threaten that if one state – presumably the Arabs – refuses to sign the treaty of Economic Union, the General Assembly of UN will take appropriate action. What action?

Yet, the majority are right when they declare that these common economic interests cannot be partitioned since they "are in fact inextricably bound together." Why then partition the country territorially, and thus lead to a loosening of these common economic interests? Indeed, the majority declare that the economic union, although it may have its political implications, "is dictated by the necessities of the overriding interest of unity."

But this overriding interest of unity applies not only to the economic life and development of Palestine, but also to its Holy Places and to Jerusalem. Why not then also to its social and political life and development as well? Without the unity of the country you are on the brink of chaos. With unity, you have a starting-point towards order and development.

[A word as to Jerusalem. One can be grateful, that at least the Holy City is to be kept unpartitioned and demilitarized. That ought to be the pattern for the entire Holy Land – unpartitioned and demilitarized. If the United Nations were to declare the Holy Land to be a demilitarized territory, perhaps some of the great powers might lose their present interest in it, and perhaps the Jewish armies and the Arab armies might learn to convert their swords into ploughshares.]

What Jewish State – without Jerusalem! Jerusalem, the heart and soul of our tradition. Nominally a Jewish State – without Judaism. A Jewish State without Judea, without the greater length and the outlet of the Jordan, without western Galilee, where even today you can see the ruins of the beautiful synagogues built in Roman and Byzantine times.

Both Majority and Minority reports favor increased Jewish immigration. That is the great step in advance. Whatever the fate of UNSCOP's proposals, the Jewish refugees should not be left in the lurch. There

should under all circumstances be a large compassionate immigration to Palestine and elsewhere.

But for anyone genuinely concerned with Jewish immigration, partitioning the country and forbidding Jewish immigration, settlement and land purchase in the area of the Arab state would deprive the Jews of those larger immigration possibilities they require. In this regard the minority proposals, despite their opposition to partition in principle, are as truly restrictive and as thoroughly in the nature of partition as those of the majority.

But even a Jewish majority in the Jewish state does not dispose of the "Arab problem" here. Doubtless one of the first things we shall be hearing of is the "Arab underground" there; then of repressive measures against it; then of the answer from the Arab side of the border. Thus the war of the irredentas will have begun even before the independence of the two states has been proclaimed. [The Jewish army? The "token forces" of UN, if ever they come into being? Has not the history of the war and of the past two years in Palestine shown, that comparatively small underground forces, if backed by a considerable section of the population, can undermine the position of large, well-equipped regular armies?]

It is largely the Jewish terror groups which have made the people of Britain weary of their task in Palestine. Having secured the partition proposals through terror, they are now prepared to secure the rest of the country for the Jews in the same way. If the Jewish State opposes them, that creates an additional front. [Both the Jewish and Arab youth have been taught that violence, terror "pays." The Peel Commission proposed partition in 1937 after the Arab revolt. The Arabs refused to accept partition and, as a consequence, renewed their revolt. Then as a result of this came the White Paper of 1939. UNSCOP proposed partition in 1947 as a result of the Jewish revolt. To say, as the Majority do, that there is "finality" in partition is simply fatuous. It is but the beginning of intensified conflict. In view of this, it is interesting to find the UNSCOP Majority hoping for "reductions on Police expenditure" as a way of lowering the deficit of both states.]

The majority are aware of the weakness of their proposals, and they finally admit that, when all is said and done, the real advantage of their "partial partition" is that it "satisfies the aspirations of both groups for independence."

But even that, by their own showing, is not correct. In another section of their report they say that their partition proposals only meet "in part the claims and national aspirations of both parties." The wide powers of the proposed Joint Economic Board and of the Governor of the City of Jerusalem are clearly in derogation of the national aspirations and the sovereignty of these so-called independent states.

Palestine is not just a Jewish land or just an Arab land. It is a common Jewish-Arab land, an international, interreligious land of Jew, Christian and Moslem. There can therefore be no such thing as full national independence for the Jews and full national independence for the Arabs of Palestine, partition or no partition. Why then partition the country?

The UNSCOP Majority keep emphasizing the "irreconcilable" claims and differences of the Jews and Arabs. Yet they themselves say "there are no fundamental incompatibilities among them." Indeed the final passages of their commentary on partition are a paean to the whole idea of Arab-Jewish cooperation, of bi-national understanding and outlook. But why? Why not keep the bi-national Palestine whole, and work towards understanding and cooperation in all of the country?

That brings me to the minority report. But I have no time or space in this statement to analyze it as it deserves. This report seems to me to have many weaknesses, particularly in its practical proposals, which do not always accord with its principles.

But the Minority report has the outstanding virtue of believing Jews and Arabs *can* cooperate and of proposing that they build up a common citizenship in their common country.

For this reason I would urge that the Minority report be taken as the basis of discussion, and that changes be made in it somewhat along the following lines:

1. The boundaries between the Jewish state and the Arab state should be abolished. These boundaries constitute a form of partition, despite the federal nature of the state as a whole.

2. Instead of these almost sovereign boundaries, the unitary Palestine should be divided into counties, not necessarily contiguous, for purposes of local administration and no more.

3. The two peoples, Arabs and Jews, should be declared to have political parity, irrespective of who is the majority or the minority. This seems to be implied through the provision in the Minority report of an upper legislative chamber constituted "on the basis of *equal representation* of the Arab and Jewish citizens of Palestine"; and by the provision that "legislation shall be enacted when approved by majority votes in *both* chambers of the federal legislative body."

4. That the Federal Court of Appeals on constitutional matters be composed of an equal number of Jews and Arabs, and not of an Arab majority. This court is of decisive importance, as a reading of its proposed functions will show. If necessary, the chairman might be an appointee of the United Nations in some such way as is proposed for the International Commission on Absorptive Capacity.

5. That Jewish immigration be permitted in all parts of Palestine up to parity with the Arabs. This seems to be implied when the Minority re-

port excludes the possibility that the Jews, "by means of free mass immigration would become the majority population in Palestine."

This is the moment when the less intransigent among the Jewish and Arab leaders should get nearer together in view of the common danger of partition.

[A few days ago a young Arab labor leader, Sami Taha, was assassinated. He and his considerable following had not been satisfied with the policies of the present Arab leadership. Despite the inner Arab terror, many thousands of Arabs from all walks of life attended his funeral.

We are often asked if there are Arabs who are in favor of the binational Palestine. I should like to quote from an address by Fawzi Darwish al Husayni, another younger Arab leader who was done to death by Arab political assassins. He was the leader of a newly established party called "The New Palestine." He had been detained in 1936 for his active participation in the Arab revolt. Since then, he and many of the younger Arabs had learned a great deal and had changed their attitude towards the Jews. This is what he said shortly before his lamented death:

There is a way towards understanding and agreement between both peoples in spite of the many obstacles. Agreement is necessary for the development of the country and for the liberation of both peoples. The condition for agreement is the principle of non-domination of one people by the other, and the establishment of a bi-national state based upon political equality and cooperation between both peoples in their economy, their social and cultural life. Immigration is a political problem, and in the framework of a general agreement it will not be difficult to solve the question of Jewish immigration according to the economic absorptive capacity of the country. The agreement of the two peoples should receive international confirmation by UNO; the agreement should assure to the Arabs that the independent binational Palestine will join a union with the neighbouring Arab countries.

This is the voice of an Arab brother, the authentic voice of our common Semitic tradition. It is as though he had heard the voice of the Hebrew Prophet:

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace,
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
Until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness,
And the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

It is this voice which speaks out of the hearts of multitudes of Jews, Moslems and Christians. This is the true vision of the Holy Land to guide the United Nations, not the despair of the defeatists and the chauvinists.]

Do not dismember the country. Do not estrange Jews and Arabs from one another. Lay down a generous bi-national policy and make Jewish-

Arab cooperation the chief objective of this policy. Give the two peoples the chance they have never had of self-government *together*, and through systematic work day by day, year by year, their response will be increasingly joyous and constructive.

JLM

1. Text in brackets appeared in the original draft submitted by Magnes, which he entitled "Do Not Dismember the Holy Land" (JMP).
