

II. Birth and Afterbirth

Israel, like the United States, was born in blood. And, as in 1776, a citizen militia sprang to the defense of the country and routed enemies vastly superior in numbers and arms. Again, as in our Revolution, aid from abroad, this time from the countries of socialism and transition to socialism, played a major role in bringing victory and freedom.

However, the Jewish independence movement developed slowly and late. For years the Zionist policy of collaboration with Britain held the Yishuv in thrall. True, the relations with the mandatory power were not without strain. The depreciated currency in which the British were redeeming the pledges of the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate led to occasional conflicts. Resentment also flared up over the complete lack of elementary political rights under the Crown Colony type of regime that had been established. But none of the Zionist leaders, whether of the Right, Center, or Left, even intimated that this autocratic yoke ought to be thrown off.

The British White Paper of 1939 whiplashed the Jewish community into mass resistance. The beginning of this struggle ended a chapter of shame—the chapter of the Yishuv's submission to, and collaboration with, the jailers of the Jewish and Arab peoples. There opened a chapter of glory—the flame that rose high out of the tragedy which befell European Jewry. In that chapter the fighters against the White Paper joined with the ghetto insurrectionists and the Jewish partisans in occupied Europe in a new Maccabean struggle, which became part of the larger world battle that broke the back of the Nazi beast, smashed both the White

Paper and the Mandate, and brought freedom to the young Jewish nation in Palestine.

Under the White Paper Jewish immigration was to be limited to 75,000 during the next five years, after which it was to end completely unless the Arabs of Palestine were willing to permit more to enter. It was no longer only a question of how this would affect the Yishuv. At stake was the fate of hundreds of thousands, fleeing bestial torture and annihilation, and seeking refuge in the land many of them regarded as their own. This lent a new dimension to the heroism of those Palestinian men and women who defied the White Paper to bring in illegal refugee ships, who parachuted behind the Nazi lines to organize resistance and rescue, and who in the postwar years harried the British with bomb and bullet.

But at first resistance in Palestine, as had been the case in the American colonies, had limited aims, seeking only the annulment of the White Paper. As the movement developed, however, resistance was transformed into a fight for independence.

The national struggle unleashed by the White Paper also became an arena of class struggle. The issue of resistance or surrender to imperialism tended to reflect class alignments. It was from the workers and co-operative farmers that the main impetus in the fight for freedom came, and they carried with them a considerable section of the urban lower middle class. A limited and inconsistent impulse in this direction also came from the industrialists—often in the extreme chauvinist form represented by the reactionary Revisionist Party and its offspring, the Irgun Tsvai Leumi. But the industrialists were not a factor independent of the commercial and financial bourgeoisie—or from the British and American investors in Palestine industry. In general the capitalist interests, bound by a thousand threads to their counterparts in the “mother” country, resisted any move which might weaken that profitable relationship. On the other hand, the Revisionists reflected to some extent American capitalist influence, which was not averse to loosening the British grip on Palestine in favor of the American.

The class struggle within the national liberation movement also forced a temporary rift in the marriage of the bourgeoisie and Social-Democracy, symbolized in the long-standing alliance of Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization,

and David Ben Gurion, head of the Palestine Labor Party (Mapai). From that time till after the establishment of the Jewish state the leadership of the Labor Party vacillated under pressure from both the Right and the Left. At the twenty-first Zionist Congress, which met three months after the issuance of the White Paper and on the eve of the new world war, Ben Gurion, who became the spokesman of the "activist" group in Mapai, urged a departure from the Weizmann policy, though not a clean break with it. But Weizmann continued to sing the old tune. "Our quarrel is not with Great Britain," he said in his opening address to the congress, "but with those responsible for her present Palestine policy." And he went on: "Our policy has not failed. It is others who have failed us. We trusted Great Britain. We relied upon her good faith. We still desire to do so. Is it our fault if some of her representatives for some reason find it expedient to abuse that trust?" He urged that the Jewish people rely on educating public opinion and meanwhile work within the framework of the White Paper.¹

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, one of the leaders of the American Zionist delegation, supported Weizmann and warned against "extremist measures."² However, most Zionist leaders found it necessary to swim at least partway with the stream while seeking to prevent it from becoming a flood that would sweep away the pillars of British power.

Within the Zionist movement organized mass initiative against the White Paper came from the Left wing of the Palestine Labor Party. This Left wing, which also demanded a more militant policy on internal labor issues, broke with Mapai in 1944 and formed a party of its own, Hatnua Leachdut Haavoda (Movement for the Unity of Labor), known too as Achdut Haavoda. (It is now part of the United Workers Party.) Achdut Haavoda was also beset with many confusions and shied away from demanding independence, but it became a dynamic force in the Hagana and was largely responsible for creating the Palmach, the Hagana's assault troops, which later played a decisive role in Israel's liberation war.

There was one group in the Yishuv which over the years had rejected Zionism and Zionist policy. This group, the Communist Party, had consistently opposed imperialism and fought for independence and Jewish-Arab co-operation. The Communists, how-

ever, were until 1943 outlawed and persecuted. Though a small group, after the lifting of the ban against them they became a growing influence, direct and indirect, in combating harmful compromises and projecting the central goal of independence.

British governments changed: Churchill, who had denounced the White Paper, succeeded Chamberlain; and Attlee, whose Labor Party had pledged to annul the White Paper, replaced Churchill. But imperialism and its White Paper remained. And British policy, by closing the doors of Palestine to all but a thin trickle of Jewish refugees, became the accomplice of Hitler. In the black book of infamy there must be recorded not only Buchenwald, Dachau, Auschwitz, Maidanek, and the other Nazi murder camps, but also *Patria, Struma, Atlantic, Darien, Exodus 1947*, and many other refugee ships barred by the British; and Mauritius, Athlit, Kenya, Cypress—detention camps where survivors of the Nazi horrors suffered new agonies under the Union Jack.

However, for several years the war saved Britain from the full fury of opposition to the White Paper. For the Jews the Nazis were enemy number one, and the fight against the White Paper was waged within the framework of the anti-fascist war. But even before the end of the war, the Irgun and another Revisionist offshoot, the Stern group, launched an armed underground struggle against the British. After Japan's surrender brought the war to a close, Hagana, a much larger organization than the other two combined, entered the underground battle. But there was an important distinction between Hagana's work in this field and that of the other two groups. Hagana, though illegal, was a mass organization with deep roots in every phase of the Yishuv's life. It had been placed in charge of organizing the illegal immigration, and most of its military actions—the blowing up of bridges, railway lines, military installations, etc.—were carried through in connection with this task and with the establishment of new settlements in forbidden zones. Hagana's military activity was thus an organic part of the larger struggle.

The Irgun and the Stern group, on the other hand, though they undoubtedly contributed to the fight against Britain, were isolated conspiratorial bands. They idealized violence, making it an end in itself, and infected a section of the youth with this attitude. At

times their acts, like the Irgun's bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, served no useful purpose and brought unnecessary reprisals against the Yishuv. Moreover, reared in the Revisionist tradition, they were socially reactionary and anti-labor. And their extreme anti-Arab chauvinism served to strengthen Britain's grip on Palestine by fomenting strife between its two peoples. Thus, whatever the Irgun's contribution to the underground battle against Britain, this no more altered its basically reactionary character than did the resistance of the Metaxas government in Greece to the Italian invasion in 1940 alter its basically fascist character.

At the same time it is also true that Hagana's activity suffered from its subordination to the dominant Zionist policy. And the frequent condemnations of the Irgun and the Stern group on the part of Hagana and the Zionist leadership reflected in part their reluctance to break completely with the British oppressor and launch the national revolutionary struggle for independence.

The military actions of all the underground organizations need to be viewed in proper perspective. In the United States highly inflated claims have been made concerning the Irgun's role; it has even been said that because of its "valiant fight . . . the whole structure of the British regime collapsed, making possible . . . the establishment of the state of Israel."³ The fact is that nothing like warfare of even the guerrilla type took place. Without minimizing the courage and skill of the rank and file of all three underground groups, their combined forces and operations were too limited to have caused the British lion to more than flick his tail.

The military actions did, however, have an important *political* and *moral* effect, especially among a people reared for years in corrosive collaborationism. Coming in the midst of mounting political struggle, which found expression not only in mass resistance to the White Paper, but in joint Jewish-Arab strikes against British enterprises, they contributed to sharpening the conflict with the mandatory power and raising the fighting spirit of the Yishuv. They speeded the process by which the Jewish community was transformed from an instrument of British policy into its opposite. They also helped arouse support abroad which acted as a deterrent to the larger and more ruthless suppressions which the British would have launched had they not hesitated to defy world opinion.

The year 1946 saw Jewish resistance in Palestine rise to new heights. The ardor and self-sacrifice, which had gone into the construction of the country, were now poured into the defense of its future. British repressions began to assume Nazi-like proportions; and on June 29, 1946, the authorities launched far-flung raids, arresting nearly three thousand men and women, including leaders of the Jewish Agency, the Histadrut (the labor federation), and other Jewish bodies. Yet as late as January and February, 1947, the Jewish Agency, in discussions with the British government, expressed its readiness to continue the mandatory regime provided the restrictions on immigration and land purchase were lifted.⁴

Only after Foreign Minister Bevin himself announced on February 18, 1947, that he was turning over the Palestine problem to the United Nations did the Zionist leadership begin to face the possibility that the Mandate might be terminated. In testimony before the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Jewish Agency spokesmen went so far as to ask for an independent state—to be under U.N. supervision for several years. This reluctance to frame statehood in the context of full independence reflected not only hesitation to sever the traditional bonds with imperialism, but also the need to guarantee the dominance of the Jewish minority over the Arab majority.

The United Nations on November 29, 1947, decided differently—in favor of independence for Palestine and the recognition of both Jewish and Arab national rights through the creation of two democratic states, politically separate but economically joined. It was a decision in the spirit of bi-nationalism even though the immediate reality of Arab-Jewish conflict made it necessary to partition Palestine. This was, however, an entirely different partition plan from the one put forward by the British in 1937 with the blessing of Weizmann and his Mapai partners. The earlier plan, proposed by the Peel Commission, would have created a rump Jewish state, an Arab state including Transjordan, and a British enclave, with Britain retaining economic, political, and military control.

THE U.S.A. AND THE U.S.S.R.

A confluence of four factors made possible the birth of Israel: the Yishuv's own staunch struggle; the firm stand in the United

Nations of the Soviet Union and its allies and the aid they gave Palestine Jewry's efforts to implement partition; the conflict of imperialist interests between the United States and Great Britain; and American public opinion, which took advantage of the differences between the two powers to press our government into voting, after much backing and filling, for the partition resolution.

Bevin brought the Palestine problem to the United Nations with the aim of entangling it in great power controversy that would mean further delay. Whatever solution would eventuate, he had reason to hope that, with Washington's aid, Britain would remain in Palestine even though it might have to admit its more powerful rival into a limited partnership. Such a partnership in maintaining the imperialist status quo had already been initiated in 1945-46 in the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, both powers seeking to exclude the Soviet Union, as well as the Jewish and Arab peoples, from any significant influence in shaping Palestine's future. So confident was London of the devoutly wished for consummation that at the special U.N. Assembly session on Palestine, which opened April 28, 1947, its representative, Sir Alexander Cadogan, insisted that Britain should get help in enforcing a United Nations decision.⁵ A few months later, after the report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine had blasted these imperialist hopes, His Majesty's representative sang a different tune: it would not be possible for Britain to participate in enforcing a decision which was not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews.⁶

The United States played a devious game. Despite the fact that both the Truman administration and the Republican Party had publicly committed themselves to a Jewish "national home" in Palestine and the immediate admission of at least 100,000 refugees, Secretary of State George Marshall announced it would be "premature" for the United States to formulate its policy.⁷ Washington, with future electoral considerations in mind, was leaving to others—to Britain and the American satellites—the onus of forcing through another betrayal.

But these calculations misfired. The initiative was seized by the Soviet Union in a way that took the Anglo-American cabal by surprise and changed the entire course of the Palestine discussion. The American and British manipulators—and for that matter, the

Zionist leaders too—had completely failed to understand the main-springs of Soviet policy. They did not comprehend that Soviet hostility to Zionism did not mean hostility to the Jewish national struggle in Palestine, any more than Soviet sympathy for Arab national aspirations meant support of the reactionary Arab leaders. Soviet policy, guided by Leninist-Stalinist principles, had *always* opposed imperialism in the Middle East, as elsewhere, and had *always* sympathized with any people fighting to free itself from alien misrule. When, as a result of developments in Palestine and internationally, the relations between the Yishuv and the mandatory power changed and the Jewish community moved against Britain and toward independence, the Soviet Union necessarily lent its support to the national aspirations of *both* Palestinian peoples. Moreover, this was not a policy based on ephemeral tactical considerations. Throughout the difficult trials that followed the U.N. decision the U.S.S.R. alone among the great powers demonstrated genuine friendship for Israel and fidelity to the partition resolution. This was because only *its* policy was based on that consistent anti-imperialism and defense of the right of national self-determination which characterize the whole of Soviet foreign policy.

The historic speech of the Soviet representative, Andrei Gromyko, before the United Nations General Assembly on May 14, 1947, ignited the imagination and the hope of mankind. He alone among the spokesmen of the great powers recalled the sufferings the Jewish people had undergone at the hands of the fascist hangers-on. Rejecting rival nationalist demands for Jewish or Arab dominance in all of Palestine, Gromyko declared 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." However, if the special U.N. investigating committee found that "the deterioration of relations between Jews and Arabs" made this impossible, Palestine would have to be divided into two independent states.⁸

In these two alternatives Gromyko outlined what in essence became the minority and majority reports of the U.N. special committee. His speech and the subsequent active support of the majority's partition plan by the U.S.S.R. and the people's democracies provided a rallying point for democratic public opinion in all

countries, including the United States. As Lillie Schultz pointed out in *The Nation*, the Russians "were the only big power to display firmness and morality. . . . They alone among the major delegations dared to challenge the role, the record, and the participation of the Mufti and his Arab Higher Committee. And it was the Russians who at every point tried to prevent the attrition of the majority report and to secure for the Jews their just demands."⁹

Meanwhile the American government for months sat on the fence. Because of its own conflict with Britain in the Middle East, as well as domestic political considerations, it did not wish directly to oppose the Soviet position or the U.N. committee's majority report. Soviet initiative and Washington's marking time provided an opportunity for certain countries to venture away from Washington's apron strings. A particularly honorable role was played by Guatemala and Uruguay. Finally, on October 11, five months and thirteen days after the opening of the special U.N. Assembly session, and thirty-eight days after the report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, the American delegation made known its stand. Formal support of partition, however, could not entirely conceal the active efforts of the powerful oil lobby, together with the State and War Departments, to frustrate any democratic solution of the Palestine problem. "Far from supporting the U.N. report vigorously, the U.S. delegation permitted its indifference to become known to the states under American influence," wrote I. F. Stone.¹⁰ President Truman, under pressure from millions of American supporters of partition, made only feeble gestures at halting this sabotage. Nevertheless, on November 29, 1947, the groundswell for partition won the necessary two-thirds vote in the General Assembly: 33-13, with ten abstentions.

The U.N. proposed, but Anglo-American imperialism attempted to dispose after its own fashion despite the fact that the United States had participated in this solemn international decision. While Britain cynically set about to obstruct partition, create chaos, and incite bloody Arab assaults on the Jews, the American government's more oblique sabotage grew bolder. On December 6, one week after the partition vote, the United States imposed an embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East. This not only placed the aggressors on an equal footing with the victim of aggression, but

gave the former an enormous advantage since the Arab states continued to acquire arms from Britain.

From a member of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Jorge Garcia-Granados, representative of Guatemala, who fought for partition both before and after the U.N. decision, has come first-hand testimony about the sordid American role. "Certain persons in the United States began to play their part too in the sabotage," he writes in his book, *The Birth of Israel*. "In January [1948] American officials in Washington quietly began to suggest that partition was unsound and cited the disorders in Palestine as proof that it should be reversed. This developed into an overt campaign to make American public opinion swerve from support of partition to questioning its wisdom. On February 24 Senator Austin [chief American delegate to the U.N.] announced that the Security Council was not empowered to enforce a political decision—in short, could not enforce partition."¹¹

This culminated March 19, 1948, in a public reversal of the United States position when Senator Austin declared that partition could not be peacefully implemented and proposed a United Nations trusteeship for Palestine.¹² *One day before, President Truman had received Dr. Weizmann and assured him that the United States was contemplating no change in policy.*¹³ This did not prevent Truman from issuing on March 25 a formal statement supporting the trusteeship proposal, though he still professed to be in favor of partition.¹⁴ On March 30 the American delegation introduced a resolution in the Security Council requesting a new special session of the Assembly "to consider further the question of the future government of Palestine"¹⁵—that is, to scuttle partition. This crass betrayal was being prepared despite the fact that, as Garcia-Granados testifies, "The majority of Americans and many American political leaders genuinely wished to place the full weight of their country behind the United Nations decision."¹⁶

Can it be doubted that these machinations of the American government played a part hardly less significant than Britain's in encouraging Arab aggression against the Yishuv?

The United States also sponsored and secured passage by the Security Council of a resolution directing a cease-fire—which was all to the good—but, in addition, imposing an arms embargo on the

countries involved in hostilities.¹⁷ By that time the Arab states had amassed large stocks of arms, while the Jewish equipment was a joke. A Soviet amendment to the resolution that would have ordered the "immediate withdrawal of all armed groups which have invaded Palestine from the outside," was defeated.¹⁸ Thus the United States succeeded in making the United Nations a party to abetting aggressive war, in violation of its own decision.

In the special Assembly session the American trusteeship plan, which sought to place Palestine under the rule of a governor general responsible to the Trusteeship Council—in which the U.S.S.R. was at that time not represented—bogged down in endless discussion. Conflicting forces operated to create a stalemate. With the Presidential election only a few months off, Washington was unwilling to take the onus of introducing a formal resolution for trusteeship and instead presented its proposal as a working paper. Most countries usually in the American bloc were, however, reluctant to sponsor this unsavory scheme. The Soviet Union, her allies, and a few others fought hard to save partition. And the Zionist General Council, responding to the mood of Palestine Jewry, rejected all foreign control and announced its determination to set up an independent state.¹⁹ Thus the eve of May 15, the date when the British were abandoning the Mandate, came with the Assembly still wrangling over what to do or not to do.

FIGHT FOR LIFE

But the Jews of Palestine were implementing partition themselves—with their blood. Fighting the assault, first, of the Mufti's bands, then of the "volunteers" from other Arab countries, and finally of the invasion armies of five Arab states, the Jewish people were waging a magnificent war of national liberation. Before the irreversible achievements and grandeur of that struggle, supported by Russia and her allies and by ordinary folk in all countries, the machinations of the world's two mightiest imperialist powers proved of no avail.

Those of us who were in Palestine shortly before the proclamation of the Jewish state will never forget our first view of that fight for freedom. Haifa had just been liberated from the Mufti's bands that for nearly five months had terrorized the city. The streets were

full of Hagana soldiers, officially still illegal, but proudly taking over direction of the city's life. British troops still held positions in the city, but they were now more spectators of events they could no longer control than the arrogant lords of creation they had been for so many years. The country was passing through the remarkable experience of living under a dual power: the fading mandatory regime and the rising, though still unborn, Jewish state. The mood of the people was buoyant and determined. "These are great days," said a little tailor on Tel Aviv's Allenby road, his eyes dancing. "We don't care what Britain and America do. We're going to have a Jewish state."

Yet the voice of the Yishuv's leadership was strangely subdued. In Palestine speculation was rife and until the last moment there was no certainty that the state would actually be proclaimed. "In a number of private talks at Lake Success, New York and Washington," writes Garcia-Granados, "representatives of the United States State Department exerted the strongest possible pressure on Jewish leaders in an effort to persuade them not to proclaim a state. Veiled threats of possible American disfavor, even of severe economic sanctions, were expressed."²⁰ The Zionist leaders were not wholly unresponsive; some, among them Moshe Sharett (Shertok), wilted and were ready to postpone everything. But the people had decided. There was no turning back. And so the great day came.

What was President Truman's role in all this—he who hastened to cover up his traces by recognizing *de facto* the state his government had moved heaven and earth to kill in the womb? The fable has been spread—and by none more sedulously than the American Zionist leaders—that Truman is a kind of St. George who repeatedly has had to slay the pro-Arab dragon of the State Department—which somehow refuses to stay slain. But this bedtime story will deceive only "big fools and little children." It was Secretary Marshall who declared that Truman—despite his pledge to Weizmann—had approved the American trusteeship proposal.²¹ And from that authoritative eyewitness, Garcia-Granados, has come this testimony in connection with the State Department effort to browbeat Jewish leaders into halting the proclamation of the state: "Nor was the White House totally unassociated with this effort. According to my information, at one point Mr. Truman's

personal airplane, the Sacred Cow, was offered to members of the Jewish Agency Executive then in the United States to fly them to Jerusalem, if they would agree to take up with their colleagues there the possible postponement of a proclamation of independence."²²

Behind the conspiracy against Israel has lain a larger objective. Wrote *The Nation*: "With the aim of isolating the Russians in the United Nations and bending every policy to the single end of preparing for war against the Soviet Union, this military clique [dominating American foreign policy] has decided upon, and is carrying through, the appeasement of the Arab states, is pushing China and even France to support its position, and is urging the British to remain in Palestine on the score of securing bases for common action against the Soviet Union."²³ In other words, the Palestine policy was the evil fruit of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

With the creation of the Jewish state, the old guard of imperialism did not surrender. There opened a new sordid chapter, called United Nations mediation and conciliation, though a more accurate name would be Anglo-American strangulation. It is usually forgotten that U.N. mediation in Palestine was the offspring of the Washington-London efforts to kill partition and prevent the birth of the Jewish state. In a last-minute attempt to salvage a new betrayal out of the stalemate on the trusteeship plan, the American delegation introduced a draft resolution in the Assembly, calling on Jews and Arabs to take no political action and appointing a U.N. commissioner to negotiate between them. Supporters of partition succeeded in eliminating all reference to suspending political action and changed "commissioner" to "mediator," who was authorized to "promote a peaceful adjustment of the situation in Palestine."²⁴

This "peaceful adjustment" took the form of the Bernadotte Plan, of which a preview was presented on July 4, 1948, and a final, somewhat modified version on September 20. The report of the U.N. Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, proposed: (1) to reward the aggressors by depriving Israel of the Negev, thus reducing its territory to about two-fifths of what was projected in the partition plan; (2) joining the Negev to Britain's puppet state of Trans-

Jordan (now known as Jordan); (3) converting Haifa into a free port and the Lydda airport, the best in Palestine, into a free airport, in effect handing them over to foreign interests; (4) placing Jerusalem under United Nations control (in the first version of his plan Bernadotte proposed giving it to Jordan); (5) returning the Arab refugees who had fled from Jewish territory; (6) setting up a United Nations conciliation commission.²⁵

The Bernadotte Plan, it was charged by an American journalist with excellent contacts in official quarters, "was written by representatives of the State Department and the British Foreign Office, in collaboration with the late United Nations mediator and the present acting mediator, Ralph Bunche."²⁶ (The latter is a former State Department official.)

At the session of the U.N. General Assembly, which opened in Paris the day after the publication of the Bernadotte report, Secretary of State Marshall and Foreign Minister Bevin formally endorsed it. In Tel Aviv an Israeli government spokesman virtually accepted the Bernadotte Plan as a basis for negotiations, mildly seeking to differentiate between its "good" and "bad" features.²⁷ With hostilities in Palestine halted by the U.N. before a decisive defeat had been dealt to any of the Arab states, and with the truce and mediation machinery controlled by Americans operating under the United Nations flag, it seemed to the faint-hearted, as well as to the evil-hearted, that Israel's goose was cooked.

But again a constellation of the same international factors, plus the action of Israel's gallant people, decided otherwise. And thanks to the Soviet stand and the lack of support for the Bernadotte Plan among other delegations, the attitude of the Israeli government stiffened. In the midst of the discussion the people of Israel, unable to tolerate any longer the repeated violations of the truce by the Arab states, took matters into their own hands: in mid-October the army of Israel struck in the Negev and in rapid thrusts drove the Egyptians out of important positions and captured Beersheba. Apart from its military results, this action caused the enemies of Israel in the United Nations to turn their attention temporarily away from the Bernadotte Plan and concentrate on efforts to compel the Israeli army to withdraw to its former positions. Attempts of Britain's Sir Alexander Cadogan, discreetly abetted by America's

Senator Austin, to impose U.N. sanctions against Israel were repeatedly frustrated by Gromyko's successor, Yakov A. Malik—"Israel's best friend on the Security Council," as the correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune* called him.²⁸

But immediately after the American election the United States struck hard, forcing through the Security Council, over Russian and Ukrainian objections, a resolution carrying the threat of tough sanctions against Israel. "With the American elections out of the way," wrote John G. Rogers in the *Herald Tribune* of November 5, 1948, "the United States delegation switched its position again and not only supported the proposal, but also sponsored a successful amendment which, in a sense, went to even more extreme measures than were proposed by Great Britain, the original author of the sanctions resolution."

In the General Assembly the Washington-London axis succeeded in putting through a resolution creating a conciliation commission of three states.²⁹ But they were forced to abandon their demagogic proposal to have this commission function on the dual basis of the Bernadotte Plan and the original U.N. partition resolution. Earlier a Russian resolution had been introduced, providing for "the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops and foreign military personnel from the territory of the Jewish and Arab states in Palestine."³⁰ It died a-borning.

Though the Bernadotte report was thus officially shelved, the designs of its real authors were not. Washington handpicked the Conciliation Commission, its membership consisting of the United States and two of its semi-dependencies, Turkey and France. But before the commission could begin its work the people of Israel again took matters into their own hands, their army exploding a new offensive in the last week of December, 1948, that drove the Egyptians out of all of Palestine except for a coastal strip in the South. The Israeli government, under American and British pressure, cut short the campaign and yielded vital points in the subsequent armistice agreement with Egypt. Both actions were sharply criticized in Israel.

Throughout 1949 the United States continued to squeeze Israel, utilizing the Conciliation Commission as well as more direct means in an effort to exact territorial and other concessions. In July, 1949,

Britain announced that it would resume arms shipments to the Arab states, thus ignoring the U.N. embargo. In August the United States, in response to a recommendation by Ralph Bunche, pressured the Security Council, over the protests of Israel, into lifting its arms ban.³¹ At the time this action was taken Britain had increased its annual military subsidy to Transjordan from \$10 million to \$14 million; Syrian military expenditures had been raised so that they constituted more than half the budget; Egypt had announced the largest military appropriations in its history; Lebanon had for the first time introduced compulsory military service and greatly increased its arms budget. And Israel, which had been denied arms when it desperately needed them—with the United States taking the lead in that denial—was being told its respite from aggression must be converted into a frenzied effort to match the military preparations of the Arab states, even though this would mean, as the Tel Aviv correspondent of the *New York Times*, Gene Curvian, put it, "diverting funds earmarked for resettlement and economic rehabilitation to defensive requirements."³² And the entire Middle East was being plunged into an armaments race that could lead only to economic exhaustion and war.

At the second anniversary of the partition decision the United Nations, meeting again at Lake Success, had before it a new plan for extending the Anglo-American domain in Palestine: the proposal of the Conciliation Commission, which Washington held in the hollow of its hand, to "internationalize" Jerusalem under the authority of the U.N. This proposal would in effect have recognized and legalized the seizure of most of the Arab part of Palestine, including the Old City of Jerusalem, by the British puppet, King Abdullah of Jordan. And it would have placed Jerusalem under a U.N. commissioner responsible to the General Assembly where Washington was in a position to dictate policy. The United States pressed for the adoption of its plan, rejecting the pleas of Israel's government that only the Holy Places be internationalized and that the New City of Jerusalem, which had been so heroically defended by Jewish arms, be assigned to Israel.

Unfortunately the Israeli government's proposal had an unofficial and unexpressed appendix: Tel Aviv was engaged in secret negotiations with Jordan, widely reported in the press, for an

agreement which would recognize Abdullah's right to retain the Old City and the other fruits of his brutal aggression against Israel. This meant agreeing to British seizure of a slice of Palestine. Neither before nor during the U.N. session did Israel's government raise the demand that Abdullah's British guns, which were menacing Israel, be removed from the Old City and from the rest of Arab Palestine. Under the circumstances both the Washington-dictated Conciliation Commission plan and the government of Israel plan (in its actual form) would have resulted in strengthening imperialist positions to the detriment of Jews and Arabs.

The Israeli government's proposal proved to have little support in the United Nations. The debate centered around the kind of internationalization to be adopted. An alternative proposal by Australia provided for a more complete internationalization that conformed to the Vatican's ideas, while leaving Jerusalem's fate in the hands of the American-controlled Conciliation Commission. Some type of reactionary "internationalization" seemed certain of adoption when the Soviet Union stepped in and by drastic amendments to the Australian plan changed its character. The amendments eliminated the Conciliation Commission from the proposal (though the U.S.S.R. did not succeed in abolishing the commission entirely), placed the international regime under the supervision of the U.N. Trusteeship Council, in which the Soviet Union has an important voice, provided for greater democratization of the Jerusalem setup, and in general brought the plan into harmony with what had been projected for the Holy City in the original partition resolution. The Australian-Soviet proposal passed by 38 to 14, with 7 abstentions, the United States and Britain, as well as Israel, voting against it. Once more, thanks to the U.S.S.R. and its allies, imperialism had suffered a rebuff in Palestine.

For Israel all this should underline the experience of two turbulent, glorious and inglorious years: there is no sanctuary in imperialism; there is no refuge among those whose business is tyranny and war.

III. Cockpit of Empire

In Israel you are conscious more of Europe than of Asia. It is a Europe torn out of Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Germany, twisted and seared by the Hitler horror. Yet somehow all this that is so terribly alive already belongs to the past. Europe recedes. And America for these people exists only as a gargantuan political and financial enigma that smiles or frowns on Israel. Chiefly and almost exclusively you are conscious of Israel. This national self-preoccupation shuts out for most Israelis not only the thunder of approaching global storms, but even the lightning of the immediate neighborhood. Who would guess, from reading Zionist literature, that Israel is situated not on an elysian island, but in the vortex of the Middle East? Who would know, from the lyrical books and pamphlets, that Zionism chose to solve—after its fashion—the Jewish problem in the very spot where giant powers and trusts had chosen to solve—after their fashion—problems of their own?

The flight from Europe has intensified the mood of immersion in Israel. Yet the Yishuv's own experiences in the last few years have certainly dented and cracked the isolationist shell and thrust the rude realities of world politics and economics into the consciousness of large numbers of its citizens. But it would be an exaggeration to say that the majority have already shed illusions and the tendency to discount the explosive milieu that surrounds them.

One does not have to go far to encounter a striking physical expression of the Middle East reality. Squatting against the Haifa skyline are the yellow, funnel-shaped turrets of the British-owned oil refineries: a reminder that Israel's problems would be relatively simple, that it would not have had to fight a war in the very act