

# PALESTINE: A SOLUTION

**How the obstacles that stand in the way  
can be overcome by the Soviet proposals.**

**By CHARLES S. ABRAMS**

**T**HE finale of the special Palestine session of the United Nations Assembly did not warm the heart of the British colonial bureaucrats or of the architects of the Truman Doctrine. Things had not quite worked out as they had planned.

On the major questions that had come up for decision the votes had gone the way the Anglo-American bloc wanted them to go. The terms of reference for the UN investigating commission do not include any mention of Palestine independence. The composition of the commission leaves the door open for all sorts of Anglo-American maneuvers. What a travesty of justice it is for the Netherlands—which has been waging war against the independence of the 55,000,000 inhabitants of the Indonesian Republic—to hold a seat as a “neutral” member of a committee inquiring into a colonial question. But Warren Austin’s stubborn fight against the inclusion of the permanent members of the Security Council on the commission was not motivated by considerations of justice or neutrality. The objectives were to bar the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and to avoid any assumption of responsibility by the US for a solution of the Palestine question. And Austin won this point.

But something bigger than the election of another fact-finding commission was achieved at this session. The basis for the just solution of the problem of Palestine was dramatically placed before world public opinion. This of course was not on the agenda that Britain and America had so carefully prepared for the Assembly. But

Great Britain and the United States are not the only members of the United Nations. After Andrei Gromyko finished his address at the closing session of the UN the formal victories of the Anglo-American bloc looked small indeed. The formal victories could not obscure the imperialism on which the Anglo-American position rested. The Anglo-American attempt to use the UN session as a mere delaying tactic—under cover of which they would continue to jockey for Middle Eastern hegemony, for oil and bases — had sustained a sound moral defeat.

Gromyko’s speech has already evoked an international response comparable, under new circumstances, to Litvinov’s “collective security” speech in the defunct League of Nations. It gave this UN session an entirely new significance, as all objective observers admit. The Republican New York *Herald Tribune*, for example, pointed out editorially: “Undoubtedly, the most important single development of the special session was Mr. Gromyko’s address. . . . This Russian declaration opened for the first time the possibility of an all-around and roughly equitable solution.” Although there is much room for disagreement with the rest of the *Herald Tribune*’s comment and with other interpretations that have been read into the Gromyko speech, the decisive thing is that the position enunciated by the Soviet Union provides a practical basis for untangling the Palestine knot. If the problems of Palestine are to be solved many people will have to depart from pet formulas and slogans. The great challenge of

the Gromyko speech and the practical manner in which it has placed within reach a solution of the Palestine problem lies in its thorough grappling with fundamental realities.

**I**N ESSENCE the problem of Palestine is a colonial problem—a colonial problem with its own specific complexities and peculiarities. Geographically and strategically Palestine lies at the point where Asia, Africa and Europe converge. It lies in the heart of the rich Middle-Eastern oil fields. Between World War I and World War II it has been developed into the decisive strategic base of Great Britain in the Mediterranean. British policy in Palestine has been dictated by imperial strategy, the pursuit of oil and the cultivation of commercial advantage. In this primary sense the problem of Palestine is no different from the problems of any other colony. British colonial rule in Palestine has been typified by the absence of democracy, by brutality and terror, a conscious cultivation of enmity between the peoples who inhabit the country, and support for the most reactionary forces in both the Arab and Jewish communities as the best props for continued imperialist domination. A solution of the problem of Palestine within an imperialist framework is a contradiction in terms. The root problem of Palestine is: imperialism. Its woes and agonies, its trials and tribulations during the past decades are all the fruit of foreign rule. There is no magic formula that can bring peace, security and the termination of conflicts in Palestine outside the framework of the colonial problem as a whole: freedom from imperialist rule.

In addition Palestine is linked to the aspirations and problems of important sections of the Jewish people. The Jewish community in Palestine today numbers 600,000. It has deep roots in Palestine and aspires for the realization of its national rights. Any attempt to ignore or evade the rights of the Jews in Palestine would not only be unjust but would fail to afford a solution.

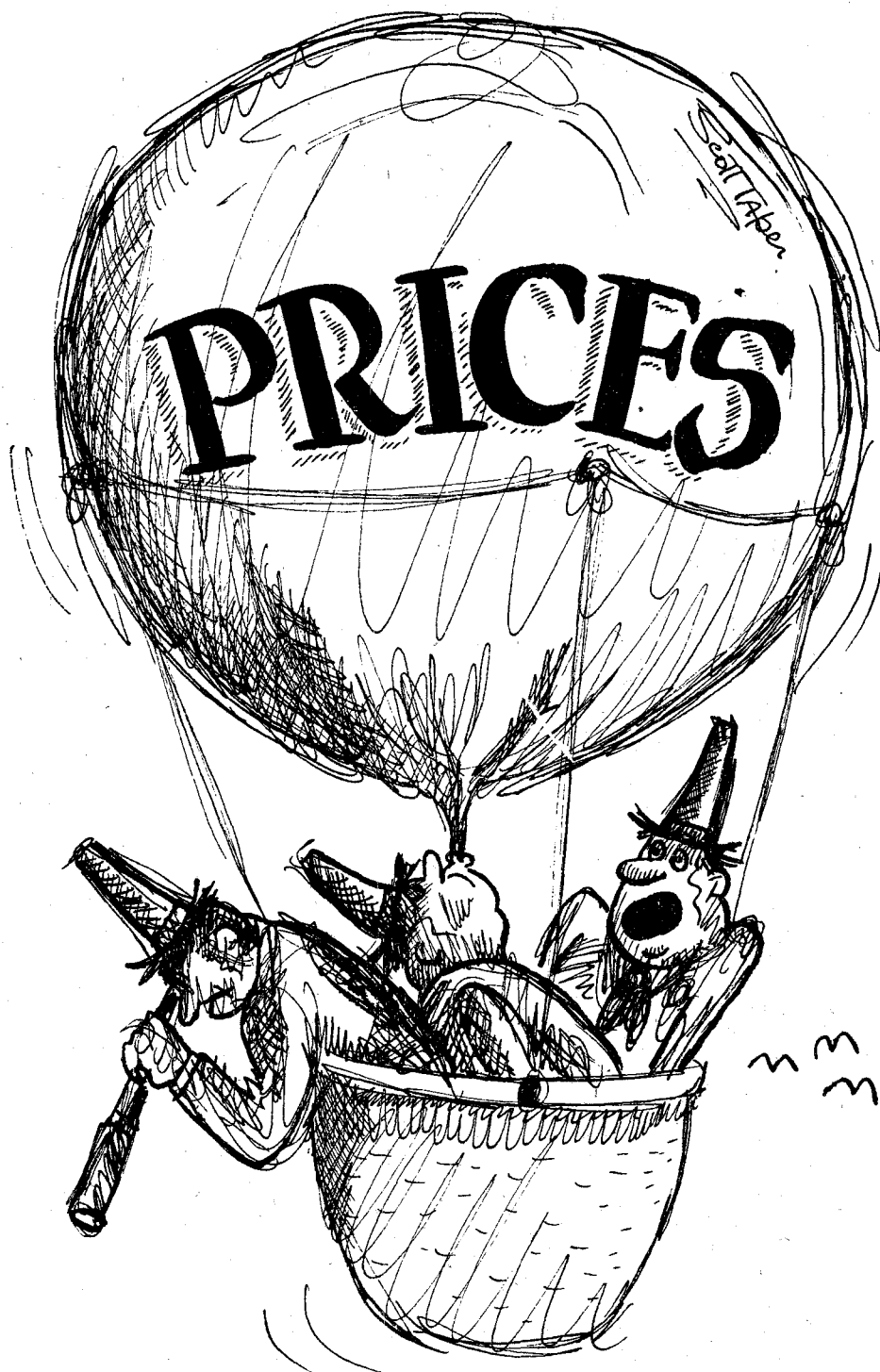
At the same time a solution for Palestine cannot ignore or evade the fact that there is a large Arab population, comprised chiefly of peasants and workers, aspiring for an end to semi-feudal bondage and the democratic realization of its national rights.

Imperialism has traditionally pitted Arab against Jew and Jew against

Arab in order to betray both peoples and perpetuate imperial rule. The significance of Gromyko's speech lies in the fact that it did not evade or ignore any of the complexities of the Palestine question and at the same time set forward a practical plan for resolving the difficulties within a framework that provides full protection for the national development, national aspirations and

desire for self-government of both peoples. The current effort to twist the speech into the old formulas based upon the imperialist pitting of one people against another only turns the clock back. Gromyko's speech was neither pro-Zionist nor anti-Zionist, but sought peace and cooperation between the Jews and the Arabs.

The dominant Zionist leaders have



"Can you still see Harry Truman?"

sought to channelize the national aspirations of the Jews into the sterile rut of reliance on imperialism. Gromyko demonstrated that the true national aspirations of the Jews can best be satisfied through the movements for national liberation which are ascending with such intensity throughout the colonial world.

The Soviet delegate posed independence as the key problem—explaining that neither an independent Arab state, ignoring the lawful rights of the Jewish people, nor an independent Jewish state, ignoring the lawful rights of the Arab population, are tenable. The solution he emphasized was “a single Arab-Jewish state with equal rights for Jews and Arabs,” within which cooperation between the two peoples, for their mutual advantage, can be developed. He also suggested an alternative, a less desirable solution, in the event that relations between the Jews and the Arabs deteriorate to such an extent that a democratic Arab-Jewish state becomes untenable: two independent states, one Jewish and one Arab. The headline writers immediately asserted that Gromyko favored partition. In reality Gromyko’s alternative proposal bears no similarity to any of the past partition proposals, all of which have been based upon the continuance of British rule and sovereignty over Palestine. The key to Gromyko’s approach, in both instances, is independence.

**A**FTER watching the conduct of the representatives of the Arab Higher Committee at Lake Success, and after hearing their distinctly anti-Semitic utterances, many question the possibility of cooperation between the Jews and the Arabs. But it should be borne in mind that the reactionary Axis-tainted Arab leaders, who represent the Mufti’s coterie, are British imperialism’s contribution to the world. Great Britain has consistently worked with and supported the most reactionary top crust of Arab feudal lords. They are not the true representatives of the Arab masses in Palestine. At least two Arabian newspapers in Palestine expressed strong opposition to the representation of the Arab Higher Committee. *Al-Ittihad* wrote: “We refuse to recognize the Arab Higher Executive because it cannot and will not express the will of the Arab public. We reject its political methods, which deny elementary rights to the people.” *Al Shaab* wrote: “The Higher Executive has

never been elected and has no democratic basis.” Most significant is the report that 13,000 Palestinian Arabs wrote letters to the Arab Higher Committee protesting its appointment and demanding election of Arab representatives.

These are the Arab forces with whom cooperation is both possible and necessary. The joint Jewish-Arab strike of British army and government employes in Palestine, which occurred right after the UN session ended, is further demonstrable proof of the practical possibilities of Jewish-Arab cooperation based on the common interests of both peoples. Within the Jewish community there have long been advocates of Jewish-Arab cooperation. In addition to the Communist Party of Palestine there is Dr. Judah L. Magnes’ Ichud group and the Hashomer Hatzair party. These groups are among the best known supporters of Jewish-Arab cooperation notwithstanding differences on many other political questions. And the chauvinism of the Arab and Jewish extremists alike are among the factors that have to be combated if a solution is to be achieved.

The decisive obstacle to a solution in Palestine, however, is American imperialism. The close teamwork between the American and British representatives in the UN Assembly should not obscure the fundamental fact that the Middle East is the scene of acute Anglo-American rivalry. American control of the British Empire is one of the prominent objectives of the “American Century” expansionism embodied in the Truman Doctrine. In the Far East and Pacific the United States has already far outstripped Great Britain as the dominant imperialist power and is now driving to outstrip the British in the Middle East. America has emerged from recent battles over oil with a monopoly of Saudi Arabia’s rich oil reserves and vastly extended rights and interests in the British sphere. The Greco-Turkish subsidy and the expanded American grip on the Middle East oil belt consolidate American imperialism for further assaults on Britain’s weakened positions—positions not limited to the Mediterranean but extending to the heart of the Empire, to India itself. This rivalry is a factor in the evolution of US-British relations in the Middle East and has been reflected in the sharp verbal tilts between Foreign Minister Bevin and President Truman on the question of Palestine, and the in-

ability of the British and American governments to agree on the implementation of the proposals of the Anglo-American Commission on Palestine which they had jointly set up.

In addition, while American imperialism persistently drives to reduce Britain to an increasingly subordinate position, it wants to preserve the British colonial system and utilize British manpower and administrative machinery for the defense of oil and imperial interests. Thus, hand in hand with the Anglo-American rivalry, we witness the studied American efforts to defend and uphold the British colonial system under US hegemony.

The zigzags of US policy in Palestine are, in part, explained by this contradiction. Richard Crossman, the British Labor member of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine, has the following to say in his book *Palestine Mission* about the American support recently rendered to Britain’s departure from the commission’s recommendation: “Why, then, did Mr. Byrnes give his approval in Paris, to the Morrison Plan? [A partitioned Palestine under federal British rule.] The answer was clear. Deeply embarrassed by the ineptitude of President Truman’s first statement on our committee’s report, he realized the importance to America of a joint Anglo-American policy in the Middle East, designed to safeguard the oil fields against Russian expansion. Looked at from Paris, where the American-Russian deadlock overshadowed all other issues, the fact of agreement was more important than the details to be agreed upon.”

It is, of course, absurd in the face of the facts for Crossman to speak of “Russian expansion,” but his remarks do indicate the excuse American imperialism uses in shoring up British colonialism.

The Anglo-American imperialism will not shrink into oblivion because of the moral defeat they have suffered in view of the Soviet’s position on Palestine. They will only intensify their efforts to achieve their imperialist objectives. The decisive struggle is therefore, still ahead. Because of the special role of the United States, American public opinion has a special responsibility. Washington must continue to hear demands for a shift in American policy, for American support of a just solution of the Palestine crisis based on UN unity and American Soviet collaboration.