

# A PALESTINE SOLUTION

## The historic address of the Soviet delegate in the UN General Assembly

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*On the 20th anniversary of its delivery in the U.N. General Assembly May 14, 1947, we reprint the text of this historic address. It marked the turning point in the winning of socialist, democratic and anti-imperialist forces in the U.N. for support of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Gromyko based his stand neither on the Balfour Declaration of British imperialism nor on the theories of Zionism but on the harsh realities of the post-war Jewish situation, which he depicted very movingly.*

*Today this address has much to say to those Arab states and their supporters in the international arena who falsely assert that Israel was created by imperialism as a dagger in the Arab heartland and that therefore peace can come to the Middle East only by the destruction of Israel. Anti-imperialists distort history when they make this claim and also endanger the peace of the Middle East and of the world. On this, the 19th anniversary of the birth of Israel, we reaffirm our belief that Israel is here to stay. Of course we also believe the security of Israel would be enhanced if its government abandoned its foreign policy of neutralism, or non-identification as it was called, that guided the State from May 14, 1948 to Nov., 1951, when the Knesset swung over to the West in the Cold War.*

**T**HE course of the discussion both in the plenary session of the General Assembly and in the First Committee have shown that the question of Palestine has become an acute political problem. It would seem that all of the representatives who have taken part in the debate share this view. The view is also confirmed by the fact that this question has become the subject of consideration by the United Nations.

The fact that the question of Palestine has become a subject of study in the General Assembly, however, not only demonstrates the acuity of this

problem; it also places upon the United Nations the responsibility of finding a solution. This obliges us to study the problem attentively and from all angles, being guided by the principles and purposes of our Organization and by the purpose of maintaining peace and international security.

The course of the discussion has shown quite evidently that in this Special Session it has been difficult to take any definite and, still less, any final decision on the substance of the problem. The discussion in the present session, therefore, can be considered only

as a first stage in the consideration of the question of Palestine. In the general opinion of the delegations, a decision upon the substance of this question by the General Assembly will have to be taken in the next regular session of the Assembly, at the end of 1947.

Nevertheless, the discussion has shown that the delegations of a number of countries considered it useful to exchange their views upon some of the important aspects of the question of Palestine, even in the present session. Even an incomplete consideration of some of the important aspects of this problem has been useful.

In the first place, it has enabled the representatives to become better acquainted with the facts relating to the question of Palestine and, in particular, with the situation which has developed in that country at the present time. In the second place, this discussion, although of only a preliminary character, facilitates our task of determining the functions and directing the work of the committee which we have met to set up, in order that it may prepare proposals on the substance of the question for submission to the regular session of the General Assembly.

In consideration of the problem of Palestine—although this consideration has been only of a preliminary character—and in the consideration of the tasks and functions of the committee to which I have already referred, one cannot fail to observe, first and foremost, the very important fact that the Mandate System set up in 1922 for the Government of Palestine has not justified itself. It has not stood up to examination. The rightness of this view can hardly be contested by anyone. There can be no doubt as to the fact that the aims proposed in the establishment of the Mandate have not been achieved. The solemn declarations

which accompanied the creation of the Mandate System over Palestine have remained only declarations. They have not been transformed into living facts.

*The conclusion that the Mandate System for the Government of Palestine has not been justified is confirmed by the whole history of the Government of Palestine on the basis of this System, quite apart from the confirmation which it receives from the present situation in that country. In this connection, it is useful to recall that even in 1937 the British Commission headed by Lord Peel, after studying the situation in Palestine, declared that the execution of the Mandate was impossible.*

A similar conclusion was likewise reached by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations which also referred to what it called the impossibility of implementing the Palestine Mandate. The committee which we have come together to create should function in accordance with the historical facts relating to this question.

It would be possible to adduce a number of other facts relating to the history of the mandatory government over Palestine which confirm the bankruptcy of this system of government. However, it is hardly necessary here to enumerate these facts in detail. It will be sufficient, in this connection, for instance, to point to the Arab uprising which began in 1937 and lasted in reality for a number of years. There are also sufficient facts related to the circumstances which have arisen in Palestine at the present time which confirm the conclusion that I have already referred to. It is well known that bloody events have occurred in Palestine. These events are becoming more and more frequent.

For that reason they are increasingly

attracting the attention of the peoples of the world, and, above all, of the Organization of the United Nations. It is because of this result of the bankruptcy of the mandate system over Palestine, which has led to the extremely critical condition and the blood-thirsty events in Palestine, that the question has been brought before the General Assembly.

The very fact that the Government of the United Kingdom itself referred this question to the General Assembly for its consideration is highly revealing. This fact cannot be interpreted otherwise than as constituting a recognition that it is impossible to allow the continuance of the situation now existing in Palestine. The committee must very carefully make itself acquainted with the circumstances which have arisen in Palestine at the present time.

It is known that the representatives of the Government of the United Kingdom have repeatedly, on different occasions, even before referring this question to the General Assembly, pointed out that the mandate system for Palestine had not justified itself and that the solution of the problem of what was to happen to Palestine should be found by the Organization of the United Nations. Thus, for instance, Mr. [Ernest] Bevin declared in the House of Commons on February 18, 1947, as follows:

"We intend to place before the United Nations a historical account of the manner in which the British Government has carried out its trust over Palestine in the course of the last 25 years. We shall explain that the Mandate could not be realized in practice and that the undertakings entered into with the two communities in Palestine have proved irreconcilable."

This statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom frankly and directly takes note

of the existing situation to which the mandate system for Palestine has led. It is a recognition that this administration has not provided a settlement of the problem of mutual relations between Arabs and Jews, which is one of the most important and acute questions, and that this administration has not completed the attainment of the goal set forth when the Mandate was created.

***The existing form of government,*** as Mr. Bevin has confirmed, has shown itself to be unacceptable both to the Arab and to the Jewish populations of Palestine. Both these peoples have protested against it. It does not enjoy the support of the peoples of Palestine and without such support it can lead only to further difficulties and complications of the situation.

Dealing with the question of the attitude of the Arab and Jewish populations toward the mandate system for the Government of Palestine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom, in his statement in the House of Commons of Feb. 26, 1947, said the following: "The administration of Palestine is faced with a very difficult task. It does not enjoy the support of the people and it is subjected to criticism from both sides."

The committee, which we have come together in order to create, must not fail to take account of the conclusions to which the Government of the United Kingdom has come regarding the results of the Mandate over Palestine.

It is well known that the same conclusion was reached not only by the Government of the United Kingdom, but the same conclusion was reached in substance, for instance, by the Anglo-American Commission on the Palestinian Problem, after it had studied this question in the year 1946. The report of this Commission contained

the following words regarding the situation that has arisen in Palestine:

"Palestine is an armed camp. We discovered signs of this as soon as we crossed the frontier. From day to day it became increasingly clear that the atmosphere in the country was extremely strained. Many buildings are circled with barbed wire fences and with other fortifications. We ourselves were protected by armed police and, in some cases, we were accompanied in our movements by armored cars. Throughout the whole country, there are solidly constructed police barracks."

Thus, this is the description of the situation in Palestine as given by the Anglo-American Commission. It describes also in supplementary fashion the consequences to which the Palestinian Mandate has led. The transformation of Palestine into an armed camp, to use the words of the Commission, is a fact which speaks for itself. In such conditions, it is impossible to speak seriously of the defense of the interests of the population of Palestine, of the improvement of their material conditions of existence, of the raising of their cultural level.

The same Commission points out the following very interesting facts. The total number of persons employed by the police on the basis of a full working day, employed by the police and in the prison administration of the country in the year 1945 was 15,000. These figures are extremely significant. They explain where the considerable resources went to which constituted such a burden upon the tax-paying population. In different circumstances, these resources might have been devoted to the economic and cultural interests of the country and to its development. In other words, they could have been devoted to the interests of the people inhabiting the country.

Here also, Mr. President, is another fact. In the year 1944 to 1945, no less than 18,400,000 American dollars were spent for the maintenance of law and order. In the course of the same financial year, only \$2,200,000 were spent on public health and only \$2,800,000 on public education. In using these figures, the Anglo-American Commission comes to the following conclusion which deserves our attention. I am quoting once again from the report: "And thus, even from the point of view of the budget, Palestine has become a kind of semi-military police state."

The data brought forward in the report of the Commission constitutes a factor of importance from the point of view of the description of the situation which has arisen in Palestine and compels us to think very seriously on the problem of the correction, the rectification of this situation, and the problem of finding a solution to the Palestine problem, a solution which would be in accordance with the interests of the people of Palestine and with the general interests of the United Nations.

***The task of the Committee should*** be to help the United Nations in reaching just such a solution through on-the-spot study of the factual situation in Palestine. Is it surprising, Mr. President, under these conditions which have arisen in Palestine, that the liquidation of the Mandate is called for both by Jews and Arabs? On this matter, Jews and Arabs are completely in agreement. Upon this question there is no divergence between them and the United Nations must not fail to take account of this fact in considering the question of the future of Palestine.

In considering the question of the tasks of the Committee which is to prepare proposals on Palestine our attention is inevitably drawn to another

important aspect of this problem. As is well known, the aspirations of an important part of the Jewish people are bound up with the question of Palestine, and with the future structure of that country. It is not surprising, therefore, that both in the General Assembly and in the meetings of the Political Committee of the Assembly a great deal of attention was given to this aspect of the matter. This interest is comprehensible and competely justified.

The Jewish people suffered extreme misery and deprivation during the last war. It can be said, without exaggeration, that the sufferings and miseries of the Jewish people are beyond description. It would be difficult to express by mere dry figures the losses and sacrifices of the Jewish people at the hands of the Fascist occupiers. In the territories where the Hitlerites were in control, the Jews suffered almost complete extinction. The total number of the Jews who fell at the hands of the Fascist hangmen is something in the neighborhood of six million. Only about one and a half million Jews survived the war in Western Europe. But these figures, which give an idea of the losses suffered by the Jewish people at the hands of the Fascist aggressors, give no idea of the situation in which the great mass of the Jewish people find themselves after the war.

A great many of the Jews who survived the war in Europe have found themselves deprived of their countries, of their shelter, and of means of earning their livelihood. Hundreds of thousands of Jews are wandering about the various countries of Europe, seeking means of livelihood and seeking shelter. A great many of these are in the camps for displaced persons, where they are continuing to suffer great privations.

This was all clearly stated in the discussions of the Assembly's Committee

by the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

It may be asked whether the United Nations, considering the very serious situation of hundreds of thousands of Jews who have survived the war, should not show an interest in the situation of these people who have been uprooted from their countries and from their homes. The Organization of the United Nations cannot, and should not, remain indifferent to this situation, because such an attitude would be incompatible with the high principles which are proclaimed in our Charter—principles which envisage the defense of the rights of men, irrespective of race, religious convictions and sex. This is a time to give help, not in words, but in deeds.

It is necessary that we concern ourselves with the urgent needs of a people who have suffered such great hardships as a result of the war, in connection with Hitlerite Germany; it is a duty of the United Nations.

***Regarding the necessity of concerning ourselves with the situation of the Jewish population, which is without shelter and without means of livelihood, the Soviet delegation considers it necessary to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the following circumstances. The experience of the past, particularly during the time of the Second World War, has shown that not one state of Western Europe has been in a position to give proper help to the Jewish people and to defend its interests, or even its existence, against the violence that was directed against it from the Hitlerites and their allies. This is a very serious fact, but unfortunately, like all facts, it must be recognized.***

The fact that not a single Western European state has been in a position to guarantee the defense of the elemen-

tary rights of the Jewish people or compensate them for the violence they have suffered at the hands of the Fascist hangmen explains the aspiration of the Jews for the creation of a state of their own. It would be unjust not to take this into account and to deny the right of the Jewish people to the realization of such an aspiration.

It is impossible to justify a denial of this right of the Jewish people, particularly if one takes into account the experiences of this people in the Second World War. Consequently, the study of this aspect of the question and the preparation of corresponding proposals should also be a part of the important task of the committee.

I come now to the question which is fundamental in the consideration of the task and powers of the committee which we propose to create: I come, that is, to the question of the future of Palestine. It is known that quite a number of different plans exist for the future structure of Palestine and for the solution of the Jewish problem in connection with the problem of Palestine. In particular, some proposals were prepared concerning this question by the Anglo-American Commission, to which I have already referred.

Among the best known of the published plans regarding the question of the future structure of Palestine, the following must be noted: one, the creation of a single Arab-Jewish state with equal rights for Arabs and Jews; two, the division of Palestine into two individual states, one Arab and one Jewish; three, the creation in Palestine of an Arab state without due regard to the rights of the Jewish population; and four, the creation in Palestine of a Jewish state without due regard to the rights of the Arab population. Each of these basic plans is accompanied by different methods for the regulation of relations between Arabs and Jews,

and the settlement of a few other questions.

I do not intend now to analyze all these plans in detail. The Soviet Union will state its position on the various plans in greater detail when the concrete proposals are prepared and considered, and especially when decisions are to be taken on the future of Palestine. At the present time I shall limit myself to a few remarks on the substance of the plans proposed, viewed from the standpoint of the definition of the task of the committee in this sphere.

In analyzing the various types of plans for the future of Palestine, it is necessary first of all to take into account the specific aspect of this question. We must bear in mind the incontestable fact that the population of Palestine consists of two peoples, Arabs and Jews. Each of these has its historical roots in Palestine. That country has become the native land of both these peoples, and both of them occupy an important place in the country economically and culturally. Neither history nor the conditions which have arisen in Palestine now can justify any unilateral solution of the Palestine problem, either in favor of the creation of an independent Arab state, ignoring the lawful rights of the Jewish people, or in favor of the creation of an independent Jewish state, ignoring the lawful rights of the Arab population. Neither of these extreme solutions would bring about a just settlement of this complex problem, first and foremost since they both fail to guarantee the regulation of the relations between Arabs and Jews, which is the most important task of all.

A just settlement can be found only if account is taken in sufficient degree of the lawful interests of both peoples. These considerations are the basis upon which the Soviet Union delega-

tion concludes that the lawful interests both of the Jewish and of the Arab peoples of Palestine can be defended in a proper manner only by the creation of one dual, democratic Arab-Jewish state.

***Such a state should be founded*** upon equal rights for the Jewish and Arab populations which might constitute a foundation for cooperation between these two peoples in their common interest to the advantage of them both.

As is known, this proposed solution of the problem of the future of Palestine has its advocates in Palestine itself. Contemporary history shows not only that racial and religious discrimination unfortunately still exists in certain countries, but also offers us examples of peaceful cooperation between different nationalities within the framework of a single state; cooperation in the process of which each nationality has the unlimited possibility of contributing its labor and using its talents within the framework of a single state in the general common interest of the whole people.

Is it not clear that in solving the question of Palestine it would be very useful to take into account the experience gained through such friendly co-existence and friendly community of life between different nationalities within the framework of a single state? The settlement of the problem of Palestine by the creation of a single Arab-Jewish state with equal rights for Jews and Arabs might in this way be considered as one of the possible solutions, and as the solution most deserving attention, of this complicated problem.

Such a solution of the question concerning the future of Palestine might provide a sound basis for the peaceful co-existence and cooperation of the

Arab and Jewish populations of Palestine, in the interests of both these peoples, for the good of the whole population of the country and for the peace and security of the Near East.

If it were found that this plan was unrealizable on account of the deterioration of relations between Jews and Arabs, and it is highly important that we have the opinion of the committee on this question, then it would be necessary to consider an alternative solution which, like the first, has its advocates in Palestine and which consists of the division of Palestine into two independent separate states—one, Jewish, and one, Arab.

I repeat, such a solution of the question of the future of Palestine would be justified only if relations between the Jewish population and the Arab population of Palestine were, in fact, so bad that it was impossible to reconcile them and to insure the peaceful co-existence of the two peoples in that country.

Both these possible alternative plans for the solution of the problem of the future of Palestine should, of course, be studied by the committee. Its task should be to study from all sides, and very carefully, the draft plans for the structure of Palestine in order to enable the committee to submit to the next regular session of the General Assembly well considered and fully motivated proposals which would help the United Nations to find a just settlement of this problem, a settlement corresponding to the interests of the peoples of Palestine, the interests of the United Nations, and a settlement in accordance with our general aim—peace and international security.

These are the reflections which the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics considered necessary to present at this initial stage in the consideration of the Palestine Problem.