

Against the British Plan to Divide Palestine

BY WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P.

THE question of Palestine has been raised in a new and acute form. The Royal Commission proposes to divide this small country into three separate parts and by this means not only to prevent the people of Palestine from realizing national independence, but also to keep open and intensify the enmity and hatred between Arab and Jew that have been so sedulously fostered by British imperialism.

In the discussion of the report of the Royal Commission which took place in the British House of Commons, there were many different interpretations given of what Sir Henry McMahon promised the Sherif Hussein of Mecca in 1915, or of what he meant when he said that Great Britain will, "acknowledge the independence of Arab countries, in every sense of the word—independence."

There were also similar attempts to water down what was done by "Lawrence of Arabia" just as there were numerous interpretations of what Balfour said, or what Balfour meant, in his declaration on a National Scheme for the Jews on November, 1917. But however much speculation there may be on such matters as these, they all appear to be beside the point.

Whatever British diplomats or politicians may have promised to one side or the other, nothing can alter the facts that the Arabs of Palestine have and must secure the right to own their land, to develop their own form of government and to determine the course of

their own lives in cooperation with their Arab or non-Arab neighbors.

For centuries Arabs and Jews have lived in close association, in peace and amity. There is no reason why it should not continue to be so. When during the Middle Ages, Jews were suffering the most unspeakable persecutions throughout the rest of Europe, in Spain under the Moorish occupation they made a mighty contribution to the advance of civilization.

Today when in a number of countries, the terror against the Jews has reached a level never known before, the Jews in Palestine have an opportunity, as loyal members of an Arab state, of contributing their share to a new advance in that country, and by this means to assist in winning the people of other lands for support of the campaign to end Jewish persecution throughout Europe.

This means finishing forever with the reactionary policy of Zionism. For Zionism, in so far as the solution of the "Jewish problem" is concerned, has always been nothing but a harmful reactionary illusion. In actual fact it has represented and carried through an invasion of Palestine, not in the interest of the Jews, but of British imperialism.

The Arabs, I am certain, would never have objected to a moderate immigration of European Jews. The more far-seeing would have welcomed them, realizing the valuable part they could play in helping forward the development of the country.

But this immigration could only usefully take place on the basis of the full

recognition of Palestine as an Arab state. Therefore, from the earliest stages of the immigration the Jews ought to have worked with the Arabs for the ending of the British mandate and for the setting up of an independent legislative assembly. Instead of following this, the only wise course, the Jews of Palestine endeavored, under the incitement of the Zionists, to carry through an occupation of Palestine at the expense of the Arabian people.

What other result could have been expected other than the tragic events recorded in recent history? No people, unless they were utterly lost and decadent, would submit without a struggle to the loss of their homeland and to the wholesale buying up of their land, which threatened to deprive them of their living and turn them into homeless wanderers. Certainly the Arabs were not prepared to tolerate it and time and again they demonstrated their hatred against the administration that was primarily responsible for their bitter wrongs.

In the report of the Royal Commission we read:

"It has been pointed out that the outbreak of 1933 was not only, or even mainly, an attack on the Jews, but an attack on the Palestine government. In 1936, this was still clearer. Jewish lives were taken and Jewish property destroyed, but the outbreak was chiefly and directly aimed at the government. The word 'disturbance' gives a misleading impression of what happened. It was open rebellion of the Palestine Arabs assisted by fellow Arabs from other countries against British mandate rule."

Despicable propaganda has been used in Britain and elsewhere in an effort to discredit the heroic struggle of the Arab people. Arab men and women valiantly placed their lives and liberty in jeopardy because they were fighting in a cause that was just, the cause of national liberation. Yet we were told that it was all the outcome of "foreign incitement" or that it was the "fanatical" Mufti and his immediate associates amongst the big Effendi who were using the Arabian peo-

But it does not require "foreign incitement," or Muftis, to arouse a people threatened as the Arabs were. They were left no other course but the path of revolt, and all who believe in freedom, in the right of peoples to self-determination should have been wholeheartedly with them in their fight.

With great courage they have asserted their right to Palestine and demonstrated their determination to carry on till this right is recognized and established. So now, the British imperialists, faced with the impossibility of continuing with the mandate, make a new and almost unbelievable maneuver in order to retain their power over this important center in the Near East. In several discussions in the House of Commons emphasis has been laid on the vital position of Palestine arising out of the new international situation in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. With quite cynical disregard of the Arab people, Mr. Amery, the die-hard imperialist and Conservative leader, told the House of Commons that in the new situation that had developed, "Palestine was the 'Clapham Junction' of the air" and must be retained at all costs by the British Empire.

The Mandate, the regime that existed hitherto, having failed, it is with this end in view that partition is now proposed. Whatever is offered to the Arabs or the Jews, the real power, the real control, remains with the British imperialists.

But the Arab people will no more submit to partition than to the Mandate. They will carry on the struggle against the proposed "rape of Palestine" and for full self-government over the whole of the country. Already much of the best land has been taken from the Arab peasants and now it is proposed that 225,000 Arabs on the Jewish side of the "partition" are to be transferred. What a blessed word—"transferred." Driven off the land they have owned and cultivated for generations, they will be "replanted" somewhere, maybe to starve and die.

* Clapham Junction is a well-known center in London from which roads and transport branch out to all parts of Lon-

"Transferred" and "replanted." How is it possible that such barbaric treatment of a great people (however simple their economy may be) can be contemplated?

At the dawn of capitalism in Great Britain, year after year thousands of men, women and children were driven off the land, forced to cross the sea to the new land of the West, never any more to see or cultivate the land they loved so dearly.

Is this picture to be repeated in Palestine?

Can the people of Britain tolerate such a terrible injustice, which can only be perpetrated by the prodigal use of armed might. For certainly the Arab people will never tolerate it. They will fight with every means against this robbery, against the attempted "rape" of their land, against the attempt to turn it into a "Clapham Junction of the air" for British imperialism—and they will be right to fight.

But what of the Jews throughout the world? What have they to say to this criminal attempt forcibly to tear a country to pieces and drive its peoples off the land? Are they still under any illusions about the politics of Zionism or are they beginning to understand that the reactionary leaders of this movement are actually betraying the Jewish people?

My own Jewish comrades have always been clear on the reactionary role of Zionism, but thousands of splendid young Jewish men and women have come under the influence of the Zionist leaders and have been led to believe that Zionism was the way of release from the persecutions that have made life a continuous hell of torture for so many Jews.

But when the Zionists lead them into the camp of British imperialism, when they identify their interests in Palestine with the interests of Britain and against the Arab people, then the question arises: Is this policy calculated to bring relief to the Jewish people who are enduring so much in Germany and Poland? Will it make their lot easier or more difficult? Obviously the latter will be the case.

Have the young men and women in the

Zionist movement ever discussed the meaning of the project that Palestine should be given to the Jews and should become "a *dominion* of the British Empire"? Ivor Montagu, one of our very best Jewish comrades, effectively exposes and disposes of the Zionist Congress in the *Daily Worker* of August 14. Here is what he says:

"The Zionist Congress in Zurich must make all Jews, proud of their people, blush with shame.

"They will assert *their* rights to Palestine. *They* will obtain their rights. From whom? The British government.

"The British government, to whom Palestine does not belong, is called on to keep its promise, which it had no right to make, by forcing the inhabitants, to whom the country does belong, to give it to the Zionists.

"The Zionists are modern; go-ahead, destiny is on their side; Arabs are backward, lazy, barbaric, and will be benefited by the invaders. The Zionists claiming Palestine speak with the accents of Mussolini claiming an empire, or Hitler, or Japan in China. . . .

"Realists among the Zionists are aware, and say frankly, that their *one card is to play good little combination excuse-policeman for the British Empire*. They are not realist enough to reflect on what happened to the Assyrian, who did the same thing, when the British Empire had no more use for him.

"Jews who were not Jewish Nazis would know their only 'right' in Palestine is such that they can negotiate with liberated Arabs and share in equal and non-exclusive citizenship there with all inhabitants, not discriminating."

Ivor Montagu is right. The only "right" of the Jews in Palestine is to cooperate with the Arabs in the building up of a prosperous Arab state. If only they will understand this and act accordingly how much better it will be, not only for them, but for the Jewish population throughout the world.

For all of us must participate in the struggle to secure for Jewish men and women in the land of their birth or adoption equal rights to citizenship as any other citizens. This must apply in Germany, in Poland and in all other countries. Only in the land of triumphant

socialism, the U.S.S.R., has an end been put both to all kinds of national oppression and to anti-Semitism. The U.S.S.R. represents a real fraternal alliance of the peoples. The Jews throughout the world have made a contribution to the advance of civilization of which they can be rightly proud. Cooperation of the Gentiles with the Jews must take the place of the criminal anti-Semitism that is being so vigorously fostered in certain European countries at the present time.

But the struggle to establish the rights of the Jews in Germany, Poland and elsewhere cannot be aided if the Jews allow themselves to be used by the British imperialists for the purpose of depriving the Arabs of their rights. On the contrary the greatest possible injury will thereby be inflicted on the Jewish cause.

Therefore, I appeal to all Jewish men and women, as one long associated with them in the fight against persecutions

and slander, to give no support to the attempt that is being made to carve up Palestine. Palestine is the country of the Arabs. An independent Arab state guaranteeing full and equal citizenship to Jewish men and women will do a thousand times more for the Jews throughout the world than any alliance with British imperialism can ever do.

In unity with the Arabs, establishing a strong democratic legislative assembly, building up the economic life of the country, and in this the Jews can give an extraordinary contribution, developing its culture and general well-being—in this way Palestine can become a prosperous and happy country and the unity established there can be the forerunner of a greater unity throughout the world.

No partition of Palestine, but Palestine as an independent Arabian state, for this all honest Jews and all lovers of freedom, man and woman, must fight.

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