

# FROM MONTH TO MONTH

## THE FATE OF PALESTINE IN THE BALANCE

*An Editorial Article*

*By Moses Miller*

IT is quite apparent, since both the United States and the Soviet Union have recorded themselves in favor of partition of Palestine, that the major problem becomes one of implementation. Because any decision will have to be enforced, the basic problem narrows down to this—who will be responsible during the interim period for peace and order and for insuring that both Jewish and Arab peoples will be helped to move rapidly towards complete independence and statehood?

This is the crux of the Palestine problem. Unless a solution is worked out with the agreement of the Big Three, any hope that a UN decision will be executed can only be a pious wish.

Unfortunately, on this issue the U. S. declaration was wholly inadequate. Most of the American press was cognizant of this and contrasted the U. S. delegate's clear and unequivocal endorsement of Jewish rights in Palestine with his very hazy declaration on the issue of implementation. Thus the *New York Post* of October 13 called attention editorially to "the vague and cautious wording" of the U. S. statement and "its failure to give . . . any hint that the Truman administration is prepared to make an all out effort." The *Post* adds that "if justice is to be done . . . the imposition of a solution should not be attempted through British administration" for the reason that "the British have demonstrated complete unfitness for such a task."

It is inconceivable that any solution involving the preparation of Jews and Arabs for independence and statehood can be achieved if the reins are left in British hands. Exhaustive and conclusive evidence to this effect was presented by the Soviet Union, Guatemala and many others. Yet the U. S. statement remained strangely silent on this question. If anything, the vague formulations tended to create the impression that the State Department desired Britain to remain in Palestine.

At Lake Success it was evident that many delegates as well as observers believed that the American delegation is not inclined "to make an all out effort." They give credence to the I. F. Stone report from Washington which appeared

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in the October 13 issue of *PM* which stated that "there is an unwritten and informal but nonetheless real agreement between the British government and the Arab League for the establishment of an Arab state in Palestine as soon as British troops leave.

"The withdrawal of the British troops, it is reported, is to be timed in such a way as to facilitate occupation of the country by Arab troops. . . .

"The Middle Eastern experts of the State Department are well aware of the informal Anglo-Arab understanding on Palestine. Most of them favor the British program, have always opposed partition or any other solution favorable to the Jews, and fought hard against the position finally taken by the U. S. A. . . .

"They believe the administration should exert no pressure at UN for the position taken Saturday in the hope that the Arabs (with British help behind the scenes) can muster enough strength to block a two-thirds vote.

"Their cynical view is that this would enable the administration to get credit for upholding past American pledges on Palestine while passively going along on a program to prevent establishment of a Jewish state in that country."

Further indication of what lies behind the "vague" section in the U. S. statement on implementation is given by James Reston in the *New York Times* of October 13. Reston, who is close to government circles, states that the Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized "that it was not in the strategic interests of the United States to antagonize the Arab states holding vast oil reserves." Reston concludes that "what has come out of the United States delegation here is a compromise proposal that raises in the minds of most delegates almost as many questions as it answers."

With the Reston and Stone reports as background, it becomes clear why the American statement was cut and dried and devoid of any feeling or conviction. Comparison of the American with the Soviet declaration brings out sharp differences between the two. The Soviet declaration, following the pattern of Gromyko's historic utterance at the special session last May, is inspiring and deeply moving in its humane understanding of Jewish needs and aspirations, in its warmth of approach and depth of understanding. The Soviet position accepts Jewish aspirations and treats them with dignity and respect. In contrast the Ameri-

can statement sounded as the *Post* editorial aptly says, like "the uncertain administrative paragraphs of an army field order by an uncertain junior officer."

It is obvious, therefore, that the battle is far from won and that complacency or overconfidence can only immobilize the people at this critical juncture.

The American community, Jewish and non-Jewish, can now see that its energetic and militant campaign succeeded in ending American silence and brought forth an endorsement of statehood for Jews in Palestine. The struggle to insure an unequivocal and democratic American position on *implemmentation* is our immediate task. And the knowledge that victory in this struggle can insure statehood for our people in the very near future, should certainly be incentive enough for redoubled effort.

Unfortunately the American people are not as well prepared to carry on this struggle as they were for the earlier one. Previously the issue was clear-cut and self-evident. All were united on one basic proposition. All were agreed that America must speak up and reaffirm its pledges to the Jewish people. With this one thought in mind we were able to channelize and organize the indignation of the overwhelming majority of the American people.

The picture is somewhat different now. The question of implementation raises new and more complicated problems. At this point the Palestine problem merges with all other major international problems. The issue of unanimity of the Big Powers is involved. The problem of whose troops will execute a decision comes to the fore. And on all of

these questions there is a cleavage of views and opinions.

The fact that our task is more complicated should not be ground for despair. However, it does make necessary immediate and valid perspectives and plans which can serve as a rallying point for energetic action.

Let me enumerate what I consider to be basic to such plans. In the first place, the immediate termination of the British mandate. There can no longer be any doubt on this point. The brutal rule and terror of British imperialism dare no longer be tolerated. Energetic, militant action by the American people can persuade the American government to declare itself unequivocally on this issue. This is a first step and urgently necessary.

Certainly of great importance in its own right, but equally important for further progress towards a solution, is Big Three unity. No great degree of political astuteness is needed to recognize that U.S.-U.S.S.R. agreement is the key to a quick and effective solution for Palestine. Such agreement would force Britain into line in quick order.

Any attempt to move towards a solution on the basis of divided East-West blocs can lead only to a dead end and frustration. Those advocating any approach on this basis will be guilty of pursuing objectives other than the achievement of Jewish security and statehood. The principle which must prevail—and it is possible to realize this—is unanimity of the great powers and their acceptance of *collective* responsibility for the Palestine problem.

A vigorous campaign along these lines can clear the road for realization of Jewish statehood.