

**The driving logic of events shows there is only one solution: joint struggles of Jews and Arabs against imperialism. A report from Jerusalem.**

# CROSSROAD IN PALESTINE

**By R. S. GORDON**

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*Mr. Gordon's article is of special value because it puts into sharp focus the real issues that will confront the United Nations General Assembly in its meeting on Palestine. Palestine will not be free until British colonial rule and British troops are eliminated from the area. It is British imperialist policy that is responsible for the brutalities and the suppression of civil rights just as it is British policy that violates the economic and social advance of the country.*

*Even though the British have insisted that they are not coming to the General Assembly to give up their mandate, forcing its relinquishment to*

*the United Nations should be on the first order of business. Nor can anyone depend on American imperialism to help settle the issue. Any imperialism is a constant source of danger to the Arab and Jewish peoples. The issue can be resolved only by the Arabs and Jews on the basis of equality and on a program which will assure in Palestine an Arab-Jewish state with a democratic constitution guaranteeing equal national rights for all inhabitants. For this purpose any investigating committee set up by the General Assembly must include Arabs and Jews democratically chosen by the two peoples involved.*

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*Jerusalem (by mail).*

**T**HE day after the British had launched the naval blockade of the Palestine coast, while illegal immigrants on two ships were being transferred to British vessels destined for Cyprus, a Jewish businessman told me in Haifa: "We will not accept the defeat of all our hopes in Palestine. Without immigration we are lost. We stand with our backs to the wall, and we are prepared to go down fighting. The British are responsible. Without their interference we could settle the question of immigration, and every other question as well."

"Are you suggesting," I asked, "that the Jews here can undertake a struggle to get rid of the British?" My friend looked at me without compre-

hension. "Who said anything about getting rid of the British? Any child can see their strategic interests here. And if Britain were to leave, on whom could we rely? Russia? The United States?"

There, in a nutshell, is the Jewish dilemma in Palestine. Rightly or wrongly, the Jews here consider the British responsible for their present difficult position. After a quarter of a century of trust in the mandatory power, they feel themselves abandoned by the very people from whom they had expected succor. They denounce British regulations which restrict immigration, British warships which track down illegal refugee ships, British curfews on Jewish cities. They denounce

large-scale military actions against Jewish settlements. They denounce British statesmen, who, they declare, are sounding the death-knell of the Balfour Declaration.

But dismayed and disillusioned as they are, they can see no salvation except through reliance on the same British statesmen, colored now with the hope that if they do not listen to reason, they will listen to more forceful arguments. This dilemma has created a sort of mass split personality which is mirrored in every aspect of life and politics in Jewish Palestine. It reveals itself in paradox and anomaly.

It was Ben Gurion, for example, who before the war vigorously asserted that whoever opposed Britain thereby ranged himself against the Yishuv (Palestine Jewish community). And in a recent message from abroad to the Palestine Labor Party (Mapai) he opposed taking Palestine out of the hands of Britain and transferring it to the United Nations.

Moshe Shertok, Jewish Agency leader, one of the key political figures in Jewish affairs here, has always stood for reliance on Britain. He told the Anglo-American Inquiry Committee that Jewish-Arab cooperation and agreement had been a distinct possibility, and the subject of negotiations between leaders of both communities. The Jewish leaders had turned it down, he declared, because the Arabs had made a joint struggle against the British one of the conditions of agreement.

The same Shertok, who refused to act against the British, was imprisoned

at Latrun by his erstwhile friends, without trial or legal charge.

The same strange contradiction finds expression in the daily routine of Palestine's 500,000 Jews, where the dominant feeling is one of sharp hostility toward British acts and British leaders. But the official policy of the Jews toward the same British leaders remains one of finding new accommodations. Public opinion oscillates between hope and despair, now expecting British concessions, now driven to frustration and black anger. A similar process is seen in the attitude to the United States. On the two occasions that President Truman spoke of admission of the 100,000 refugees, hopes soared that there would be American intervention. When the American administration preferred to base its action on what were here considered more material things than its humanitarian declarations, the dream faded and the Yishuv returned to grim reality.

The dilemma cuts deep even into the so-called "Jewish resistance movement." Zionist leader Dr. Moshe Sneh, accused of being the author of telegrams indicating alleged contacts with the terrorists and proponent of the theory that a more belligerent policy could force concessions from the British, declared that even "extreme manifestations" of this belligerent policy "do not have an anti-British character."

This is how the dilemma appears to the observer from abroad. After the successive crises, the Jews in Palestine feel "bottled up"—betrayed by those hitherto accepted as friends and allies. Yet they have not heard from their leaders—or worked out for themselves—any alternative to reliance on what they have always considered mutual British-Jewish interests in Palestine.

In the ensuing frustration, not even dimly appreciated abroad, several processes are at work. One finds expression in the increased activities of the terrorists, who clearly influence some youths whose lives are filled with despair and are pumped full of obsessions about "direct action." Another finds expression in an unceasing search for a way out of the unbearable impasse. Some predict that events will force the conviction upon the Jews that the alternative they face is to accept whatever the British offer, or seek new methods of attaining what the British refuse to concede. The first course means resignation to the continued whittling down of what the Yishuv has

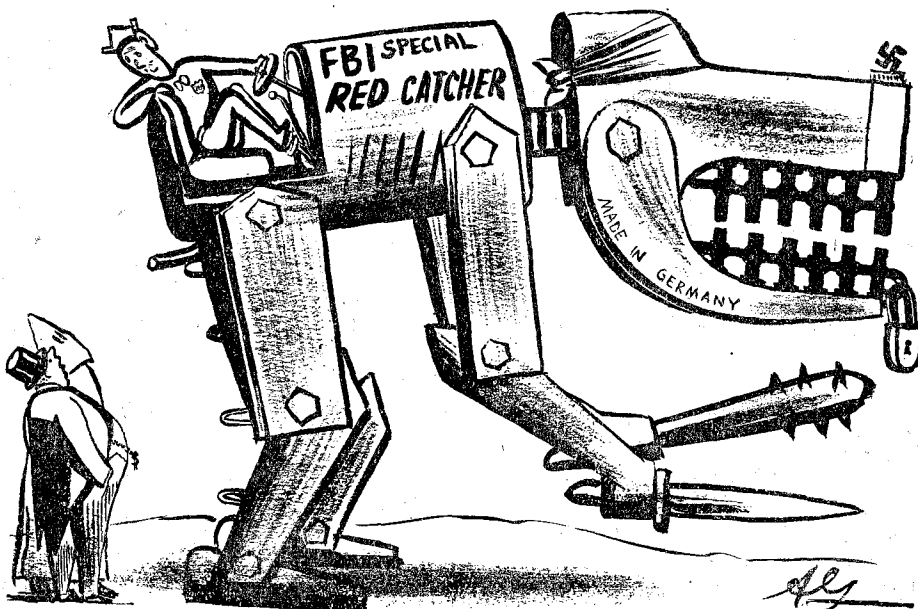
already attained. To that the Jews here will not reconcile themselves. The second course, in present circumstances, must lead to separation from the British, heading through various possible stages to outright collision with the British.

THE possibility of such a collision brings one to the second part of the Jewish dilemma: the Arabs.

"One of our difficulties at this moment," a veteran Zionist told the

tion and on the future state form of Palestine. On the question of immigration, on which Jews and Arabs are completely divided, there are those who maintain that the problem has to be reversed in order to be seen in proper perspective. Rather than consider immigration a stumbling-block to agreement, they contend that Jewish-Arab agreement is the only basis for solution of the immigration issue.

Their theory is that once the basic political issues are straightened out in



"Oh no—he eats anything that thinks."

writer, "is the fact that we do not as yet have an over-all policy on the Arabs."

Except for two groups on the Left and Dr. Judah Magnes' Ichud, the Arabs have not figured in official Jewish policy. There is, of course, no doubt as to the Jewish desire to live at peace with the Arabs, and the sharing of that desire by the majority of the Arabs. But feelings of friendship do not constitute a policy, and an increasing body of Jews is now placing emphasis on Jewish-Arab relations. With the whole structure of Jewish-British relations crashing about their heads, more Jews are now prone to stress Jewish-Arab relations in their efforts to achieve a solution.

No one here, of course, pays any attention to tales spread abroad about the supposed "irreconcilability" of the two peoples. But no one would deny that Jewish-Arab agreement presents very formidable political difficulties. It is enough to consider the sharp differences on the question of immigra-

the framework of a Jewish-Arab working arrangement, then, and only then, will the solid Arab opposition to admission of Jewish refugees have no basis and the mass of the Arabs find it possible to conclude that immigration need not represent a threat to themselves; only then will the British have no grounds for the present entrance restrictions.

Those people, inside and outside the country, who see the urgency of the refugee problem cannot set aside a very simple fact which is readily apparent here. Inside Palestine it is clear that there can be no large-scale influx of refugees in the existing circumstances except under the protection of British bayonets and in the face of unanimous Arab opposition. But the hard reality is that British bayonets are keeping the refugees out. Only one who has been aboard the illegal refugee ships; has talked to the human derelicts from Europe's concentration camps; has heard their cries of pity from the barbed-wire cages on Cyprus-bound

Liberty ships; has witnessed the anguish of helpless Palestinians as the human cargoes are borne away—only one who has seen and shared the shame which all the world must yet share can truly appreciate the tragedy of the homeless and unwanted refugees.

Events themselves impel the Jews of Palestine to conclude, though slowly and haltingly, that a fundamental transformation of the situation can come only from agreement between the two peoples who live here.

But agreement cannot be reached without certain revisions in the official attitudes on both sides. Everyone here knows that no agreement is possible if the Arabs insist on a purely Arab Palestine or the Jews insist on a purely Jewish Palestine. To many Jews abroad, who still talk glibly about "constituting Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth," that may sound like an astounding suggestion. It is not so in Palestine. Here the slogan of Palestine as a Jewish state or commonwealth or dominion is deadlier than a door-nail.

But even the proposal for partition does not solve the Jewish dilemma. Even here the Jews find themselves between two stools: the British and the 1,200,000 Arabs in the country.

The Arabs are in their overwhelming majority united against partition. All of them declare that it can only be imposed by force of arms, something with which many informed Jews agree. It will, according to all portents as plain as the nose on one's face, call forth massive Arab resistance and even, it is predicted, revolt, which will parallel the bloody incidents of ten years ago and perhaps on a larger scale. For the Jews, many of whom would welcome it in an effort to salvage at least a part of their work and their hopes, it would thus bring not a real solution, but new and greater conflicts and turmoil. And if there are Jews who might still be ready to face the consequences, they cannot fail to note that in the recent events British power, in their eyes, has been brought to bear against the Jews and not against the Arabs.

As with partition, so with every controversial issue in the country: neither the Jewish nor the Arab community can seek the realization of its aspirations in any direction without coming up against the hard fact that it must reckon with the other. In this situation a new formula is taking vague shape in the minds of some people, though it is as yet resisted in varying

degrees on both sides. It is: the creation of an independent, democratic Jewish-Arab state in Palestine in which both peoples would be guaranteed full national rights. Supporters of such a formula contend that only an independent Jewish-Arab state can untie the Gordian knot of Jewish-Arab relations and guarantee to the Jews, at long last, realization of the dream of a genuine Jewish National Home.

The concept of a Jewish-Arab state is in itself nothing new. It has for some time been championed by a fairly important group within the Zionist movement here. What is new, though still put forward somewhat feebly, is the practical suggestion that Jews and Arabs join now in working for such a state on the basis of disentanglement from oil and power politics and foreign domination of every kind.

Should such a development actually materialize — and it is certainly not around the corner — then the dilemma of the Jews, as of the Arabs, will be shifted to the British. It will be the British who will be faced with a new situation fraught with a whole series of strategic, military and political problems.

Nobody has any doubt that a Jewish-Arab movement for the independence of Palestine would have excellent chances of succeeding. And its success, as also its very existence, would have repercussions far beyond the borders of Palestine. It would cut the ground from under those who seek to keep the Arabs in neighboring countries preoccupied with the supposed threats of Jewish aggression, to the exclusion of their own domestic issues. It could very easily help stimulate the national liberation movements in the Middle East, and bring to Palestine Jewry in turn substantial support from these same movements. This would represent a novel reversal of the present situation.

The Jews of Palestine thus stand at the crossroads. Weighed down by difficulties and disappointments never anticipated in the first flush of their endeavors, they sense that they face great decisions. They know that no matter which way they turn, the road will be long and hard, as those who have come in search of the Promised Land, and not found it, have learned from bitter experience. It is clear that the course they take in solving their own dilemma will also vitally affect the whole trend of history in the Middle East.

## portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

Rankin was chosen to read Jefferson's first inaugural address to the House. It was expected that after reading the speech he'd want the author investigated for un-American activities.



*Roger Babson, the financial prophet, has moved to Kansas for protection against atomic bombs. The next crash he hears won't be caused by bombs.*

President Truman has asked businessmen to cut prices. Next thing you know he'll ask them to cut off their right arms and send them to Congress.

*Lindbergh favors the use of force to back US aims. He's still thinking in terms of making America First instead of making peace last.*



Friends of Senator Taft predict that he is going to change after going through some sincere "soul searching." He shouldn't have to search far—the soul is usually right in front of the heel.

*Another of Truman's failings is that he sticks by his advisors despite their shortcomings. Krug, for instance, is being referred to as Secretary of the Inferior.*

Some Congressmen are clamoring for the enforced return of Wallace and Stassen. It seems the two aren't showing enough innocence abroad.

*Gael Sullivan accused the Republicans of "stumbling backwards." The best thing that can be said for the tory Democrats is that they try to be graceful about it.*