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Palestine

Albert Meltzer

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Palestine
1948

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the saddle, it is used throughout the Great Russian Empire of Eastern Europe to divide and rule.

INTERNATIONALIST

under the United Nations delusion, the fact is that conflict, in these circumstances inevitable, and victory will certainly go to the strongest side. The Powers are not really interested in any other solution, but are doing their best to use the Palestine struggle as one of the many pawns in the cold war.

NO EASY SOLUTION

As internationalists we ought not to delude ourselves into any other facile solution, but rather to look for hopes that in the future some measure of international co-operation will come about, not between governments or political leaders, but from the people from below, and in the meantime to expose such delusions as those spread by the leaders of all sides in any war. But the major deduction to be drawn from the Palestine conflict is the utter degeneration of Soviet Russia into Czarism, a fact known to everybody with the least perception who witnesses the flight of so many Jews from Europe, but one concealed not least by the Zionist parties who welcome Russian U.N.O. [United Nations Organization] support, and who have in any case a certain vested interest in anti-Semitism. There can be no denying the fact that if conditions were normal and decent in Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the other countries behind the Iron Curtain, there would be no "D.P. problem": the fact of open and silent pogroms in those countries causes the great exodus from Eastern Europe to the overladen D.P. camps of Germany and Italy, and the great freights of human cargo leaving the Danubian ports. The Communists may deny responsibility for this, but the fact remains that all opposition to Stalin has been stamped out in those countries and if Stalin so wished, anti-Semitism could not last a minute. It has not been tolerated in Russia for many years because of its identification with and exploitation by the "White" Czarists, but now that Red Czarism is so firmly in

The war in Palestine continues to take up headlines in the Press, as politicians bicker in pretences at armistices and parleys, not in the least in an endeavour to find a reasonable solution, but solely in order to preserve the balance of power existing in the "cold war".

The ironic nature of the war is that the opposing forces consider themselves as fighting against something which does not happen to be on the other side of the barricades. The thousands of immigrants arriving from Europe are passionately keen to defend their stakes in Israel, and after years in D.P. [Displaced Persons] camps and concentration camps they are anxious to "fight back"; but, of course, the Arabs they are fighting against were not responsible for European anti-Semitism. The Arabs regard themselves as fighting against European influence; to them it is a "new aggression of the West against the East" and they regard it as a par with British Imperialism or the Italian war in Abyssinia.

There is a certain amount of truth in both claims, because undoubtedly much of the outside criticism of Zionism comes from anti-Semitism and support for Zionism out of sympathy with Jewish victims of Nazi and other oppression in Europe. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the majority of Zionists regard the Arabs in the same way as other colonisers have regarded other "native inhabitants", and it is hardly an answer for the Israeli authorities to claim cooperation from certain Arab tribes, such as the Druses, who have always been on unfriendly terms with other Arabs and inclined towards their enemies. Similar tactics were pursued by the British in India.

There is not the slightest question of Jewish superiority in any renewed outbreak of fighting, no matter how rated the Arab, troops may have been in the past; and particularly since the British withdrawal enabled them to bring in thousands of Jewish D.P.s and also munitions from all over Europe, as well as volunteers. The Arabs accuse Britain of betraying their interests in withdrawing at the particular time it did (had it withdrawn in 1936, for instance, the Jews could have been militarily defeated by them, since at that time

they had no possibility of calling in large-scale immigration from Europe, importing arms from countries like Czechoslovakia, nor had they the thousands of British-trained troops from the war.) On the other hand, the Zionists generally have portrayed Britain as aiding the Arabs on the grounds of the association with Abdullah of Transjordan, and there is a left-wing picture (which is now accepted as truth by all Zionists) of Bevin forcing through a pro-Arab policy against the Cabinet's wish, and being able to call the war off any time he chose.

Bevin's ability to control the Arab States' policy in regard to Palestine (but not in regard to Egypt or the Sudan!) may be doubted. It is more certain that Britain has played a diplomatic game of keeping in with both sides: influencing the Arab countries by the military missions under Glubb, etc., and relying on the pro-British sentiments of Weizmann and the Social-Democrats on the Jewish side. An alternative theory is pointed out by many: namely, that Britain and America — who are agreed on policy in every country in the world — may be not so much at loggerheads over this one small country as may be imagined. America ostensibly and loudly backs the Jewish side and calls on their support in the case of war. This is convenient for whoever may be President (having to placate the New York Jewish vote) and in addition, American influence among European Jewish circles can be considered. On the other hand, Britain ostensibly backs the Arabs — she has "traditional friendships" among the Arab countries, and calls on their support in the case of war. The Jewish vote in this country does not count very highly; and in any case is not generally pro-Zionist. Thus, whoever wins is an ally against Russia for Britain — or America!

It cannot be doubted that Palestine may be an important focal point in another war, since Russia has seen the weakness of the Arab countries, and that even such a small body as Palestine Jewry can resist them all, and if it had not been restrained, might by now have toppled them all over. Her striking point in a war might well

be the oil fields of Iran and with only "Glubb's Girls" to stop them might soon be in Cairo. The Israeli leaders are well aware of their importance to world politics, and disinclined to give way over limiting their territory, to please the Arabs.

ARAB REFUGEES

Meanwhile, the most pressing of all post-war problems has received very little notice — namely the displacement of thousands of Arabs from their homes. These thousands became refugees not because of "misleading Arab propaganda" as the Israel Government claims, but because they feared terrorists attacks such as that of the Jewish Fascists on Deir Yassin, when a village which had actually not cooperated with and even resisted Arab terrorists, was massacred by Jewish terrorists. As the thousands of Jewish immigrants come in, the Israel Government can only accommodate them in the deserted Arab cities, and in such towns as Jaffa, transform it completely from an all Arab city to a Jewish city. Before very long, there will simply be nowhere for them to go back to, and having gone, the Israel Government does not particularly want them back, however it condemned the methods which drove them away.

It is futile and unreasonable to blame the Jewish immigrants for this problem of Arab homelessness; they have themselves certainly nowhere else to go, and are naturally bitter at the cynical ease with which Great Powers who deny the great open spaces under their control to settlers, declare that they ought not to go to Palestine but elsewhere. They cannot be expected to stay behind barbed wire and bars until their death, as has been apparently the view of the British Government in its great Cyprus concentration camp experiment (which still goes on). They are no more likely to consider Arab claims than the thousands of Europeans who swarmed to build up America considered the Indians. In spite of all the bunk about peace by settlement and negotiations between the Powers,