

A DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION FOR PALESTINE

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SOMETHING HIGHLY IMPORTANT happened at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly, in May, with regard to Palestine. At that session, a just and democratic set of principles for the solution of the Palestine crisis was projected by one of the most powerful countries on earth—the Soviet Union—and supported by representatives of other democratic states. Thus, a just and democratic solution for Palestine became a practical and realizable possibility in the not too distant future. This is a fact of tremendous importance to the two peoples of Palestine—Jews and Arabs—as well as for the entire Middle East and for the world in general. As to the Jewish masses, these developments were greeted by them as opening a new chapter in the history of the Jewish people.

This was not at all what the British and American governments were

expecting and planning. The decision of the British government to refer the question of Palestine to the United Nations, without committing itself to the acceptance of that body's recommendations, was generally understood as a maneuver to gain time. The imperialists of Britain and the United States still have to reach agreement on such major issues as the division and control of the Near East oil reserves, air traffic, air and naval bases, commerce, and capital investments. Failure to reach agreement on these issues, even though the international oil cartel has been re-established under Wall Street domination, is the major cause for the failure of the British and American governments to reach a much sought for political agreement for an Anglo-American imperialist domination of the Near East. Hence the failure thus far of the Anglo-American bloc to reach agreement on Palestine, except that the solution must be an imperialist one and that, as far as the imperialists can manage, the influence of the Soviet Union must be kept out.

In the light of the foregoing, it is undoubtedly the purpose of the British and American governments to make use of the time gained to try to iron out their differences behind the screen of the United Nations' investigating committee, and to attempt also to reach an understanding with those reactionary groups among the Arabs and Jews respectively that are most likely to join

up with the imperialist schemes for the further domination of Palestine. If these designs succeed, it may also be the intention of these two governments to seek United Nations approval of their mutual behind-the-scenes understandings. These seem to be the expectations and plans of the British and American governments for the prevention of a democratic and anti-imperialist solution in Palestine and for keeping the whole matter strictly in the hands of the Anglo-American bloc, whatever the exact forms of their intended "solution."

NEW FACTORS

But this is not likely to succeed. Whatever final agreements the American and British monopolists and cartelists may reach—and this, too, will not be an easy matter—the solution of the Palestine crisis is no longer completely and exclusively in the hands, and under the control, of the British and American governments. The Palestine issue is now before the United Nations, and new factors have already entered actively into the situation, major factors of a democratic, non-imperialist, and anti-imperialist nature. These factors are bound to affect materially, if not decisively in the immediate future, the solution of the Palestine question.

What Gromyko's famous speech on Palestine did was not only to project a democratic and just solution for Palestine as a guide to the United

Nations. This it did, of course, and it was supported by the new democratic governments of Europe represented in the General Assembly. But it did more than that. It demonstrated before the whole world that a democratic solution for Palestine will enjoy the backing of powerful democratic, progressive, and socialist forces all over the world; that, therefore, a democratic solution is a practical and realizable solution in the present world situation. This demonstration will most certainly help consolidate the democratic and progressive forces among the Jewish and Arab peoples of Palestine. In fact, it is already doing so, thus contributing powerfully to an eventual Arab-Jewish understanding for a democratic solution. Finally, the Gromyko proposals have also demonstrated that it is possible for Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States to work together to help the United Nations attain a just settlement, on the basis of complete equality, with due and consistent regard to the independence of Palestine and to the equal national rights of the two peoples inhabiting that country. It remains for the democratic, labor, and progressive masses of the United States and Britain to see to it that the governments of these countries work with the Soviet Union, not against it, for the solution of the Palestine problem as well as all the other problems affecting the peace and democracy of the world.

FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND INDEPENDENT JEWISH-ARAB PALESTINE STATE

A just and democratic solution of the Palestine crisis is the establishment of what Gromyko called "one dual, democratic Arab-Jewish state" in Palestine. This is the only solution that is completely and basically sound from a democratic standpoint. It is the best and most permanent solution from the standpoint of the national interests of both peoples of Palestine.

There are, of course, other positions. Among the reactionary nationalists of both Arabs and Jews the popular solution is one that would turn Palestine into a state of only one people, ignoring and suppressing the national rights and interests of the other. This is the meaning of the demand of the reactionary Jewish nationalists for turning the whole of Palestine into a Jewish state and equally of the demand of the reactionary Arab nationalists for turning the whole of Palestine into an Arab state.

To begin with, these demands are undemocratic. They are pregnant with possibilities of national strife of a reactionary character. They endanger the peace and security of both peoples in Palestine. In addition, these demands are *impractical and unrealizable*. The democratic and anti-imperialist forces of the world oppose such demands because they are neither just nor democratic and because they are a threat to peace.

On the other hand, neither the British nor the American government, for imperialist reasons, supports the demands for turning Palestine into either an Arab or Jewish state.

Turning Palestine over to either Arabs or Jews, even under imperialist hegemony, does not fit the schemes of either British or American imperialism or both. This has been proved by life itself. The only solutions thus far brought forward or indicated by the governments of these two countries were these: From Britain—the Morrison Plan for turning Palestine into a so-called "federation" of provinces (Jewish, Arab, British, and a military reservation), retaining fully imperialist domination shared by England and America, and granting certain minor rights of local self-government to the Jewish and Arab provinces respectively. From the United States—the well advertised report that the Truman Administration favors the imperialist partition of Palestine, with the setting up of two so-called states (a Jewish state and an Arab state) under the hegemony, to be exercised either jointly or separately, of British and American imperialism.

The imperialists trust neither the Palestine Jews nor the Palestine Arabs. Not only do they oppose the national liberation of the two peoples and the independence of Palestine, but they are also fearful lest either of them become too strong for "convenient" handling if allowed

to become the *dominant* people in Palestine. Hence, neither the British nor the American government supports the demand for turning Palestine over to one of its two peoples.

It is therefore legitimate to pose this question: what governments in the United Nations support, or are likely to support the demand for turning Palestine into either an Arab or a Jewish state? None of the major governments and very few of the small ones. This means that, as far as the United Nations is concerned, these demands are impractical and unrealizable. This also means that they are impractical in general; that there are no adequate forces, actual or potential, for the realization of these demands. This is well understood in wide circles of the Zionist movement, even though the official policy continues to call for turning Palestine over to the Jewish people. Among the Arab people, too, the realization is growing that turning Palestine over to the Arabs is not a practical proposition, even though the dominant official nationalist leadership continues to demand an Arab Palestine.

Consequently, other demands and proposals are being pressed forward by various Jewish and Arab groups. We shall examine here one that is enjoying considerable support among the Zionists. It is the proposal recently restated by David Ben Gurion, chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine,

which calls for the establishment of a Jewish state in a part of Palestine—an "adequate" part—with the Arab part of Palestine remaining under British mandate. Other versions of the same plan provide for the Arab portion of Palestine organizing its own state or joining in one of the existing Arab states.

A rather frank Zionist argumentation for such partition plans is to be found in a recent article by Z. Aharonowitz, an important official of the Jewish trade unions in Palestine. Writing in the Hebrew trade union paper, *Davar*, he says:

It is obvious that there are no Zionist prospects of obtaining at present the recognition of our right to establish a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine. . . . The Zionist movement must clearly decide now on the creation of a Jewish state in a large part of Palestine as the sole Zionist solution of our generation (*New York Times*, June 2, 1947).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE SCHEMES

A significant feature of all these schemes of partition is that the central question of the *independence* of the partitioned state or states is left very much in the dark. It is assumed by the authors of these plans (Ben Gurion and others) that somehow Great Britain and the United States will "protect and assist" the Jewish state which will have to orientate on these two countries. Thus, it is clear that the partition

plans of a section of the Zionist movement do not call for an independent and democratic Jewish state but rather for an imperialist partition of Palestine, retaining and even strengthening British and Anglo-American domination in the partitioned state or states, with the so-called Jewish state receiving a certain measure of autonomy in local self-government. The crucial question of Jewish-Arab relations following partition is looked upon by its Zionist authors as a problem to be solved with the "help," and under the supervision, of Anglo-American imperialism.

Support for such partition schemes has come recently from the non-Zionist American Jewish Committee, the organization that is dominated by big capitalists and strongly influenced by some of the most reactionary monopoly circles. This Committee opposes the independence of Palestine, favoring a long-term trusteeship by the United Nations, and suggesting partition as an alternative to immediate independence. The plan of this Committee is quite obviously calculated to go along with the plans of the American imperialists for Palestine and is based upon Anglo-American imperialist collaboration.

Consequently, the following has to be said about these partition schemes: they are not democratic; they do not provide for the proper defense and safeguarding of the legitimate interests and equal na-

tional rights of both peoples of Palestine. They are based upon imperialist solutions of the Palestine problem, upon continuing imperialist rule by the Anglo-American bloc. These schemes definitely sacrifice the aspirations of the Jewish people for the development of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine because such a homeland can be realized *only in a free, independent, and democratic Jewish state, capable of living in peace, security, and collaboration with the Arab people of Palestine and with all Arab peoples.* And these conditions can be realized *only in a Jewish-Arab independent and democratic state in Palestine.*

THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC AND PRACTICAL SOLUTION

[On the question of such a state, the point is raised in various quarters that while this proposal does supply a just and democratic solution, it may not be realizable because of the unwillingness or inability of the Jews and Arabs of Palestine to live together in one state. It is pointed out, further, that Gromyko himself anticipated such a situation and, hence, expressed readiness to consider the alternative of establishing two separate states. To this the main answer is the following. First, only in practice, *only in the struggle for Arab-Jewish understanding and for the establishment of a joint Arab-Jewish independent state in Palestine, will it be proved whether such a state*

is realizable and practical. Secondly, the democratic, socialist and progressive forces, consequently, must fight for such a solution. Thirdly, a separate independent Jewish state; as alternative to one dual Arab-Jewish state because of the deterioration of Arab-Jewish relations, would not be able to live a secure or normal national life, and the growth of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine would be seriously retarded and even jeopardized.]

Consider this last point. The question of considering the establishment of two separate states as an alternative to one dual state will arise, among the supporters of a consistent democratic solution, only if it is proved that one dual state cannot now be realized because Arab-Jewish relations have seriously worsened. But what will this mean? It will mean that the tiny Jewish state will be surrounded by an ocean of Arab hostility which Arab reactionaries will not fail to exploit. These reactionaries will resort to all means to combat the Jewish state, including economic boycotts, political provocations, and armed conflict. On the other hand, Jewish reactionaries will not fail to exploit this condition of national strife to sharpen still further Jewish-Arab relations. Under such conditions, the reactionaries of both sides will be playing up to Anglo-American imperialism which will know how to make use of these rivalries and conflicts to exploit and

oppress both peoples and to maintain its rule in Palestine.

It must not be forgotten that even if the two separate states live in friendship and collaboration, they will have great difficulties in building up and developing their national economies because of their small size, the nature of the land, etc. But if these two states live in strife and conflict, which presumably must be the case if two separate states become necessary, then the economic difficulties will be almost insurmountable.

We must therefore conclude that the only adequate, democratic, and practical solution for both Jews and Arabs is the setting up of one Arab-Jewish independent and democratic state in Palestine, guaranteeing the equal national rights of both peoples. For the Jewish state, no other solution can provide sufficient guarantees for the peaceful development and growth of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine.

UNITY FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION

To achieve a democratic solution in Palestine means, to begin with, to free the country and its peoples from foreign rule, from the domination of British imperialism. It means to prevent the setting up of a combined Anglo-American imperialist domination of Palestine. As pointed out above, the British and American governments are seeking a private understanding behind the back of

the United Nations, later to be rubber-stamped by it, and at the expense of the freedom and well-being of the peoples of Palestine. Hence, it will require the united efforts of all progressive and democratic forces of the peoples of Palestine, the Arabs, as well as of the Jewish people, the American people, and all the United Nations to attain a just and democratic solution of the Palestine problem.

Only by such a unity of the democratic forces here and abroad can we achieve through the United Nations the abolition of the British mandate, the building up of an Arab-Jewish understanding, the setting up of one dual Arab-Jewish independent and democratic state in Palestine. For us, in the United States, the question of united action on Palestine involves the double problem of, first, stimulating the united activities of the labor-progressive coalition of the American people in favor of a democratic solution for Palestine, and, secondly, of helping to consolidate the united action of the American Jewish masses in favor of such a solution. Both of these closely related tasks have to be tackled in order to exert maximum influence upon the position of the American government in the United Nations on the question of Palestine.

What must the people demand of the Truman Administration on the Palestine issue? They must demand that the American government:

1. Fulfill the obligations assumed

by the United States to support the upbuilding of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine;

2. Support the setting up of one dual Arab-Jewish state in Palestine as an independent and democratic state, free from foreign domination, with the complete abolition of the British mandate;

3. Support the demand for the immediate transfer of Palestine to the United Nations, which shall seek to bring about an Arab-Jewish understanding for Jewish immigration into Palestine and for the setting up of an independent Arab-Jewish state guaranteeing the equal national rights of both peoples;

4. Support the demand that the United Nations at once assume responsibility for the Jewish refugees in the D.P. camps and seek to open the doors of the United Nations to these refugees;

5. Collaborate with the governments of the Soviet Union and Great Britain for the attainment by the United Nations of a just and democratic solution for Palestine.

DEMANDS ALL PROGRESSIVES CAN SUPPORT

These demands upon our government can be supported by every progressive American regardless of whatever other ideas and proposals he or she may have on Palestine. Zionists as well as non-Zionists can support united action for the above-

stated demands because they incorporate the fundamental propositions that must form part of a just solution of the Palestine problem. Certainly only the united action of all progressive forces of the American people, regardless of ideology and party affiliation, can succeed in impressing upon the Truman Administration the need of a democratic solution, considering that the present policy of our government is reactionary and imperialist. Such united action can be attained only on a broad platform of demands which are already favored by the broadest masses of the American people. Certainly no united action can be realized on platforms of a strictly partisan nature, as is evident in the many, varied, and conflicting proposals submitted by a number of American organizations to the United Nations.

We make a plea for united action toward a democratic solution. This does not require the abandonment of party position or ideologies in the matter of Palestine. We Communists support the program of united action set forth above without giving up any of our ideological opposition to bourgeois nationalism (as well as to bourgeois assimilationism). We support this program of demands upon the American government because these demands are in accord with our position on the Jewish question in general and on the Palestine question in particular, as formulated in the resolution of our Party on "Com-

munist Work Among the American Jewish Masses."* We support these demands because they are in accord with our general position on the struggle against imperialism and the Truman Doctrine, against the war incendaries, against reaction and fascism, against anti-Semitism, for a democratic and stable peace, for equal rights, for national freedom and independence, for social progress and democracy.

NO DEPARTURE FROM MARXISM

However, it is claimed by certain Zionist writers that Communists can support the idea of a Jewish state only by departing from Marxism. This is not true, of course, as is demonstrated in the resolution just cited.

Moreover, when the Soviet government promulgated in 1934 the famous decree for establishing Birobidjan as a Jewish Autonomous Region, Kalinin explained that the purpose was to create a Jewish state unit, Jewish statehood, for the economic and cultural development of a Jewish nationality. Not only did this constitute no departure from Marxism, but, on the contrary, it was the development of Marxism applied to the solution of the Jewish question in the concrete circumstances of the Soviet Union. It follows inevitably from Stalin's historic contributions to the solution of the national question and from the entire

* See *Political Affairs*, November, 1946—The Editors.

Marxist-Leninist policy of the Soviet government on this question.

This proves conclusively that there is no contradiction in principle between Marxism and the idea of a Jewish state. It also proves that Marxists brought forth and supported the idea of a Jewish state when the objective conditions became ripe for it, *when progressive forces had made their appearance on the historic stage, forces interested in, and capable of, realizing the aspirations of large sections of the Jewish people for a Jewish state.* This is what happened in the Soviet Union with regard to Birobidjan. This is what prompted Marxists in the recent period to raise the question of Jewish statehood and of a Jewish state in Palestine.

It was Stalin, in his polemics with the "Bund" in 1913* and in other writings, who insisted and demonstrated scientifically that a people cannot live a normal and full national life—cannot be a single nation—if it does not have a common territory, does not have one national economy, language, and culture. Stalin was speaking about the Jewish people. This meant two things. First, the Jewish people cannot act as a single nation, much as they may desire it. Second, in the absence of a Jewish community anywhere on earth growing into nationhood, the Zionist policies for a Jewish state at that time (1913) were not only utop-

ian but profoundly reactionary since no progressive forces of any sort were then present in the objective situation interested in and capable of realizing the dream of a Jewish state. It is still true today that the Zionist conception that the Jews of all lands constitute one single nation is of a bourgeois-nationalist character.

But the most significant thing is this: when the Russian Marxists became the leaders of the old Russian state, and the Socialist Soviet Union was established, realizing the Marxist solution of the national question, these same Marxists raised the question of creating conditions for the establishment of a Jewish state. Why? Because, according to Stalin, no complete national life is possible without a common country and common statehood; because the Jewish people are as much entitled to a normal national life as other peoples; and because the Socialist Soviet Union had the necessary progressive forces for formulating and eventually realizing the task of developing a Jewish state unit in the Soviet Union.

As to Palestine, an examination of the *concrete circumstances* will demonstrate that in the present period, especially since the rise of Hitler-fascism and throughout the Second World War, the experiences of the Jewish people have made the dream of a Jewish state in Palestine the aspiration and desire of wide masses. A Jewish national community has grown up in Palestine during these

years. Large groups of Jewish refugees in the D.P. camps want to go to Palestine. And—most important—*progressive and democratic forces* are now active in the world, including such forces among the Jewish and Arab peoples, interested in and

capable eventually of realizing a Jewish state in Palestine. The concrete problem now is: how can this best be realized? The answer is: by setting up one dual Jewish-Arab state in an independent and democratic Palestine.

* *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, International Publishers, New York.