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# PALESTINE

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*What  
Is  
The  
Solution?*



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# THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE

## AND THE PROBLEM OF

### JEWISH POST-WAR RESETTLEMENT

Text of an address delivered by

**TIM BUCK**

at Toronto, September, 1946

**W**HAT is to be the future of Palestine? Where can hundreds of thousands of tortured victims of fascist terror who want to get out of Europe find a haven? These are two of the most acute problems of world politics today, and each of them is a matter of serious concern for every Canadian. The question of the future of Palestine concerns Canada because the way that question is answered will influence the question of the future of world relationships. The eventual settlement of the problems of Palestine will strengthen either the forces which are making for a lasting world peace or the forces making for war. Some individuals may ignore the significance of this fact but the nation dares not. The cost to our people of two world wars in our own generation and the fact that Canadian imperialist interests are striving to integrate our foreign policies with those of British and American imperialism make the security of world peace a matter of primary concern to each one of us. We cannot consider it as a problem for Jewish-Canadians alone.

Similarly with the question of post-war resettlement. For many anti-fascist refugees, frightful memories make it absolutely essential

that they be given a refuge outside of Europe. The acute need of upwards of a hundred thousand Jewish victims of fascism who are seeking to enter Palestine illustrates this problem in a striking way. Can it be said that only Canadians of Jewish birth are concerned about this? It certainly cannot, because our government is a full partner in the international organization which must accept ultimate responsibility for its settlement. The misery, unnecessary suffering and terrible frustration being inflicted upon hundreds of thousands of victims of Hitlerism, even now more than a year after the end of the war, has shocked the conscience of democratic people in Canada and all over the world, and Canada is a full member of the economic and social commission of the United Nations which bears ultimate responsibility for the settlement of this problem.

The problem of post-war resettlement which has been highlighted in such tragic tones by the ghastly episode of the "Four Freedoms" should be dealt with forthrightly by the economic and social commission of the United Nations. That commission will be convening in New York in a few days and the Canadian delegation attending this will be headed by no less a person than by the Secretary of State. What should be the attitude of Canada's representatives towards the problem of post-war resettlement? What should our delegation propose in order to meet the crises caused by the conflict between the British and United States governments on the question of allowing one hundred thousand refugees to enter Palestine? We as a nation will have to accept the consequences of the decisions that are made and we as a nation should accept the responsibilities for our share in making sure that they are correct decisions.

## THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE

THE PROBLEM of the future of Palestine can be fully understood only in its setting as a part of the problem of the Middle East. The Middle East has been for centuries an area of vital strategic importance for the great powers of the world. Geographically it has been described truly as the land where world interests meet. It is the road between Western Europe and the Far East. It is the site of the Suez Canal. It

lies between the Mediterranean and India and China, and today, between the great powers which lead the imperialist and the socialist sectors of the world.

The struggle for imperialist domination of the Middle East has gone on continuously. It was the motive behind Kaiser Wilhelm's project for a railroad from Berlin to Bagdad. It was the motivation of the desperate diplomatic struggle in which the allies on one side, and the triple alliance on the other, sought to win the Turkish Empire as an ally in the First World War. The Turks allied themselves with Germany and British foreign policy was necessarily re-orientated from the effort to win Turkey as an ally to the longer range plan for destruction of Turkish domination in the Middle East.

Through Lawrence of Arabia and General McMahon, Britain came to terms with the Arab princelings and sheiks. On behalf of the British government, McMahon promised the Arabs that Britain would guarantee complete Arab independence and self-government over the entire area of the Middle East if the central powers were defeated. By this stroke of diplomacy the thirty million people of the Arab world were won over to the support of the Western Allies and hundreds of thousands of potential soldiers of the Sultan became fighters against the Turks in cooperation with the British forces under General Allenby. Thus was the Holy Land wrested from Turkish rule.

Simultaneously, however, the Western Allies needed the support of world Jewry. They needed the active support of world Jewry in North America and they needed to weaken the support that European Jewry was giving to the Central Powers particularly to the struggle against Russian Czarism. This need was met by the Balfour declaration in 1916. In this declaration, the British government pledged to world Jewry that, if the Western Allies were victorious, the Holy Land should be made available to world Jewry for the establishment of a Jewish national home. Thus the British government simultaneously made to Jews and Arabs promises which could not both be kept.

As the Peel Royal Commission wrote in its report to the British government in 1937, "We cannot in Palestine as it now is both con-

cede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of a Jewish national home."

The fact stated so bluntly by the Peel commission was evident to all who gave the matter serious consideration even when the Balfour declaration was made. It was made more evident, for all who did not deliberately shut their eyes to facts, by the decisions of the British government in 1921 which marked the first open effort to place narrow limits around the meaning of the promise given under the pressure and the critical needs of war.

The record of British policy in Palestine during the 25 years which have passed since 1921 is a record of shame. Playing off, alternately, Arab interests against Zionist interests and Zionist interests against Arab interests, British diplomacy has created a situation which can be described as follows: Arab antagonism against Jewish settlement has been influenced to a point at which demagogues among the Arab nationalists are able to arouse enthusiasm by talk of a holy war. At the same time, by creating a sizeable and in many ways successful Jewish community in Palestine, the British government has created what the Arabs, rulers and Effendi see as a threat to their own interests and security and thereby increased their dependence upon the great imperialist states. The Jewish community, established in Palestine with great effort, pain and suffering on the part of the settlers and as a result of sacrificing effort on the part of millions of Jews all over the world, is already large enough and represents such substantial economic interests that it is an important factor in middle-eastern politics. Yet, because it has never been given any possibility of developing self-government or democratic institutions, and because of the chronic atmosphere of uncertainty and even danger in which it lives, it has been kept in a state of complete dependency upon British military and naval power. At the present time Palestine is an occupied territory. The British army is in possession. It is ruled by British administration. Not a single Jewish or Arab citizen of Palestine holds any administrative position of importance in their own country. The British administration collects taxes from the people and for every dollar which is spent on public health nearly nine dollars are spent "to maintain law and order."

A headline in the Toronto Daily Star announces "One Third of All Jews in Palestine Arrested." One of the United States members of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in Palestine wrote of the methods of the British administration there: "It is not possible for anyone to express his views publicly . . . The system of group punishment practised by Himmler has been introduced into Palestine. Should anyone in their neighborhood commit some offence, the entire community is punished." A state of things has developed which is akin to guerrilla warfare on the part of the inhabitants against the forces of the occupying power. While British troops patrol the land, British ships patrol the seas off the coast to prevent the tortured and desperate refugees fleeing from Europe and frightful memories, from landing on the soil of the only place in the world where the people have offered them a haven.

One of the reasons for the ruthless policy being followed by the British Labor Government is to be seen in its recent proposal for the partitioning of Palestine. In that proposal the entire area of Southern Palestine was set aside as a "British Zone." It was announced officially that the British War Office planned to establish the major British base for military and air operations in the Middle East in that zone. It should be noted, incidentally, that this decision reflects the far-reaching changes taking place in the relation of forces in the Middle East. Under pressure from the rising national consciousness of the people of Egypt, British forces, which have been occupying Egypt for 64 years, must now quit that country. Until now Egypt has been the main base for military, air and naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean. Now, Cyprus and Palestine are to replace the Egyptian base. It is a significant fact that the British War Office expresses satisfaction at the transfer because Cyprus is to the North and East of Alexandria, while Palestine is on the North-East side of the Suez Canal instead of to the South of it, as the Egyptian bases were. The fact is that the plan for redistribution of British forces in the Middle East reflects the changing strategic aims of the British War Office as well as the insistent demands of the Egyptian people. It is a part of the new phase of the struggle of the Middle East.

## THE REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES IN PALESTINE

THE GREAT MASS of the Jewish people in North America felt very good when President Truman called upon the British government to allow 100,000 Jewish refugees to land in Palestine. This was understandable. Those tortured souls had no other place to go. Any action, and even an expression of opinion, which might aid them in getting out of Europe was welcomed and correctly so. If we want to understand the real problem, however, we must frankly face the fact that the overwhelming majority of people misinterpreted the real meaning of President Truman's attitude.

It must be noted first of all, that while he called upon the British government to allow 100,000 refugees into Palestine, President Truman had not yet proposed that failing to get into Palestine the refugees, or even part of them, should be permitted to enter the United States. He has not even proposed that the United Nations should call upon its member states to accept these refugees on a quota basis. Under the circumstances it becomes obvious that the embarrassment caused to British imperialism was a much bigger factor in the results of the president's appeal than was any actual assistance to the stranded Jewish refugees.

The fact is that the United States has entered the world contest for a dominant position in the Middle East. It is reported on good authority that the United States government has given to the Arab League, through King Ibn Saud, an assurance that the United States will support the demands of the Arab League for complete independence and control over all the territories of the Middle East. At the same time, the Jewish Agency reports that the United States government has given assurances of its sympathy with the aim of establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine. The result is that the United States has now given similar pledges to both the main parties in the dispute which had been given at various times by the British government. What is the difference between the promise to King Ibn Saud and the promise to the Jewish Agency? The difference is clear — King Ibn Saud and the other Arab governments are there and in



possession. King Ibn Saud received the assistance from Britain and the United States during the war. King Ibn Saud, and the other Arab governments concerned, are receiving the millions being poured into the Middle East by the United States and British finance capital. The maintenance of their regimes is of vital importance for British and American imperialism, while the Jewish Agency is still politically and literally fighting to establish something which does not yet exist.

The official records show that every promise given to the Zionists by different presidents, and by Democratic and Republican parties' conventions, has been countered by the U.S. State Department which promptly advised the Arab governments that no action would be taken to fulfil such promises.

The foregoing explains the dilemma of Zionist organizations. When Lord Rothschild accepted the Balfour declaration on behalf of world Zionism in 1916 he committed Zionism to an aim which could be accomplished only by a great imperialist power—in circumstances then existing, only by Great Britain. Accepting the Balfour declaration and its terms, Lord Rothschild and the other leaders of the Zionist movement committed Zionism to a role in which its actions and policies had to be subordinated to the policies of British imperialism. This may not have appeared as a contradiction to Lord Rothschild because he himself was one of the most outstanding of British imperialists. The contradiction would have been evident to thousands of serious-minded Zionists, however, had they considered carefully the perspective that it opened up for immigration into Palestine as a virtual instrument of British imperialist policy in the struggle for power in the Middle East.

Today the United States is seeking to take over leadership of imperialist policy all over the world including the middle East. In this situation many influential leaders of Zionism are showing a tendency to now place their dependence upon United States imperialism to do the things which British imperialism has refused completely to do. How utterly wrong they are, and what disaster their plans would bring to the Jewish community in Palestine, is made evident by even a cursory study of the decisive aims of United States policy.

My attention was drawn to a striking illustration of this only yesterday while I was considering the subject matter of this speech. In yesterday's edition of the New York Herald Tribune, in his daily syndicated column, Walter Lippman, one of the best-informed commentators in the United States, known to be very close to the State Department, analyzes the tasks which United States' imperialism has set itself in world politics in general and particularly in the Middle East. Under the title "For America to Decide", Walter Lippman points out that early last winter the United States government made its momentous decision to take the leading part in the struggle to organize opposition to the Soviet Union. He warned his readers that "as a result we now are engaged in a world wide diplomatic struggle of the utmost gravity." Lippman pointed out that the great issues of world politics upon which the Truman administration is fighting are the following:

- (a) "Whether Germany is to be neutralized and pacified or is to be sought as an ally."
- (b) "Whether the British Empire is to be transformed peaceably or dissolved violently."
- (c) "Whether the civil war in China is to become an international war."

As though in reply to those of you who are asking what has this to do with Palestine, Lippman declared that the indispensable measure necessary to ensure the success of United States imperialist policy in this situation is "to build up American power at a selected point where, if war comes, the Soviet Union would from the outset be on the defensive. That point is manifestly in the Eastern Mediterranean." Lippman points out that in the Eastern Mediterranean "It would be feasible for the United States, employing the kind of force with which we are best equipped, to redress the balance of power which has been radically upset by the demobilization of the western land armies, by the enfeeblement of Europe, by the disunity in China, and by the reorganization of the British Empire."

I ask any serious-minded person, is it likely that American imperialists would accompany such a policy, or even consideration of such a

policy, by action which might turn the decisive 30,000,000 Arabs of the Middle East against America? It is obvious that the narrow and immediate, as well as the long-range, predatory interests of United States imperialists, will be most effectively served by policies aimed at making the Arab states allies and not of driving them into opposition.

Any attempt to settle the future of Palestine in accord with the aims of either the British or United States imperialists could lead only to disaster for the Jewish community there because it could only be part of a pattern of preparation for war. This is the major contradiction in which the official leadership of the Zionist organizations are caught. That leadership can get out of the contradiction, if it will renounce the policy of subservience to and dependence upon the policy of finance capitalist imperialism. It can avoid disaster in no other way.

### FREE PALESTINE

According to the recent revelation of Elliott Roosevelt, the late president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, saw this and spoke of it freely, long before his untimely death. Elliott Roosevelt reports him as having declared that to continue the colonial system of the great imperialist powers after the war would mean to maintain the cause of a third world war. Elliott Roosevelt quotes him as saying: "If we want to prevent a third world war we must free all the colonies and abolish the colonial system."

That statement is profoundly true and it applies to Palestine equally as it applies to India, Indonesia and the Phillipines. *Palestine today is a colony.* It does not enjoy even the limited measure of self-government granted to India many years ago. It is in this colonial status of Palestine that we find the source of most of the problems of its people and of the hectic contest which goes on behind the scenes, particularly between Britain and the United States, to exploit the miseries and sufferings of the people of Palestine in seeking more advantageous relationships with the rest of the Arab world. The first and decisive step to bring about a genuine solution of what has become known as the Problem of Palestine is to SET PALESTINE FREE! To make Palestine an independent sovereign democratic state in which

all of its citizens, Jew and Arab alike, enjoy equal rights and equal responsibilities of citizenship.

That is actually being done in India, slowly, with every possible obstacle being placed in the way of the Indian people, but it is being done because the pressure of the people for it cannot be resisted any longer. There are nearly 400,000,000 people in India. There are deep and acute antagonisms between the various sections of the population. These antagonisms have been inflamed by propaganda over a period of years, the memory of which constitutes almost an open invitation to civil war. In spite of those things the people of India have started the establishment of their own government and will write their own constitution. It cannot be questioned that the people of Palestine could do likewise.

It is true that there will be difficulties. It is true that it might be necessary to replace the British troops who are there today by the United Nations forces charged with the task of maintaining order through the preliminary stages while the people of Palestine elect their representatives to a constituent assembly, plan a constitution and shape their democratic institutions and governmental apparatus. It might be necessary for the United Nations Organization to assume trusteeship over Free Palestine as a guarantee both of its territorial independence and its stability in the early days of statehood. The point is that *it can be done!* The Jewish community is established there and the Arabs are not going to leave the Middle East. Jewish-Arab cooperation in Palestine is the only possible solution in the existing situation and Jewish-Arab cooperation is only possible if Jewish and Arab citizens of Palestine have equal rights and equal responsibilities in a democratically organized state.

A free and democratic Palestine could play a tremendous role in the further development of the Middle East. A free democratic Palestine as one of the community of states in the Middle East would, because of its higher technical development, higher standard of living and broader approach to cultural and economic problems, stimulate the economic development of that entire area. It would help transform vast areas from desert to a productive and, yes, in a relatively short

time, rich and prosperous land. The Middle East has enormous possibilities for economic development which are well known. It is rich in mineral resources—especially oil. It has potentially fertile valleys which lie idle today and useless for lack of irrigation which could bring available water to them. It is at the cross-roads of the world and, with economic development and the development of education, it could become an important transportation and communication area under control of its own people instead of under the control of alien armed forces guarding the plants and equipment of the great powers now seeking to exploit and dominate its resources and facilities. These and many other possibilities are open to the Middle East today and the freeing of Palestine would provide a tremendous stimulus to their development.

It is argued sometimes by earnest and serious-minded people that Jews and Arabs cannot cooperate. Some people pretend to believe that, if British forces were withdrawn, the Arabs would start anti-Jewish violence. It's a lie. First of all be it remembered, there are now 600,000 Jews in Palestine and, secondly, they have already shown that they can fight. They fought with Britain against the Nazis and they are showing now that they can fight equally well against any other enemy when need be. Furthermore, the so-called Jewish-Arab antagonism, which is pointed to as evidence that cooperation is impossible, is a product of the past 25 years of British policy in Palestine. Jews lived in Palestine and throughout the Middle East before the Balfour declaration—many thousands of them. There was no Jewish-Arab conflict then! Even during the most acute tension between Jew and Arab during the trying 1930's, when Arab nationalism was being systematically inflamed against the imperialist policies for which the Arabs mistakenly blamed the poor Jewish settlers, there was never the day without its demonstration of the possibility of Jewish-Arab cooperation. Even today, when the conflict has reached the explosive stage, there is still Jewish-Arab co-operation in many sections of Palestine and many phases of social life. For example: during the month of April of this year, Jewish and Arab workers went on strike unitedly. They were denounced by certain Jewish interests as striking against the Zionist movement, they were denounced by the Arab League as being

the dupes of "Jewish agitators," they were denounced by the British administration for all the world as though they were insurrectionists, but, through it all, the 40,000 Jews and Arabs stood solid under their joint Jewish-Arab strike committee and they won their strike. It is no accident that today, when the whole land of Palestine shudders under the terror of British paratroopers with their sudden raids of violence, the majority of towns and villages where the terror is worst and most systematically imposed are places where Jewish-Arab cooperation has been developed most highly. This is a key feature of the British Labor Government's foreign policy to which the CCF in Canada is giving such uncritical and enthusiastic support.

### ARABS AND JEWS HAVE COMMON NEEDS

A STRIKING REFUTATION of the argument that Jewish-Arab cooperation is impossible is provided by the program of one of the Arab organizations in Palestine. "The Arab League for National Liberation" in Palestine does not take the position that Jewish-Arab cooperation is impossible. On the contrary, it declares categorically in its program that the struggle in Palestine for national sovereignty is a struggle not only for the Arabs but for the Jewish people in Palestine as well. This organization declares officially its recognition of "the progressive role that Jewish people can play in building a democratic Palestine." The statement of policy adopted by the Arab League for National Liberation at the national conference in October, 1945, declares in part as follows:

"The way forward to national liberation can only be achieved by the constructive policy based upon the national interests of the Arab people and the aspirations of the Jewish community in Palestine. Thus do we recognize the rights of the Jewish community to develop the legitimate, just national interests which Jews, as a part of a democratic regime, would be eager to realize. We do not believe that any contradiction need arise nor can we accept the present antagonisms as a national feature."

That is an extract from the considered statement of policy adopted by a national organization which includes within its ranks workers, members of the middle class, including members of the Arab intelligentsia and important student bodies. It is allied fraternally with the Arab Peasant League. It is obvious, therefore, that it is entirely wrong to argue that there is no basis for Arab-Jewish co-operation.

The final and conclusive reply to those who argue against the proposal for Jewish-Arab cooperation is the question: "What is the alternative?" There are 30,000,000 Arabs. Seven countries surrounding Palestine are Arab countries. For their own narrow and profit-seeking interests finance capitalist interests of Britain and the United States seek friendly relations with the Arab states. The only alternative to Jewish-Arab cooperation is persisting and sharpening antagonisms with the Jewish community allowing itself to be used as the bone over which Arabs and the western powers quarrel and in which the Jewish community suffers. How many Jews who live outside Palestine, not to mention those who are living inside Palestine, can look with relish on the prospect of the Jewish community in Palestine living permanently under the shadow of British bayonets—suffering the terror of British occupation as part of the price for British protection. No democratic person could favor such a prospect.

What I must emphasize in this connection is the fact that it is not the problem of the Jewish-Canadian alone. It is a problem of world policy. The attitude of the Canadian government towards this problem will be determined, in part, by the attitude of the Canadian people as a whole. Every Canadian who believes in the need to make world peace secure must accept a personal responsibility for action to set Palestine free under the guarantee of the United Nations.

### **OPEN THE DOORS TO THE VICTIMS OF NAZI TERROR**

I can almost hear many of you asking yourselves the question: "In what way do these proposals help the victims of Hitlerism who want to get out of Europe?"

I can assure you that acceptance of the point of view that I have outlined above would be of decisive help to the victims of fascism who

want to leave Europe because it would signalize the will to deal with their problem in a democratic manner instead of as an opportunity for diplomatic manoeuvres. The thousands of tortured and desperate people who are now seeking to go to Palestine see it as the only community in the world to which they would be welcomed by the people. Let every democratic Canadian ask himself, however, what would be the result if the victims of fascist terror saw a welcome from the people of North America? This is important, not only for humanitarian reasons but because the solution of the problem and resettlement of Europe's anti-fascist victims is one of the major post-war problems which must be settled eventually by cooperative action among the powers.

Today, even refugees who would be welcomed by the people of Palestine cannot go there. Even if they could and the full hundred thousand were landed in Palestine, then under present policies they would only be headed for another disaster. We denounce the callousness with which the British Labor Government prevents these seekers of a haven from landing in Palestine, but what are we doing? How many victims of fascist terror of any nationality are finding a haven in Canada? The answer is none. Why is this? Is it because Canada does not need immigrants? Obviously not, because the daily press is full of propaganda in favor of immigration. Leading industrialists are appealing for immigration. The Dominion government as well as several provincial governments is in favor of immigration. The Dominion government has even sent a member of the R.C.M.P. over to Italy to help "select" four thousand men from General Anders' army to bring them to Canada to fill what is termed "crying need for immigrants." I do not know what sort of men this officer of the R.C.M.P. will select, but I do know that of the 190,000 men in General Anders' Polish Army, no less than 54,000 are men who served in Hitler's armies and were captured in Nazi uniforms at the end of the war. The British offered them the opportunity of joining Anders' army instead of going into prisoner-of-war camps. The fact that they chose to be "volunteers" in the Polish army serving Britain instead of in a prisoner-of-war concentration camp is certainly no guarantee of their anti-fascist sentiments.



Against this the character of the tens of thousands of anti-fascist refugees is clear. Not only is their anti-fascist character proven beyond all doubt but it may be said that by and large they constitute a very high type of prospective immigrant. In many cases their lives were spared by Hitler only because they were virtually irreplaceable. Doctors, scientists, artists, as well as workers and farmers, are to be found among these victims. They are the type of people Canada needs. That is why any condemnation of the British Labor Government's policy in Palestine sounds empty and hollow unless we simultaneously open the doors of Canada to a substantial number of those helpless refugees who are seeking a home.

The people of Canada should demand that the Canadian delegation to the forthcoming sessions of the Economic and Social Commission of the United Nations proclaim publicly that Canada will set an example to the world in meeting the problems of the anti-fascist refugees by accepting a quota of 25,000 immigrants to our country. Let Canada proclaim its readiness to accept 25,000, and Canada can realistically call upon the United States and other countries of the western hemisphere, to accept substantial numbers also. Thus we could end one of the great and ghastly tragedies of the post-war period in a democratic and humanitarian way.

The position of the Labor-Progressive Party towards the future of Palestine and the problem of post-war resettlement is straightforward and clear. The future of Palestine can be determined in a democratic way only by setting Palestine free. The Labor-Progressive Party calls upon all democratic Canadians to press our Dominion Government to take a stand in favor of granting the people of Palestine freedom and helping them to establish a sovereign democratic state with constitutional guarantees of equal rights and equal responsibilities for all its citizens, Jew and Arab alike. As a guarantee that such a proposal can be carried through we propose that the British Labor Government should be called upon to surrender its mandate and Palestine should be a trust of the United Nations until a new constitution has been adopted and stable government is in operation. A free and sovereign Palestine will then be in a position to decide how many immigrants it desires to accept without dictation from the British Foreign Office and

War Department, or of pressure politics from the United States. For a solution of the problem of resettlement of the victims of Hitlerism who cannot adjust themselves in post-war Europe, the Labor-Progressive Party proposes that the free and democratic people of the western hemisphere shall, each according to his capacity, open their own doors to provide a haven for these, the most completely deserving victims of the war which we, with the other democratic nations of the world, fought *that men should be free!*

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