

THE PALESTINE QUESTION IN THE UNITED NATIONS :

INDIA'S ROLE, 1947 - 1950 //

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

India's interest in the Palestine question pre-dates its own independence. The Indian National Congress, which was spearheading the freedom struggle in the country, and which subsequently assumed power after departure of the British was, no doubt, primarily concerned in its programme of activities with national independence. It, however, took keen interest in the foreign affairs as well. The Congress in its annual sessions and in its working committee meetings used to pronounce its views on foreign policy issues and developments. Naturally enough, when the Palestine question cropped up on the international scene, it got the immediate attention of the prominent nationalist leadership and the Indian National Congress. The significance of the Congress attitude towards the Palestine question was two-fold. Firstly, it represented a kind of national consensus on the given issue, and secondly, the Congress's view also set the trend for the pursuit of foreign policy objectives after independence of the country. And given the nature of the Congress interest in the question of Palestine, it is not very surprising that after attaining independence when the nationalist leadership got directly involved in the conduct of foreign policy, the question of Palestine became one of the most significant issues of Indian foreign policy in the immediate post-independence period.

It should be noted that by the time the question of Palestine came to the United Nations, a provisional government

with Nehru as its head, was already instituted in New Delhi^{*}. The new government had already shown its independent thinking on foreign policy issues as reflected in its attitude towards the question of Indonesia. It had also taken certain independent initiatives like convening of the Asian Relations Conference (March 1947).

However, the question of Palestine represented new challenges to the new Government. It was not simply a question of granting independence to a colonial territory, but had its complexities because granting of independence was closely linked with the claims of the Zionist movement for a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

There was more to it. Though the situation was not exactly analogous to the Indian scene during the later phase of independence struggle, yet it was a bitter reminder of our experience in the sub-continent. In India a large section of Muslims, under the leadership of Muslim League, claimed that they constituted a separate nationality and on that basis demanded a separate homeland. In other words, in both the cases in the name of religion statehood was demanded. The nationalist leadership represented by the Indian National Congress which had opposed Muslim League's two nation theory in the sub-continent, could not accept almost the same arguments in the case of Palestine. The question, however, became all the more complex, because it got involved into cobweb

^{*}Reference here is to the Interim Govt. Nehru was the Vice-President and the Governor-General was the ex-officio President, with the explicit understanding that the new government would be fully independent of the British control in its Policy matters.

of the international power politics.

It is against this backdrop that an attempt has been made in this study to answer some of the questions that may naturally come up regarding India's role during the deliberations in the United Nations.

To what extent, if any, India's national interest was involved in a conflict situation far away from its own borders? Was India's support to the Arabs consistent with Nehru's assertion that 'we are interested in..... theory and practice of equal opportunities for all races'? And how did the Indian representative utilize the United Nations fora in the pursuit of their policy? And what impact of this question, if any, was on other questions vital to India's interests? Was it having any relevance to India's stand on the Kashmir question? To what extent, India's role and position it took, influenced the over all developments regarding the Palestine question?

These and other related questions are the subject of this study. The first chapter attempts to provide a background study of the Palestine questions and the developments leading to its referral to the General Assembly. This study also deals with India's interests in the question during the formative years. The second chapter analyzes the developments during the First Special Session of the General Assembly, which was convened to discuss and find solution of this problem. And the chapter following deals with the subsequent developments, involving controversy surrounding the implementation of the Partition Plan,

related proposal and the establishment of Israel. This chapter also covers the developments upto 1950, when Israel was admitted to the United Nations. In each of these phases analysed in the respective chapters, India's actions and interactions to the developments have also been examined, with a view to find an answer to the questions raised in this note. In the last chapter, an attempt has been made to draw some general conclusions and also to assess the performance of India in the United Nations during those early years.

So much has been written on the problem of Palestine, that it becomes a source of embarrassment when one gets down to the job and try to sift out the right material from the plethora of literature available on Palestine. On the other hand there is not much relevant material available on India's involvement in the question, particularly for those early years. Whatever literature is available, it mostly covers the Suez Crisis and the developments subsequent to it. I have to depend mostly on the United Nations documents. However, it is very easy particularly for a beginner like me, to get lost in the vast literature of United Nations official records, and loss the thread of the basic theme. It is here that I feel a deep sense of gratitude for my advisor Prof.K.P.Saksena, Professor, Centre for International Politics and Organisation, without whose constant guidance and utmost cooperation, I simply would not have been able to finish this modest study. I am also

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I also take this opportunity to thank the Librarian and the staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, the Indian Council of World Affairs Library, Sepru House and the American Centre Library, New Delhi. I am specially thankful to Mr.Bose and the staff of the UN Information Centre, New Delhi, for their maximum cooperation.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

SECTION I - THE EVOLUTION
OF THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

SECTION II - THE INDIAN
PERSPECTIVE BEFORE 1947

CHAPTER - I

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINE

The question of Palestine is a very intricate and the most illusive problem of the twentieth century. Right from the Balfour Declaration, this question has been intertwined with international power politics, having such far reaching ramifications as to involve all members of the international community. To obtain a proper perspective of the various issues involved in the problem and India's role therein, it is pertinent here to attempt a resume of the developments leading to a crisis situation in the 1940s.

Palestine, with an area of 10,435 square miles and occupying an strategic position as the meeting point of the three continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, has been the cradle of different civilizations in its chequered history of several thousand years.

The home of the three great religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the land of Palestine has been witness to the rise and fall of many a great races and civilizations. At the dawn of history, Palestine was occupied by the Cennanites who emigrated from the Arabian peninsula. Subsequently, the Philistines, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Crusaders and Turks have occupied this land at different periods in history. But amidst all these historical upheavals Palestine has maintained its essential Arab identity. Not only historically and linguistically but in its commercial, economic and social ties as well, it has remained an integral part of the Arab world.

At the turn of the century, Palestine formed a part of the decaying Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was on the side of Germany and therefore attracted concerted military offensive from the Allied powers. This offensive of the Allied powers against the Ottoman Empire was combined by seeking alliances with the Arab chieftains. It should be noted that much before the advent of the First World War, there were wide ranging agitations among the Arabs for seeking independence from the Empire and the Allies fully exploited the force of Arab nationalism against their adversary.

THE HUSSEIN - Mc MAHON CORRESPONDENCE

One of the interesting features of the World War I was that the propaganda and rhetorics had acquired an importance of their own, as part of the offensive against the enemy. Allied leaders, in their attempts to win over the people of the Arab world came out with attractive slogans and promises. High sounding verbiage like liberalism, democracy, self-determination, freedom were a common feature of various wartime propaganda and promises made by the Allied leaders. Not surprisingly, the Arabs also saw an occasion to rid themselves, of the Turkish overlordship, with the help of the Allies. The 'war-aims' of the Allies in the Arab territories, propagated from time to time had a tremendous appeal. These included guaranteed their liberation and development of their civilization";

to establish "national government and administration deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native population"; to recognise Arab independence as soon as "effectively establish"; and to ensure impartial and equal justice to all, to facilitate the economic development of the country... to foster the education..." etc.¹

Attracted, predictably, to these lofty ideals, the Arab chieftains chose to join the Allies. Sherif Hussein of Mecca, a spokesman of the Arab-cause approached Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Cairo, offering Arab aid in war against Turkey. What he sought in return was a British pledge of support to Arab independence within a certain territory which he specified as "bounded on north by Mercina and Adana upto 37° of latitude on which degree fall, Brijik, Urfa, Mardin, Midrat, Jezirat (Ibu Umar) Amadia upto the border of Persia, on the east by the borders of Persia upto the Gulf of Basra; on the south by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Eden to remain as it is; on the West by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean sea upto Mersina".²

1. M.N. Joseph Jeffries; "Palestine - The Reality", (New York; Longmans Gree & Co., 1939); pp.237-238.

2. Sami Hadawi, "The Bitter Harvest", Palestine 1914-1917 (Delvar, N.Y.; The Carvan Books, 1979).

This was the first letter written on 14 July 1915, by Sherif Hussein to McMahon. The correspondence continued for some time between the two from July 1915 to March 1916 and now consists of ten letters and is known as Hussein-McMahon correspondence.

These correspondence culminated into a British promise of Arab independence as follows:

"The two districts of Mersina and Alexandrotts and portions of Syria lying to the west of the district of Damascus, Homs; Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab and should be excluded from the limits demanded".³

McMahon went on to say,

"...I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give the following assurances and make the following reply to your letter -4

Subject to above modifications Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca".⁵

3. Ibid., p.11.

4. Ibid., p.11.

5. The British Government later contended the Palestine was independent and claimed that the area cited as using 'west of the Damascus Homa, Hama and Aleppo was excluded.

A Committee was formed in 1934 to study the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence. Sir Michael McDonell, former chief justice of Palestine expressed the opinion that "Palestine was included" otherwise why speak of district of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, not one of which is east of Palestine and all of which go northward in that order away from Palestine?....He also remarked -"Why, if Palestine was to be described, speak of Lake Habb, the River Jordan, the Lake of Tiberias and the Dead Sea as the eastern boundaries?"

That the Hussein-McMahon correspondence was not more than a political trick to enrol Arabs' sympathies for war purposes is proved beyond doubt by the fact that it could not prevent the British from entering into secret agreement with France and Russia known as Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916.⁶

However, the crowning act of the British betrayal of the Arabs' faith and hypocrisy was the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The Balfour Declaration was a bizzare document. However, the pronouncements were not made inadvertently and "was weighed to the last penny weight before it was issued".⁷

The Committee's findings were - "In the opinion of the Committee, it is, however, evident from these statements that His Majesty's Government were not free to dispose of Palestine without regard for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants of Palestine and these statements must all be taken into account in any attempt to estimate the responsibilities which upon any interpretation of the correspondence - His Majesty's Government have incurred towards these inhabitants as a result of the correspondence".

Hadawi, No.2., p.11.

6. This secret agreement was about the dismemberment of the Arab territories among the three after the war. This was not only a breach of faith but it contained provisions which were in direct conflict with the terms of Sir Henry McMahon's compact with Shouf Hussein.

For a detailed analysis of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see "Arab Awakening" - George Antonius. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938).

7. Jefferies, No.2, Chapter XI - "Analysis of the Balfour Declaration".

Though the Declaration was issued by the British Government but the most significant role in its formation was played by the Zionist movement. One may have different opinion, still it is not an exaggeration to say that the British diplomacy with the zeal of the Zionist movement which has the dubious distinction of turning Palestine into a 'problem'.

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT⁸

Zionism as a facet of Jewish and Christian thought is several centuries old. As a political movement, however, Zionism is a creation of the 19th century. The founder of organized political Zionism was Theodor Herzl a Hungarian Jew educated in Vienna. In 1885, he composed a pamphlet entitled "Der Judenstaat" (The Jewish State) which advocated the establishment of British sponsored Jewish colonization of Argentina or Palestine with a view to eventual creation of a sovereign Jewish National State.⁹

8. There are any number of studies on the Zionist movement. However, for various view points on the origin and nature of the Zionist movement following books are of immense help: Nahum Goldmann, The Genesis of Herzl & Zionism To-day (Jerusalem: Zionism Executive, 1955); Israel Cohen, A short History of Zionism and The Zionist Movement (both published by Frederick Muller Ltd., London, 1951); Jacob C. Hurewitz, The Struggle for Palestine - The fallacies & Dangers of Political Zionism (N.Y.: The Macmillan & Co., 1919). Abram Leon, The Jewish Question - A Marxist Analysis; and Arthur Kootsber, Promise and Fulfilment, Palestine 1917-49 (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1949).

9. Herzl's ideas are contained in his book translated by Sylvia D'Anigdor, "The Jewish State, an Attempt at a Modern Solution of Jewish Question" (N.Y.: Scopus Pub.Co., 1943).

Subsequently, Herzl, with his associates, succeeded in convening the First Zionist Congress at Basle in August 1897. This Basle Congress terminated with the formulation of an official programme. The ultimate goal was outlined in these words: "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law".¹⁰ The steps to be taken in contemplation of fulfilment of this aim were: (i) the promotion of Jewish colonization of Palestine; (ii) the establishment of an organization to bind world Jewry by means of an institution in each country containing Jews; and; (iii) the strengthening of Jewish national sentiment; and (iv) the acquisition of government consent to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

The aim of Zionism, as stated in the official programme of the Congress was, as Herzl conceived it, except for the fact that he contemplated a 'State' rather than a 'home'. However, those who formulated the programme, though concurred with Herzl, on this matter, realized that many Jews, indeed a majority at that time objected to the idea of a Jewish nation not to mention the objections of the Turkish government: Thus

10. Jacob G. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and the Middle-East - A Documentary Record, (Princeton: N.J.D. Van Nostran Co. Inc., 1956), p.209.

in accordance with the requirement of the Zionist programme dealing with the problem of backing of world Jewry, they deliberately used the word 'Heimstätt' (Homestead). This prevented the programme from being offensive to non-political Zionist and at the same time implied the creation of an autonomous community which could easily be construed as implying as statehood, a later date. Herzl himself remarked on this matter by saying, "No need to worry. The people will read it as Jewish, state, anyhow".¹¹

The Basle Congress also brought into existence the world Zionist Organization. This organization was to play henceforth a highly crucial role in the creation of Israel. The organization served as the government proper of a pre-natal Israel. Thus in 1897, the aim and policies of political Zionism were established and a government structure was brought into existence to seek attainment of aim through implementation of the policies.

Herzl was elected the first President of the Zionist Organization and believed that the most important policy requirement of political Zionism was the acquisition of an internationally recognized legal right to colonize Palestine. Accordingly, he met Kaiser Wilhelm II and ^{the} Ottoman Sultan but failed to convert them to his idea of a Jewish State in Palestine.

11. Alan R. Taylor, Prelude to Israel - An analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897 - 1947 (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1970).

Later he turned towards the British in 1902 and found them sympathetic. And with the outbreak of World War I, the whole complexion of international politics changed. However, when he died in 1904 he had set the things rolling.

By the time the war broke out, Chaim Weizmann, a Jewish Chemist from Russia, had emerged as the most important leader of Zionism. He knew that the British could be the most important sympathiser of Zionism. And as a part of his strategy, he started cultivating friendship with the British Politicians like Lloyd George, Herbert Samuel and Arthur Balfour Balfour has called Weizmann, "the man who made me Zionist".¹²

In November 1914, Dr. Weizmann outlined the Zionist position to be laid before the British Government. In concise form goals were: (1) an Allied victory, (2) the establishment of a British mandate in Palestine, (3) an understanding that such a British mandat^e~~ory~~ would then facilitate the entry of a million or more Jews into Palestine within a period of twenty to thirty years after the mandate was established, (4) an understanding that the mandate would terminate in a Jewish controlled Palestine which would continue to serve Britain's interest in the Suez Canal by setting as a bulwark to the defence of that waterway. It is interesting to note that all four points have been fulfilled."¹³

12. Ibid., p.10.

13. Ibid., p.13.

Though the Zionist had many sympathisers in the cabinet but PM Herbert Asquith did not buy the Zionist idea. However, Weizmann soon got the opportunity. He learnt that the British Government was in need of a method to produce alltone for explosives in large quantities. During 1915 Weizmann developed such a method and in 1916 he was appointed to the Admiralty under the supervision of Belfour.

It was at this point, early in 1916 that the British Government began to consider actively a more favourable official attitude towards Zionism.

In December 1916 Lloyd George became Prime Minister thus further simplifying the Zionist task.

With the positive help from the British Government the Zionist succeeded in converting the French and Russian and Italian government also to their ideas.

On 18 July, the Zionist submitted a draft to the Belfour. Because of the protests of the anti-Zionist Jewry some modifications were made before its acceptance by the cabinet. Which later came to be known as the Balfour Declaration.

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

The Balfour Declaration was stunning victory for the Zionist diplomacy.¹⁴ Nonetheless this diplomatic coup was

14. Sir Charles Webster, a British high official who was involved in the process has remarked on the Balfour Declaration as "one of the best examples of....successful diplomacy". Sir Charles Webster, "The Art, Practice of Diplomacy". The Listner, 18 Feb. 1952, pp.335.

brought about because the British government had also seen some practical benefit from it. This is obvious from the statements and comments by the leading British statemen of the time. For example, Winston Churchill says, "The Balfour Declaration must, therefore, not be regarded as a promise given from sentimental motives; it was a practical measure taken in the interests of a common cause at a moment when that cause could afford to neglect no factor of material or moral assistance."¹⁵

In fact, it was the obsessive desire to win the friendship of world Jewry that influenced the war cabinet's decision to issue the Declaration. Lloyd George himself has admitted, "The Zionist leaders", he writes, "gave me a definite promise that if Allies committed themselves to a National Home for Jews in Palestine, they would do their best to rally to the Allied cause... Jewish sentiment throughout the world. They kept their words in letter and a spirit."¹⁶

The British statemen were also counting on the military benefit of this Declaration. Lloyd George admits,

15. Quoted in Stephen Wise & Jacob De Haas "The Great Betrayal", N.Y.: Brentano, 1930, p.288.

16. Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel - From the Rise of Zionism to our Time: Oxford Basil Blackwell, 1977, p.109.

"There is no better proof of the value of the Balfour Declaration as a military move than the fact that Germany entered into negotiations with Turkey in an endeavour to provide an alternative scheme which would appeal to Zionists".¹⁷

Among other factors was the genuine personal affinity of Balfour and Lloyd George for the Holy Land and the Jewish People. "Other in the cabinet may have been animated by even more complex motives - for example, protestant millennialism, an uneasy conscience about Jewish sufferings.."¹⁸

According to Mr. Menachem Begin the former Israeli Prime Minister, the Great Britain approved of the Jewish Home in Palestine because it "would enable Britain to takeover control of Palestine without seeming to.. such a policy would also help British interests in America, for the Jews there had influence".¹⁹

In fact this variable was very crucial to the British government. 1916 was disastrous year for the Allies. Losses on the western Front were three men for every two German casualties, while German submarines were taking a heavy toll of allied shipping. The Allies only hope was for the United States to enter the war on their side. It was thought that

17. George David Lloyd, 'Memoirs of the peace Conference' (N.Y.: Yale Univ. Press, 1939), vol. II, p.738.

18. Sachar., no.16. p.109.

19. Menachem Begin, 'The Revolt' (N.Y.: Nash Publishing, 1978), p.131.

a formal declaration of British pledge to establish Jewish national home in Palestine, would win many influential Jews in America and would bring America into the war.²⁰ And it is with this intention that the British mandate was established in Palestine.

BRITISH MANDATE OF PALESTINE

Article 22 of the Government of the League of Nations had provided for the mandate provisions. Palestine according to the plan came under the British mandate.

The Mandate included in the Preamble a text of the Balfour Declaration. There were many other provisions in the Mandate text, which spoke of the responsibility of the administration for establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine and recognizing Jewish Agency, and emphasizing its participation with the administration for the same.²¹

The Mandate provision was in itself no more than a crude attempt of the Allied to sugar coat their colonial design. But the British mandate over Palestine was even more bizzare. The Mandate, which ostensibly at least, contained two sets of obligations to be undertaken by Britain - one towards the Jews and other towards the Arabs - was drawn up jointly by the British Government and the Zionists. The Arabs who were the inhabitants of the land were not even consulted. Nor did the Mandate take into account the pledges of independence made previously to the Arabs.²²

20. For detailed discussion on the Balfour Declaration, see James Malcolm, "Origins of the Balfour Declaration (Zionist Archives) - Jerrries, "Palestine the Reality", ch. IX, no. 2.

21. Hadavi, no. 3, p. 40.

Subsequently, the British administration in league with the Jewish Agency systematically set upon the task of converting Palestine into a Jewish National Home. One of the early actions of the mandatory power was to enact first Immigration Ordinance on 26 August 1920, fixing a quote of 16,500 immigrant Jews for the first year.²³

One after other legislation followed and the cultural, ethnic and linguistic complexion of Palestine went on changing.

At the close of the World War I in 1918, Palestine was an Arab country, similar to other parts of the Arab world. It had a population of 700,000 of whom 574,000 were Muslims, 70,000 were Christians, and 56,000 were Jews. The latter were mostly Arabs of the Jewish faith.²⁴

22. It is not that British statesmen were not aware of their hypocrisy but they were too committed to Zionism to think of anything else. No other than Balfour has admitted it. In 1919, Balfour wrote a memorandum on Syria, Palestine and Iraq in which he accepted the contradictions in Allies promises to the Arabs and their actual policy after the war. He writes, "The contradiction between the latter of the Covenant and the policy of the Allies is even more flagrant in the case of the independent nation of Syria. For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country.... The four great powers are committed to Zionism and be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of 700,00 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land". In Christopher Sykes, "Cross Roads to Israel"- Palestine from Balfour to Belvin Collins, London, 1965, p.17.

23. Hadarâ, no.3, p.42.

24. Ibid, p.43.

Reliable data on the whole population of Palestine was collected twice during the thirty years of British Administration in 1922 and 1931. After the Census of 1931 regular quarterly and annual estimates of the population classified by religion, were kept by Palestine Government, Department of Statistics. Figures of these estimates are very revealing. According to these figures "the proportion of the Jews to the total population rose from 8 percent in 1916 to about 12 percent in 1922, to about 17 percent in 1931, and to about 31 percent in 1944. The pace of these increase in the size of the Jewish community is all the more startling considering the fact that the rate of net natural increase among the Palestinian Arabs was about 50 percent higher than that among Palestine Jews (32% and 22% respectively). It was large-scale immigration that accounted for the fast rise in the ratio of the Jews to the total population".²⁵

In 1918 the Jews owned only two percent of land. During the ensuing thirty years the Jews brought their total land holdings on the date of the termination of the mandate in May 1948 to "over 15 percent of the cultivable area of Palestine".²⁶

25. Ibid, p.44.

26. Palestine Government Memorandum submitted to UNSCOP, dated 12 July 1947 cited in Hadani, n.3, p.44.

Arab opposition to the Mandate and the policy of the Balfour Declaration remained obstinate and unbending throughout the period of the Mandate. The Arabs protests ranged from appeals, demonstration, to strikes and finally to violent outbursts. Several riots took place from 1920 to 1939. Subsequently many 'statements of Policy' were issued by the British Administration from time to time. The first 'White Paper', known as 'Churchill Memorandum' was issued which repudiated the idea of Jewish domination over the Arabs. In May 1939 the Administration issued a final 'The Statement of Policy' which became known as 'The McDonalds White Paper'. In which the Government, among other things, decided "That the Jewish National Home as envisaged in the Balfour Declaration and in previous statements of British policy had been established,... that only 75,000 more Jew immigrants would be admitted in the next five years, that during these five years restriction would be placed on the further acquisition of land by the Jews; and that at the end of the five years period, self-governing institutions would be established".²⁷

Arabs reaction to this new 'Statement of Policy' was mixed. But the Zionists unanimously condemned it and took to streets in opposition to this policy.

27. Ibid, p.43.

With the outbreak of the war both the Arabs and the Jews ceased their political activities. But soon the Jews and Zionist organizations again resumed their terrorist activities by the end of January 1944 and continued until the end of the Mandate in 1948. British high officials deemed as anti-Zionists, Government buildings, railway tracks so important public places were the main target of attacks by the Zionist terrorists.

On 24 July 1946, the Mandatory Government issued a 'Statement of Information relating to Acts of Violence' in which it declared that the information which was in the possession of His Majesty's Government has led them to conclusion that the Hagana²⁸ and its associate force, the Palwach (working under the political control of prominent members of the Jewish Agency) have been engaging

28. Responsibility for the acts of violence in Palestine between 1943 and 1948 rested entirely with Hagana (meaning 'Defence') and its two splinter groups, the Irgun Zvai Leumi (national Military Organization) and the Stern Gang (Freedom Fighters). The Irgun split from the mother organisation - Hagana - in 1935, the Stern Gang in turn split from the Irgun in 1939. Hagana adhered to a Socialist philosophy and obeyed the orders of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The Irgun owed political allegiance to the Revisionists, the extreme nationalist wing of the Zionist movement.

in carefully planned movements of sabotage and violence under the guise of the Jewish Resistance Movement.²⁹

In 1947, at the height of Zionist acts of terrorism and sabotage, the Mandatory Government made one last attempt to settle the Palestine problem by suggesting to both Arabs and Jews that British trusteeship over Palestine should continue for another five years with the declared object of preparing the country as a whole for independence.

The Arabs presented their own proposals for independence with guarantees for Jewish minority rights which were unacceptable to the British Government. The Jewish Agency, on the other hand, rejected the Government proposals outright and intensified its terrorist and sabotage activities.

On 18 February 1947, the British Foreign Secretary announced in the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government had found that "the Mandate has proved to be unworkable in practice, that the obligations undertaken to the two communities had been shown to be irreconcilable", and therefore had the intention of giving it up.³⁰

29. For the complete text of the British White Paper which appeared under the title "Great Britain, Colonial Office, Palestine Statement of Information Relating to Acts of violence, July 24 1940, Cmd. 6873 (London, His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1946).

30. Hadawi, n.3, p.58.

Subsequently on 2 April 1947, the United Kingdom delegation to the United Nations, addressed a letter to the Secretary of the United Nations requesting that the question of Palestine be placed on the agenda of the next regular session of the General Assembly and that the Special Session of the General Assembly be summoned as soon as possible for the purpose of constituting and instructing a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the question by the Assembly at its next regular session.³¹

However before we further proceed we shall have a brief look at the attitude of Indian leadership and the Indian National Congress towards the question of Palestine, before India's independence.

SECTION - II

THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE BEFORE 1947.

India's West Asian policy is generally identified with India's attitude towards Palestine question. Though this is not the whole truth yet it is significant because of two reasons. Firstly, because for a long time prior to emergence of Gulf as a crisis area in the region, the Palestine question has been the storm centre of West Asia

31. We shall have a detailed look at this in the following chapters.

and secondly, because India had full involvement in this issue from the very beginning. Another significant point to be noted in this context is that India's approach towards the Palestine problem has been marked by continuity over the years. This of course has resulted in some confusion particularly for an outside observer. So there is hardly any surprise that many critics at home and abroad have mistaken India's approach to the Palestine problem as anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli. It is correct that on this particular India's stand has never been in accordance with the Zionists' perception of things. And yet it has never been because of any anti-Jewish feelings in the official policy-making circles in the foreign office. The fact is that India's attitude has been conditioned by her perception of things with global and regional implications.

Independent India's foreign policy has its roots in the past, in the colonial India. And as is often suggested the story of India's foreign policy has been a story of change in the over all framework of continuity. And as has been referred earlier this is true in the present case as well.

India's attitude on this question was formed much earlier, in fact with the birth of the problem itself, what is worth noting here is the Indian policy towards the Palestine issue was not inconsistent with over all policy framework formally enunciated by Nehru only in 1956. And

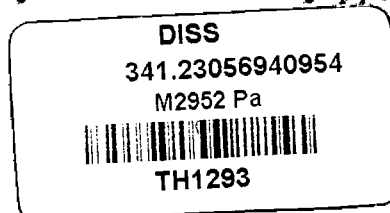
even after more than three decades of independence that policy has been followed with an amazing degree of consistency and continuity which makes it all the more fascinating reading.

Pandit Nehru's speech on 7 September 1946 as the Head of the interim Government was the first formal official declaration of the general line that the independent India was to follow in the foreign affairs. In this speech five cardinal points had emerged that independent India set before itself in the foreign policy sphere.³² They were:

1. Pursuit of world peace not through alignment of groups and powers but through independent approach regarding each international conflicts;
2. Liberation of subject people from colonial yoke;
3. Elimination of racial discrimination;
4. Promotion of individual freedom; and
5. Freedom from ignorance, poverty, illiteracy, etc. that is, the socio-economic upliftment of the needy people world over.

These were very lofty ideals, no doubt, but no serious student of Indian foreign policy can deny that India

32. Nehru spoke inter-asia- "We propose as far as possible, to keep away from power politics of groups, aligned against one another... We are particularly interested in the emancipation of colonial and dependent countries and people and in the recognition in theory and practice of equal opportunities for all races... It is for one world that free India will work for, a world in which there is the free cooperation of free people and no class or group exploits another". For full text of the speech, see J.L. Nehru Speeches, vol. I, Pub. Division, pp. 2&3.



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under Nehru did try to follow these principles very consistently. And that India did achieve a certain amount of success in pursuing these principles is because of the fact that though lofty, these were not utopian sentiments. They were based on solid grounds and clear understanding of the things. And though they were formally declared only in 1946, they had crystalized much earlier - during the national struggle against colonial domination. In fact, the Indian movement for national independence was an unique phenomenon in many ways. Apart from being very clear as to how the country would be administered after independence, it had also developed a very clear understanding about the various international questions and how independent India would react to them. The leadership of the nationalist movement, particularly Nehru and Gandhi, was very articulate about the various international questions. They expressed their view on almost all the important international questions without inhibition. And their views represented the nationalist view as against the British official view. And it is their views which was accepted as the views of the Indian National Congress. And ultimately it very much conditioned independent India's foreign policy.

In fact the very first session the Congress in 1885 had passed a resolution on foreign policy. The resolution³³

33. The paragraph of the resolution said - "That this Congress deprecated the annexation of upper Burma and considers that if the govt. unfortunately decided on annexation, the entire country of Burma should be separated from the India Viceroyalty and constituted a Crown Colony as distinct in all
(contd..next page)

had 'depreciated' the annexation of Upper Burma probably because it was feared that it "would lead to the increased taxation in India".³⁴ However, this set the tone for the subsequent Congress resolutions on the foreign affairs. And subsequently in almost all the sessions the Congress expressed its views on different foreign policy issues. Thus it opposed British expansionist moves across India's North-West frontiers, dismissed as unconvincing the Russophobia that had bogged down the British foreign policy-makers. ↵

However, it should not be forgotten that at this juncture Congress line was not exactly independent of the official influence. In fact these resolutions were in the nature of suggestions for achieving the British interests in a better way. It was only from 1921 onwards that an independent outlook emerged. It was for the first time in Delhi Session of AICC in 1921 that the Congress expressed the words 'resolution on Foreign Policy'. But more significant was the fact that the above mentioned resolution clearly laid "that the present Govt. of India in no way represents Indian opinion and that their policy

matters from the govt. of this country as in Ceylon".
Quoted in - "How India wrought for Freedom", Annie Besant, p.14.

34. Bimal Prasad, "Origins of Indian Foreign Policy", The Indian National Congress and World Affairs, 1885-1947, p.38.

has been traditionally guided by considerations more of holding India in subjection than of protecting her borders". This resolution had also asked 'other non-Indian states' to refrain from entering into any treaty with the Imperial power.³⁵

One of the significant factors that had helped this clear enunciation of independent outlook was the emergence of Gandhi as a highly significant factor in Indian politics. It was on him that the mantle of leadership fell and proved to be the most decisive factor for the subsequent course of the national movement. And Gandhi had a very clear understanding of the international political situation. And it is not very surprising that the 1st Non-Cooperation Movement that he launched along with the Khilafat Movement was on a foreign policy issue. This was an occasion of tremendous significance. From now onwards the Congress started thinking in terms of an independent India's relation with other countries and not as what is the best course for British India. Accordingly, the Congress made a formal declaration to this effect in November 1921. Gandhi was

35. Delhi, AICC, 1921, Resolution VI, "The Background of India's Foreign Policy" ed. N. V. Raj (Foreign Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1952.

This resolution also said "that the Congress should let it be known to the neighbouring and other non-India states... that India a self-governing country can have nothing to fear from the neighbouring states or any state as her people have no designs upon any of them and hence no intention of establishing any trade relations hostile to or not desired by the people of such states".

entrusted with the task of preparing a draft which was subsequently sponsored by the Congress Working Committee and adopted as the first formal declaration of independence from British foreign policy, and first clear-cut exposition of the nationalist views on the foreign policy.

Gandhi wrote on this occasion³⁶ - "Indeed, while we are maturing our plans for Swaraj, we are bound to consider and define our foreign policy. Surely we are bound authoritatively to tell the world what relations we wish to cultivate with it... We must not be afraid to speak our mind on all that concerns the nation".

However, it was Nehru, who more than anyone else, had advocated 'the study of the Indian problem against wider international background'. Gandhi and Nehru together helped chart-out a foreign policy outlook for Congress. And their stand on international problems like Palestine question, Sino-Japanese War, Spanish question, World War II were more or less became the stand of the Congress and subsequently of the nation.

THE PERSPECTIVE ON PALESTINE

So it will be seen that the Indian leadership during the freedom movement itself had developed a matured and clear thinking on foreign policy issues. It is hardly

36. Ibid., p.73

surprising then, that on the question of Palestine also the Congress took a very clear stand from the very beginning. And the significant thing that is to be noted is that in that period of limited developments in communication facilities, when there were all sorts of impediments in gathering information, the Congress took a stand which^{is} very surprisingly almost touched the essence of the matter. And in this the top leadership of the Congress showed a remarkable understanding of the whole affair.

When in the early decades of this century particularly after 20's the demand for a Jewish national home got momentum the Congress leadership very categorically expressed their views on this issue. It is to be noted that the Congress had time and again expressed its sympathies with the struggling people of Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Morocco. However, the proposal for a Jewish national home in Palestine could not find favour with the Congress leadership. Gandhi rejected the idea of national home on the ground that the Palestine of Biblical conception is not a geographical fact. He wrote in his paper Harijan under the caption "The untouchables of Christianity" "... if they must look to the Palestine of Geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of British gun".³⁷

37. Harijan 1938, Nov. 26, for the full text, see M. K. Gandhi, My Non-Violence, compiled and edited by Shillesh Kumar Bandhopadhyaya, pp. 70-72 and 73-74.

At another occasion Gandhi told a Reuter correspondent³⁸ that the Palestine problem was almost insoluble, that there was no value in their demands, if it was a mere political hankering. To Nehru the Arab-Jewish row over Palestine "was essentially an economic conflict between the new-comers and the old residents".³⁹

Subsequently, several resolutions expressing sympathy with the cause of Palestine Arabs were passed in the 30's by the Congress. In the Calcutta session in 1928 and again in the Wardha session in 1936 the AICC sent its greetings to the struggling people of Palestine.⁴⁰ Next year the AICC

"recorded its emphatic protest against the reign of terror that has been established in Palestine by British Imperialism with a view to coerce the Arabs into accepting the proposed partition of Palestine".⁴¹

In 1938 the Congress came out with a very hard-hitting resolution on Palestine. This resolution minced no

38. Quoted in D.G. Tendulkar - Mahatma, p.189.

39. Nehru - Glimpses of World History, pp.762-65.

40. Prasad, no.37, pp.48-49.

41. Ibid., p.54

words and said -

"The Congress condemns the decision of Great Britain as a Mandatory Power to bring about the partition of Palestine in the teeth of the opposition of the Arabs and appointment of a commission to carry out this project". This resolution also said that "the Congress holds that the proper method of solving the problem by which the Jews and the Arabs are faced in Palestine is by amicable settlement between themselves and appeals to the Jews not to seek the shelter of the British Mandatory and not to allow themselves to be exploited in the interests of British imperialism. (Haripura, 1938, Res.VIII.42)

Immediately before the break out of the World War II in 1939, the Congress again passed a resolution on Palestine. It said - "While sympathising with the plight of the Jews in Europe and elsewhere, the Congress deplors that in Palestine the Jews have relied on British armed forces to advance their special privileges and thus obliged themselves on the side of imperialism. The Congress trusts that the Arabs and Jews will endeavour to find a basis for direct cooperation with a view to establishing an independent democratic state in Palestine with adequate protection of Jewish rights". (Tripuri 1939, Resolution VII).⁴³

The Congress approach to the question of a Jewish national home had naturally aroused mixed reactions from different quarters; and explanations were never lacking for its reason.

42. Raj, no. p.13.

43. Raj, no.3, p.132.

One line of argument was that the Zionists activities in Palestine and their liaison with the imperialist forces had made them suspicious in the eyes of the Congress. This was strengthened by the internal compulsions of the Congress - meaning thereby the Muslims' pressure on the Congress. The western and Zionist scholars have particularly harped on this later argument as a possible explanation to Congress's opposition to the establishment of Jewish national home in Palestine and Government of India's subsequent policy toward Israel.⁴⁴

Even some Indian observers tend to believe that Congress opposition to the Jewish national home was a kind of emotional reaction to such issues as colonialism, to nationalism and imperialism, etc.⁴⁵

However, this also is not a very convincing explanation of the Congress attitude. After all the Jews were not a colonial power at that time. In fact they were a persecuted lot, in a sense, at that time. And their desperate

44. Michael Brecher, Werner Levi, Dr. Walter Lyton, among others have argued on this line. See, for details, Michael Brecher's 'Nehru - a Political Biography' London, 1954 and 'New States of Asia, A Political Analysis' London, 1978.

45. For instance, an Indian observer says - "India's WANA (West-Asia and North Africa) policy before 1947 consisted primarily in emotional commitment to certain issues like religion, ... anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, Arab-nationalism Arab Unity, etc."

K.R.Singh, 'India and WANA', in Bimal Prasad, (ed.), Indian Foreign Policy, Continuity and Change, p.625.

attempt to acquire a national home carried certain amount of sympathies in India also. Why then the Congress stalwarts opposed the establishment of Jewish national home in Palestine? Mahatma Gandhi gave his opinion on this issue in the following words:

"My sympathies are all with the Jews... But my sympathies do not blind me to the requirements of justice... Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English and France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine to-day can not be justified by any moral code of conduct.... Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home".

He further wrote: "The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and lived. The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French..." Gandhi further added: "I am not defending

"I am not defending the Arab excesses. I wish they had chosen the way of non-violence in resisting what they rightly regarded as unarrantable encroachment upon their country. But according to the accepted canons of rights and wrongs, nothing can be said against the Arabs resistance in the face of overwhelming odds".⁴⁶

This should also be remembered that the Congress had formulated this policy much before her own independence and the emergence of Israel. Even the United Nations Organisation had not emerged that time from the ashes of the Great War.

46. Bandhopadhy, n.O, 40.

Naturally it would be too far-fetched to say that the Congress was totally motivated by self-interest as claimed by both the over-enthusiastic supporters and the bitter critics of this policy. While the supporters of the policy would like us to believe that it was vital for India to support the Palestinian cause for India's self interest the detractors would suggest that it was only a false perception of their interests by the Indian leadership that they adopted such policy. Both these conclusions, however, do not withstand the rigour of the analysis of this phenomenon. It was neither a wholly selfishly motivated stand neither it was a false perception of the things. It was based on concrete foundations.

For one thing it was only natural for the Congress to extend its full support to the colonial people fighting against the imperialism and their lackeys, being in conformity with our own movement for independence.

One must not forget that at this juncture Muslim League's demand for Pakistan was gaining momentum which was an anathema to the Congress. How could it support almost the same demand in Palestine which it was opposing tooth and nail in India? Parallels can easily be drawn between the Zionists' movement for Jewish National Home in Palestine and the Muslim League's clamour for Pakistan in the sub-continent. In both the cases the demand for a nation-state was being made in the exclusive religious identities of the

people. In both the cases the colonial master, incidentally the British in both the cases - were favourably drawn towards such demands and helping it in one way or the other. For one thing the Zionists demand for Palestine was even more illogical than Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. At least in the Indian sub-continent there was no importation and infiltration of any people from outside to change the demographic balance of the territory. Moreover, there was no organised terrorist activities in the Indian-sub-continent. In the Indian context it was, at worst, the partition of the country among two communities, already inhabiting the land. In the context of Palestine it was different. Jews were being imported from all over the world to create a demographic imbalance and then to dominate the original inhabitants. And the Congress was opposing the movement for Pakistan on ideological and principled grounds, could not support or even overlook a more illogical and glory movement so near our land.

More so it was clear from the events and from the resolutions passed by the Congress that the Congress detested the part played by the Zionist organization in Palestine apparently with the active support of the British imperialists. Was it not natural to see with apprehension the creation of a state in Asia amidst the newly independent nations, who would be totally dependent on the imperialist powers for

its survival? And did not this apprehension ultimately proved to be correct?⁴⁷

It was against this backdrop that India had joined the UNSCOP. And the first hand knowledge of the phenomena that India acquired in the UNSCOP only corroborated in the past understanding of the problem.

47. Israel's aggressive postures after its establishment, its continuous aggression against its neighbours and its performance as an extension of outer post of the American interests has proved correct the worst suspicion against the Jewish state. Israel's current aggression on Lebanon (1982) has knocked the bottom out of the plea that Israel is struggling for its survival. It is simply a case of might is right.

CHAPTER II THE PALESTINE QUESTION IN
THE UNITED NATIONS

SECTION I - THE FIRST
SPECIAL SESSION

SECTION II - THE UNITED NATIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

CHAPTER - II

THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

By early 1947 the situation in Palestine had become very explosive. The Arabs had never accepted the Balfour Declaration and were opposed to the continuance of the British mandate in Palestine. Their protest to the policies of the mandatory ranged from demonstrations and strikes to sporadic violence outbreaks from time to time. On the other side as a result of large scale migration, both official and clandestine and smuggling of arms the Zionists had built up strength and were indulging in acts of violence and arson, sometimes verging on genocide. To further complicate the situation, the British Government was facing pressure from various quarters, particularly the United States and the Jewish lobby active in various governments for the creation of the Jewish home-land in Palestine. And at the same time the British were not in a position to disregard the Arab pressure because their vital economic interests were at stake. Caught in the dilemma and confusion, the British suddenly realised, as it were, of the potentialities of the United Nations, which could rescue them from the Palestinian quagmire. This was clearly an instance of what is known in the UN jargons as 'passing the buck'. It was against this background that

I. At the meeting of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom admitted, "we have tried for years to solve the problem of Palestine. Having failed so far we now bring it to the United Nations in the hope that it can succeed where we have not. All we say, is that we should not have the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience".

GAOR, "First Special Session, 15th May 1948, vol III,
pp.183-84.

the British Government referred the Palestine question to the United Nations. Alexander Cadogan, head of the UK delegation informed the world body of the intention of his Government by a note addressed to the Secretary General.

The letter invoking article 10 of the Charter² requested that the question of Palestine be placed on the agenda of the next regular session of the General Assembly. The letter also asked that a special session be called to constitute and instruct a Special Committee to prepare for the consideration of the General Assembly, the agenda relevant to the question.³

Subsequently, the Special Session was summoned to meet at Flushing Meadow, New York, on April 28, 1947. F. Ventengerhone of Belgium was elected acting Chairman, at the opening meeting of the session, that is, in the 68th plenary meeting of the General Assembly. Oswaldo Aranha, the Chairman of the Brazilian delegation was elected President by 45 votes out of 50 votes. The session went on to elect the General Committee.⁴ India, with six other nations, was elected for the 7 posts of Vice-President in the General Committee.⁵

2. The Article 10 reads: "The General Assembly may discuss any questions on any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and function of any organs provided for in the Charter and except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations to the Member of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters.

3. Doc.A/286 GAOR, First Special Session, vol. I, 28 April - 15 May 1947 Annex 1, p.183.

4. General Committee consists of the President, 7 Vice-Presidents and Chairman of the Main Committee.

5. GAOR, First Special Session, vol. I, Plenary Meetings, Verbatim Record-28 April-15 May 1947, 68th Plenary Meeting, p.10.

Agenda item presented by the U.K. was titled:
"Constituting and instructing a Special Committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of Palestine at the second regular session".

On April 21st Egypt and Iraq requested for the inclusion of an additional item - "The Termination of mandate over Palestine and Declaration of its Independence". Three more Arab states, ^SByria, ^USaudi-Arabia and Lebanon also sponsored it on April 22nd.

The General Committee considered the provisional agenda and the supplementary list at its 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st meetings on April 29th and 30th.

The Egyptian representative argued that the additional item proposed by the Arab states for inclusion of the agenda should be considered at the same time as the item proposed by U.K., as the two items were connected. The Chairman ruled, however, that under the Rules of procedure the provisional agenda had to be considered first and then any additional agenda items which could be placed on the agenda only by a 2/3 majority of the General Assembly.

However, Asaf Ali, the Indian representative, raised a very pertinent point. He said - "I understand that an announcement was made by an authoritative representative of the Government of U.K. that whatever the recommendation of the UN might be, the UK was not prepared to say at this stage that it would accept these recommendations. Is that correct?"

If so what is the use of considering this item on the agenda now?" He further said - "That appears to me to be an exceedingly anomalous position and to proceed to consider this item for inclusion in the agenda, to my mind, would be sheer waste of time, because the applicant should either state that our recommendations, whatever these may be will be acceptable to it or beg to be excused from vasing our time".⁶

The UK representative replied that since his government was responsible for carrying out the recommendations which would cost both "blood and treasury" it had every right not to commit itself to any such recommendations which might be against their conscience.

Subsequently the General Committee recommended that the item proposed by the United Kingdom should be placed on the agenda of the General Assembly.

In its 29th meeting, on April 29th, the General Committee began consideration of the supplementary list and invited representatives of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi-Arabia to take part in the discussion of the item proposed by them. However, according to the Rule 34 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, they had no right to vote. Among the sponsors of the supplementary agenda item only Egypt had the voting right in its capacity of member of the General Committee.

76. GAOR, First Special Session, vol. II, General Committee Verbatim Records of Meetings 29th April. 7th May 1947, 29th meeting, p.2.

The gist of the arguments of the ^v Arab states were; that the real question at issue was the recognition of the independence of Palestine, which, it was claimed, had already been recognised in the Covenant of the League of Nations and in the Declarations of the Allied Powers. The other mandated territories which were part of the Ottoman Empire were already free, there was no reason why a discrimination should be made against Palestine.

They argued that the problem was not that of fact finding but of establishment of principles. The situation in Palestine had arisen because of the principles in the Palestine Mandate and Balfour Declaration which were based on power politics, expediency, local interest and local pressure. These were inconsistent with the Charter, the obligations under the Charter should prevail. And if there was no agreement on principles, it would be of no use to appoint a Committee, since the Committee would have to work in the light of principles. If principles were accepted, it might not be necessary to appoint a Committee, but in any case the principles should be established first. And to discuss the independence of Palestine would not be prejudging the solution. Since it had already been envisaged in the Covenant by the League of Nations. Asaf Ali supported the inclusion of the agenda proposed by a Arab states. His contention was that the General Committee had no right to refuse it on procedural ground.⁷⁰

Against the inclusion the arguments were that the question was complicated and needed careful, impartial and objective study - that the disension of the Arab proposal would create an adverse atmosphere in Palestine.

Asaf Ali, suggested to the Arab States that since everyone agreed that independence should be objective of any settlement of the Palestinian question, they should not press their proposal to vote. In all probability Asaf Ali had sensed the trend and knew the possible result.

However, despite the objection of India and Egypt the Chairman put the proposal to vote on procedural ground. It was rejected by 8 votes against 1 in favour and 5 abstention. India abstained from voting as it did not want this proposal to be voted upon in the first instance.⁵⁸

The report of the General Committee recommending that the item submitted by the UK ²by placed on the agenda of the General Assembly and referred to the 1st Committee, but not recommending the item proposed by the Governments of five Arab States, was considered by the General Assembly at its 70th & 71st meetings on May 1, 1947.

On the question of non-inclusion of the supplementary list, it was argued that the General Committee was a procedural Committee and had made a political decision, thereby exceeding its power.

⁵⁹. Ibid., General Committee, Summary Record, vol. II, p. 66.

The President however, ruled that suggestion could not be voted on since there was no formal proposal in writing. He stated, however, that as soon as the agenda was adopted, there would be full freedom of debate without any restrictions whatsoever on the whole problem of Palestine. This interpretation was questioned by the Indian and Australian representative who submitted that, if the question of the independence of Palestine the termination of Mandate was not placed on the agenda, when afterwards raised again, it would be ruled out of order. Since the General Assembly then be able to consider only the question of constituting and instructing the Special Committee.⁹

However, ultimately this suggestion was put to vote and was defeated by 24 against to 15 in favour with 10 absentions.¹⁰ Arab nations, Socialist bloc states and India voted in favour of the inclusion of agenda.¹¹ The item was declared rejected because it did not receive the required 2/3 votes in accordance with the rules.

Earlier, at its 69th meeting on April 28, the plenary meeting decided to refer to the General Committee, communications from organisations which had written to the Secretary General asking for the opportunity of expressing their views concerning the items of business for which the Special Session

⁹. GAOR, 71st Plenary Meeting, no.4, pp.57-58.

¹⁰. Ibid., p.59.

¹¹. Ibid., pp.59-60.

had been called.^{I2} The organizations in question were, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Hebrew Committee of National Liberation in Washington, Political Action Committee for Palestine, Zionist Organization of America.

At its 31st meeting on April 30, the General Committee voted by 11 votes to 0 with three absentions to defer consideration of the communications until it had presented its report on agenda to the plenary meeting.^{I3}

In the General Committee a Polish-Czechoslovak resolution, recommending the acceptance of petitions of these organizations and recognising special status of Jewish Agency and special interest of Poland, was defeated by 8 votes to 3 with 3 abstentions.

An US proposal as ammended by the UK recommending the acceptance and referring the petitions of the said organization to the 1st Committee was passed by 11 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions.

The report of the General Committee was considered by the Generaly Assembly at its 72nd, 73rd, 74th and 75th meetings. Representative made prolonged speeches and a very lengthy debate followed. Asaf Ali, as acting President in the absence of Mr. A. Maranh of Brazil, suggested that there

I2. Ibid., p. 12.

I3. Ibid., p. 80.

was no point in discussing the issue in Plenary meeting because the representative would get full opportunity to discuss the issue in the 1st Committee. ^{I4}

At the end of the 73rd plenary meeting, the General Assembly voted upon the Czech-Polish proposal ^w had rejected it by 39 to 8 with 7 abstentions. The resolution had provided for the hearing of the Jewish Agency for Palestine before the plenary meeting. ^{I5}

The General Assembly then adopted by 44 votes to 7 with 3 abstentions the five power proposal providing for the grant of a hearing to the Jewish Agency for Palestine and other organizations of similar character to the First Committee. India, with Siam and Iran, abstained. ^{I6} Earlier the General Assembly, at its 70th plenary meeting on May 1, referred to the 1st Committee the question of constituting and instructing a Special Committee to prepare for the consideration of the next regular Session of the Assembly, agenda on the question of Palestine.

At its 47th meeting, the First Committee began a general discussion. Firstly it decided by 40 votes to 0 with 7 absentees to grant a hearing to the Jewish Agency of Palestine and the Arab Higher Committee.

^{I4} Ibid., p. 80

^{I5} Ibid., p. 112.

^{I6} Ibid., p. 114.

In the 48th meeting, the Indian representative proposed that since the Arab Higher Committee would not come before the First Committee until the Committee's recommendation had been endorsed by the General Assembly a plenary meeting be called to consider the following resolution 'that the First Committee agenda a hearing to the Arab Higher Committee'. The resolution was adopted and subsequently the General Assembly also adopted the proposal of the President of the same instruction by 39 votes to 1 with 11 abstention.

On May 7 two draft resolutions were presented on the question of the constituting of the special committee - one by the US and another by Argentina.

The US representative provided for the establishment of a Committee of inquiry, consisting of representative of Canada Czechoslovakia, Iran, Neatherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay with very comprehensive terms of reference.

Argentine proposed for a small but proportionally represented committee. It suggested for an eleven member-committee with 5 permanent members of the Security Council & others elected on the basis of geographical representation.

The First Committee formed a sub-committee, to prepare a draft resolution on this question to be presented to the General Assembly.. Finally the draft resolution submitted by the sub-committee and approved by the First Committee was finally presented to General Assembly for approval.

The plenary meetings in its 77th, 78th and 79th Session discussed the report of 1st Committee.

The Arab States protested against the suggested terms of reference of the Special Committee on the ground that they contained no mention to the independence of Palestine on the principles of the Charter; that the 'future government of Palestine' had been replaced by the vague term 'problem of Palestine', that the cause relating to the consideration of the interests of all the inhabitants of Palestine had been omitted.

The Egyptian representative then made a statement for the record, saying that he would have to vote against the First Committee report and reserve the attitude of his government for the reasons firstly because the decision of the First Committee were not in line with the legal and political remedies for a just and lasting solution to the Palestine problem.^{I7}

Asaf Ali then made a very lengthy but a highly passionate speech in which he requested, in the name of humanity, to the all parties concerned to maintain peace in Palestine. He said:^{I8}

"... unfortunately, Palestine threatens to become the baker's oven from which the danger of blood may once again rise. That is what I fear."

^{I7}. Ibid., pp. 114-115.

^{I8}. Ibid., 79th plenary meeting, pp. 161-168.

"Do not be moved by the power politics, do not be moved by the economic interest. This is a land which must be considered holy... Therefore do not introduce your pretty nationalistic small affairs there and do not make it a group affair".

Then he appealed to the Arab States to accept the mandate of the General Assembly. He said:

"Whatever your doubts may be and however angry you may otherwise feel, and I would request you - I am addressing myself to the member of the Arab States to be patient... I would beg you to believe the words of all those who have spoken, either in Committee or in General Assembly. Trust them, give them a chance. I know it is the acid test of the conscience of the United Nations, but give them a chance. Do not begin to feel that from now on justice will not be done by Palestine. You lose nothing. After all, it is merely a matter of another few weeks. This Committee will sit, collect data, come to its conclusions and bring its recommendations before this Assembly. If this Assembly by any chance or mischance forgets its duty and the independence of Palestine goes by the board, you will be free to do exactly as you like. Who says you should not. Nobody can compel you".

This was one of those few occasions which Indian delegation did not see eye to eye with the Arabs and despite Arabs' strong opposition supported the idea of the institution of the Special Committee. This, however, underscores two things. Firstly that India though supporting the Arabs was not in agreement with them on the entire issue in its totality. Secondly it would serve no purpose to oppose the institution of an special committee, when, not only the western bloc but also the countries from the socialist bloc and the countries from Asian, and Latin America were

favourably disposed towards this idea. At least by supporting the idea of the creation of the Special Committee to investigate about the Palestine, India at least stood a chance to be selected for the Committee. And then could be in a better position to influence the decision of the Committee.

In the course of debate on the composition of the Committee it was clear that there were two trends of thinking. First was that the Committee should be composed of neutral countries and should not include permanent member of the Security Council. The second line of thinking was that it should include the permanent members of the Security Council.

Finally, the First Committee elected by 35 votes to 4 with 13 abstention the states proposed in the US draft resolution and the Chilean amendment. It was decided that the two remaining members of the Committee should be elected on a geographical basis to represent South Pacific and Asia.

Australia was elected from South Pacific receiving 21 votes against 20 votes received by Philippines. India was elected from Asia received 34 votes against 7 received by Siam.¹⁹

¹⁹ United Nations Year Book - 1946-47, Department of Publication and Information, UN, Lake Success, New York-1947, pp. 300-301.

The composition of the Special Committee as a whole was approved by 39 to 3 with 10 abstention^{en}.

In the course of the discussion the Iranian republic had suggested that the representatives of the government which were elected to the Special Committee should make a statement to the effect that their government would give them no instructions and they would have wide discretionary powers so that they would investigate according to their conscience and in conformity with principles and purpose of the Charter. This was adopted.

Our detailed discussion of the deliberations during the First Special Session makes it very clear that this Session was fully exploited by the interested powers in support of the Jewish cause. It makes very interesting and at the same time very intriguing reading how the rules of procedures were manipulated so thoroughly, which is so vital in the conduct of parliamentary diplomacy, that the Arabs just did not stand a chance. Despite a very strong case, and a very forceful presentation by the Arabs and the Indian delegates, they just could not match the pro-Zionist nations in the United Nations, who made full use of their majority and then experience in the conduct of the parliamentary diplomacy.

THE UNSCOP

The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) held its first meeting at Lake Success on May 26. Since then the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, held 16 public and 36 private meetings till finally signed the report on 31st August 1947. Justice Smil Sandstrom of Sweden and Alberto Ullao of Peru were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the UNSCOP respectively.

The Jewish Agency and the Government of Palestine appointed liaison officer in accordance with the request of the Committee. The Arab Higher Committee, however, refused to comply because there was nothing positive in the terms of reference of the Committee. The UNSCOP also heard representatives of a number of other Jewish organizations and religious bodies, as well as Chaim Weizmann, to whom the Committee also heard the views of the representative of Arab States.

The Committee established a sub-committee to visit displaced persons camp. Another sub-Committee was established to study the question of religious interests and holy places in Palestine.

On July 28, 1947, the UNSCOP began work on drafting of its report in Geneva and completed its work on 31st August.

The report of the UNSCOP²⁰ made a valuable survey of the whole Palestine question. It made twelve proposals.

20. See Doc.A-364.

Eleven of which were adopted unanimously and twelfth by a substantial majority. About the future of Palestine the Committee made two recommendations, a majority proposal for a Plan of Partition with Economic Union and a minority proposal for a Plan for Federal State of Palestine. Reservations and observations of certain members of the Committee were included in the report.

Among the important unanimously adopted eleven resolutions of the Committee were: that the Mandate should be terminated and independence be granted to Palestine at the earliest practical date; that there should be a short transitional period preceding the granting of independence of Palestine, during which the authority responsible for administering Palestine should be responsible to the United Nations that the economic unity of Palestine should be preserved.

In addition to these unanimously approved recommendations, the UNSCOP also approved, with two members (Uruguay, Guatemala) and one member) recording no opinion another recommendations which read "It is recommended that:

"In the appraisal of the Palestine question, it be accepted as incontrovertible that any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution of the Jewish people in general¹³.

However, the most important recommendation of the UNSCOP were the two proposals subsequently referred to as majority plan (A-364 Chapter V) and minority plan (A-364 Chapter VII).

As per the majority plan ²¹ Palestine was divided into a Jewish state & an Arab State and the city of Jerusalem. After a transitional period of two years the two states were to become independent. During this period 150,000 Jewish immigrants would be admitted. The two states were then to enter into an economic union administered by a Joint Economic Board consisting of representatives of each state and members appointed by the ECOSOC. The city of Jerusalem was to be placed under the International Trusteeship System.

The minority proposal was presented by three members ²² which provided for an independence federal state - consisting of Arab and Jewish state with Jerusalem as capital. The federal state would comprise a federal government and the government of the Arab and Jewish state respectively. The federal government would exercise full powers over such matters as national defence, foreign relations, immigration currency, inter-state railways, transport and communications. The Arab and Jewish states would enjoy full power over local self-government in its various aspects. There was to be a single Palestinian nationality and citizenship, with guaranteed equal rights for all minorities and fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as free access to the Holy Places.

²¹. Supported by UNSCOP member - Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay.

²². India, Iran, Yugoslavia.

During a transitional period not exceeding three years, a Constituent Assembly would prepare an adequate constitution. The Jewish immigration was to continue during the transitional period but with certain limitations.

During its second meeting on September 26, 1947, the Adhoc Committee agreed to hear the views of the three parties immediately concerned with Palestine question, the United Kingdom, the Arab Higher Committee and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. After listening to the views of these three, the Adhoc Committee commenced the general debate on the agenda.

The representative of the UK government was in substantial agreement with the twelve general recommendations. However, he said, that his government would not be able to implement any decision of the General Assembly to which both the Arabs and the Jews did not agree, though it would not hamper its implementation by any agency.²³

The representative of Arab Higher Committee concluded from a survey of Palestine history that Zionist claims to that country had no legal or moral basis. He said that no people would be more pleased than the Arabs to see the distressed Jews of the Europe given permanent relief. But Palestine already had absorbed more than its share, and the Jews could not impose

23. 2nd meeting: 26th September 1947. GAOR, Second Special Session, 2nd meeting 26th September 1947, Adhoc Committee on Palestine question, Summary Records of Meetings, 25th Sept.- 25th Nov. 1947. pp.2-3.

their will on other nations by choosing the place and manner of their relief, particularly if that choice was inconsistent with the principles of international law, and justice and prejudicial to the interests of the nations directly concerned. ²⁴

The representative of the Jewish Agency ²⁵ said that minority proposal of the UNSCOP was not acceptable to the Jewish Agency. As it entailed all the disadvantages of Partition without the compensating advantages of a real partition - statehood, independence and free immigration.

Even the majority proposal was not satisfactory from the Jewish point of view, as it demanded too much 'sacrifice' from the Jewish people. Their concept of Jewish state not only included the whole of Palestine but Transjordan as well. However, not only Transjordan has been severed but even Palestine was being partitioned. This sacrifice on the part of the Jews would bear witness to the Jewish people's international spirit and its desire for peace.

During the general debate in the adhoc Committee from October 4 to October 16 the UNSCOP recommendations were wholly debated. Opinions were sharply divided. Supporters of the majority plan thought it to be the only solution to the question of Palestine, while the Arabs would have nothing short of an unitary Palestine. India through extended its

24. Ibid., 3rd meeting, 29th Sept., pp.5-11.

25. Ibid., 4th meeting, 2nd October, pp.12-19.

support to the Arab stand, still indicated a preference for a large measure of autonomy for areas of the future State of Palestine having Jewish majorities. Indian representative, Mrs. Vijay Lakshmi Pandit stated that peace in Palestine and in the Middle East was of vital interest to India on account of its close geographical links with the Middle East.²⁶²

During the speech she proposed first, that Palestine question be separated from the problem of displaced Jews in Europe, which should be dealt with independently as responsibility of the United Nation, secondly that the Mandate should be terminated without delay; and thirdly that the Palestine should be recognized as an independent state with wide autonomy for Jews in areas where they were in a majority. She emphasised that a solution had to be found without delay, a solution without the need for enforcement.

Subsequently, after the conclusion of the general debate on Chairman's proposal, three sub-Committees were established.²⁷

Sub-Committee-1 was entrusted with drawing up a detailed plan, based on the majority proposals of the UNSCOP, as provided by the draft resolution of the US, amended by Canada.

²⁶² Ibid., 11th meeting, 11 Oct., 1947, pp. 61-62.

²⁷ Ibid., 19th meeting, 21st Oct., pp. 126-137.

Sub-Committee-2 was to draw up a detailed plan in accordance with the proposal of Saudi Arabia and Iraw for the recognition of Palestine as an independent unitary state, and the proposal to the same effect submitted by the delegation of Syria. A sub-Committee on conciliation was also established with unanimous support of all the members.

By virtue of the authority, vested in him by the Adhoc Committee²⁸, the Chairman on Oct.22 appointed the following Members to serve on the two sub-Committees.²⁹ Sub-Committee-I Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Poland, South Africa, United State, Uruguay, USSR, Venezuela, Sub-Committee-2 Afganisten, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen.

The two sub-Committee submitted their reports³⁰ to the Ad-hoc Committee at the 23rd meeting on Nov.19, 1947.

In the course of the discussion, no ~~amendments~~ were proposed to the recommendations of the sub-Committee-2 while the representative of Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, the Neatherlands, Pakistan, Sweden and US submitted amendments to the latter was also submitted by the delegations of Norway.³¹

28. Ibid., 20th meeting, Adhoc Committee by a vote of 40 to 6 and with 10 abstention gave the Chairman the power.

29. UN Year Book: 47-48, pp.237-238.

30. Report of the sub-Committee-I32 to the Adhoc Committee on Palestine question. Doc.A/AC.I4-34 & Corr. I & add.I Doc.A/AC.I4/32 & add.I.

31. See Doc.A/AC.I4/39, A/AC.I4/45, A/AC.I4/43 and Rev.I A/AC.I4/37, A/AC.I4/36, A/AC.I4/40, A/AC.I4/35, A/AC.I4/38 & A/AC.I4/46

The Pakistani Swedish and French amendments were rejected by a voice votes, others were adopted.

The representatives of Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Saudi Arabia were of the opinion that the recommendations of the sub-Committee 1 had transgressed two limits imposed by the chapter and was thus illegal. The representatives of El-Salvador, Yugoslavia, United Kingdom, Columbia, Belgium and Mexico announced that they would not vote for either of the plans. Representatives of Canada, China, US, USSR, etc., announced their support to the partition plan.

On its meetings on November 24 and 25, the Adhoc Committee put to vote the reports of the two sub-Committees. First, the three resolutions of sub-Committee-2 was put to vote and the first and third were rejected, while the second resolution got equal votes, 16 in favour and 16 against and was decided to be included verbatim in its report to the General Assembly.³²

The recommendations of Sub-Committee-1 embodying the partition plan was adopted by 25 to 13 with 17 abst.³³

Subsequently the report of the Adhoc Committee on the question of Palestine (A/516) was submitted to the General Assembly for its considerations.

32. GAOR, no.23, 32nd meeting, pp.203-206.

33. GAOR, no.23, 33rd meeting, pp.222-223.

The General Assembly discussed the recommendations of the adhoc Committee on the question of Palestine (A/516) from 26th to 29th November 1947.

The Plan of partition with Economic Union found a bigger support and representative of Brazil, Canada, USA, USSR, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Netherlands, New Zealand, Belgium and Guatemala declared their support for majority Plan.

Representative of Philippines, Yemen, Greece, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Haiti, Pakistan, Cuba, Iraq were of the opinion that the partition plan violated the Charter of the principle of right to self-determination of the Palestine people.

Sensing the sharp differences among the member some representative tried to effect some compromise. The representative tried to effect some compromise. The representative of Colombia submitted a draft resolution (A/510) which provided that a decision of on Palestine question be deferred and that matter be referred back to the adhoc Committee for further efforts at producing a solution acceptable to both Arabs and the Jews.

However, the meeting was adjourned for only 24 hours at the suggestion of the French representative to permit a last minute effort at conciliating Arabs and Jews.

Following the adjournment the Iranian representative proposed that the deliberations on this question be deferred

upto 15th January 1948 to enable the ad-hoc Committee to reconvene and discuss this matter further. The President, however, ruled that the recommend of the ad-hoc Committee must be voted on before the Iranian resolution could be put to vote. He then submitted the report of the adhoc Committee (A/516) to roll-call vote. The report, including the plan of Partition with Economic Union was adopted by a vote of 33 to 13 with 10 abstentions.³⁴

On the proposal of the representative of Sweden, the Assembly completed work on the Palestine aspect of the agenda of the 2nd session by adopting the resolution 181(II)B.³⁵

The resolution 181(II)B also established a UN Palestine Committee (Part. I-B) with representatives of Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama and the Philippines. Its term of reference said that after withdrawal of the Mandatory Power, the administration of Palestine shall be progressively turned over to the Commission, which "shall act in conformity with the recommendation of the General Assembly." The Committee was also given full authority

³⁴ Voting Pattern was: In favour: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bylonussian SSR, Canada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Gautemala, Haiti, Iceland, Libya, Luxembourg, Neatherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Phillipines, Pbland, Sweden, Ukranian SSR, Union of South Africa, USSR, USA, Uruguay Venezuela.

Against: Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greeco, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen,
Abstained: Argentina, Chile, China, Colombia, El-Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, UK, Yugoslavia.

³⁵ For the text of the resolution 181(II)B. See the ^{VV} annex. Appendix.

over matters of immigration and long regulation. This Committee was also asked to submit monthly progress reports to the Security Council. In short the Committee was supposed to supervise over the partition plan. From January 1946 to May 17, 1948 the Committee remained in force till it was 'adjourned sine-die' after the establishment of Israel.

THE US FACTOR

During the debate in the General Assembly Arab and neutral states put their best effort to persuade the supporters of the Palestine's partition to give up the idea of partition. Speeches after speeches followed. The problem of Palestine was discussed from every possible angle. Participants highlighted its social, political, economic, military, communication aspects in detail. Allegations and counter allegations, accusations and counter accusations followed. During the discussion a very interesting debate took place between the Pakistani and Guatemalan delegates. Sir Zifullah Khan of Pakistan had referred to the partition plan as geographical monstrosity in his speech in the adhoc committee. Reacting to this the Guatemalan representative pointed out that the two wings of Pakistan, East & West were themselves greater monstrosity. To this the Pakistani representative replied that there was a difference because it was achieved with peoples consent. Moreover one absurd partition could not justify another absurdity, he admitted.

However, a more bizarre drama was played beyond the public exposure; and which is now part of the history

Several participants of this drama have since come out with their account of developments that took place during those fateful days. In order to go through the General Assembly, the partition plan needed 32 votes and a straw vote taken in United Nation on Saturday, November 22 showed 24 states supporting partition, 16 opposed and rest abstaining or undecided.³⁶ However, from this moment the Roosevelt administration took over and when the votes was finally taken the partition plan had received one vote more than required.

How this scuffling of the ranks of the pro-partition states took place has been recorded by various diplomats, statesmen and writers.³⁷ The following description by

³⁶ Sir Zafulla Khan writes, "... so that by the early afternoon, the other side found that they had lost, and we were quite convinced in our minds that we had won and that partition was decided."

Mohammad Zafulla Khan, "Palestine in the UNO", p. 16

³⁷ Though there are any number of accounts of how pressures were brought upon delegates, in New York, Washington and upon governments in various capitals throughout the world. Some important accounts are: "The Forrestal Diaries" - ed., Walter Millis, E.S. Duffield, Viking Press, New York, 1951. James Vinod Forrestal was US Secretary of Defence from 1947-49. "I talked with Heros" (esp. chapter 18) - Carlos Pi Romulo, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961 - New York 1961. He was Philippines permanent Representative in the UN from 1945-50. "The Partition of Palestine: A Lesson in Pressure Politics", Konrad Roosevelt. The Middle East Journal, II, No. 1 (1949), pp. 1-16. "Years of Trial and Hope", Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, vol. II, Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1956.

Zafriulla Khan, the Pakistan Representative gives the highly interesting account of what happened in those fateful days when the matter was being debated in the General Assembly. It is worth quoting. He writes:

"The Committee voting being over, we went into the General Assembly. In the General Assembly the debate started on the morning of Wednesday, the 26th November. The 27th November is a festival in America known as "Thanksgiving" and everybody was anxious, the President himself most of all, that the session should be concluded by the midnight of Wednesday, the 26th. And believing that the session would conclude on that day both sides mobilized their forces. The delegation which had promised us their votes had said that they would abstain in the Committee and would exert their influence during the discussion. The second speaker in the Assembly was the delegate for the Philippines. He had absented himself from the Committee for three/four days so that nobody would know where he was and they should not be able to get hold of him. He had said "Leave me alone".... The Philippine delegate came to the rostrum; he condemned partition in a very forcible speech and he left written instructions with one of his alternate delegates to vote against partition. We had 13 votes in the Committee and that made 14. Later on the delegate of Greece came to the rostrum, condemned partition and said he was going to vote against partition. That made 15. Haiti delegate then came to the rostrum, condemned partition and said that he was going to vote against partition. That made 16. We still had the promise of Liberia and we were trying to influence Colombia, when we thought we might win. In the meantime there was a revolution in Siam... He (leader of the Siamese delegate) was the Vice-Chairman of the Adhoc Committee on Palestine and in that Committee he had voted against partition.... But unfortunately by the time we got to the Assembly the Siamese delegate had received a telegram from the President withdrawing his credentials. Whether that telegram came from the Siamese government or from other source, we do not know."

In order to win they had to get 32 votes and there was apparently no means by which they could get that number.

Moreover, when finally the voting took place they actually got one vote more than the required.

Zafullah Khan mentions his personal encounter with the delegates of Liberia and Haiti, who admitted to him that they had been tremendously pressurised to cast their votes in favour of the Partition Plan.

Haiti, Liberia, the Philippines, China, Ethiopia and Greece, all of which had shown opposition to partition became the object of Zionist-US combined pressure. The Zionists pressurised important Congressmen to communicate directly with the governments of the six target countries.³⁸ The Fire Stone Tire and Rubber Co, which had a concession in Liberia, was telephoned and urged to persuade the Liberian Govt. to vote in favour of partition.³⁹ Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett attested that he had never in his life been subjected to such pressure.⁴⁰ Loy Henderson, Director of the State Department's office of Near Eastern and African Affairs underwent a similar experience.⁴¹ After the historic vote in the United Nations on 29th November 1947, the pressure tactics of the Zionists came under sharp criticism. Harry S. Truman has shed significant light on this in his memoirs. In a letter to the President, dated 27th November 1947,

³⁸. Roosevelt, no. , pp.14-15.

³⁹. Forrestal Diaries, no. p.346.

⁴⁰. Ibid.

⁴¹. Ibid., pp.357-58.

Dr. Weizmann had asserted that there was no substance to the then current charge in Washington that the Zionist exerted undue pressure on certain United Nations' delegations. ⁴²

Tsuman commented on this: ⁴³

"The facts were that not only were there pressure movements around the United Nations unlike anything that had been seen there before but that the White House, too, was subjected to a constant leverage. I do not think I ever had as much pressure and propaganda aimed at the White House as I had in this instance. The persistence of a few of the extreme Zionist leaders - actuated by political violence and engaging in political threats - disturbed and annoyed me. Some were even suggesting that we pressure sovereign nation into favourable votes in the G.A."

From India's point of view some significant developments took place. Firstly India did not show the earlier enthusiasm. It is interesting to note that during the two months long deliberations of Adhoc Committee, Mrs. Pandit delivered only once a "brief speech and it was marked by moderation which was in sharp contrast to Mr. Asaf Ali's more outspoken speeches during the First Special Session. That is, in this period India appeared to be more or less a passive supporter of the Arab cause. We do not know if this passive participation was at the behest of New Delhi where the first

⁴² Roosevelt, no. 37 p.14.

⁴³ Memoirs by Harry S. Tsuman, vol. II, no. p.158.

nationalist government had finally taken over since then. One reason may be that India which had acquired independence only a few months back and was busy solving domestic problems which required immediate attention.^{4A}

The secondly, significant development there was the entry of Pakistan in the world body. Pakistan, which had become the member of the United Nations, was represented by the brilliant jurist Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan. Now onwards India was more concerned with the questions which Pakistan was out to create for India. It naturally diverted much of India's attention from other questions.

④4. It should be remembered that in the wake of partition a host of problems had cropped up like the question of communal programs, refugees, the integration of princely states, relations with Pakistan. These problems facing the nation required immediate attention and this was bound to have some effect on our full-fledged participation in the international question.

CHAPTER III THE PROBLEM OF IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE PARTITION PLAN & THE
EMERGENCE OF ISRAEL

SECTION I - THE SECOND
SPECIAL SESSION

SECTION II - DEVELOPMENTS
UPTO 1950

CHAPTER - III

Section - I

THE PROBLEM OF IMPLEMENTATION: The adoption of the partition-plan by the United Nations was a dubious achievement of the international organisation. That the United Nations was manipulating into dismembering a country wherein it had no such jurisdiction was obvious⁸². And the worst fears of those who had objected to the partition, finally proved to be true, when it became obvious that the partition plan had created much greater problems than what it sought to solve.

The Arabs had declared categorically that they would oppose any dismemberment of Palestine at any cost. Mandatory power was totally inon-committal and was firm in its resolution that it would lay down its mandate on 15th May, 1948, and would not be responsible for the maintenance of law and order thereafter. Subsequently armed hostilities and act of terrorism acquired new heights in Palestine. And despite the world body's resolve to partition Palestine there was no peaceful solution in sight. The United Nations had completely bogged

I. There are any number of studies and analysis of the legality and validity of the United Nation partition plan. Some notable studies are; Henry Cattan; Palestine and International Law. The Legal Aspect of the Arab-Israel conflict (London, 1973), Hans Kelsen, 'The Law of the United Nations' (London, 1950); Alfred Lienthal 'What Price Israel' (Chicago: Henry Regency, 1953); Oppenheim, 'International Law' (London); Jorge Casteneda, 'Legal Effects of the United Nations Resolutions'. (London, 1969).

down on the question of implementation of the partition plan its fact from now onwards both General Assembly and Security Council got entangled in this guagurire simultaneously.

Immediately after the adoption of the resolution I8I(II)B by the General Assembly the Secretary General informed the Security Council of this. In this resolution the General Assembly inter-alia had requested that the Security Council take necessary action for the implementation of Partition Plan and to determine if there any threat to peace in Palestine existed within the meaning of the Arabs 39 and 4I. During the course of the American sponsored resolution (S/69I) was adopted which asked the permanent members of the Security Council to consult and inform the Security Council on the question of Palestine and to suggest measures within ten days for the implementation of General Assembly resolution. The 5 permanent members presented their report on the 19th March and recommended to the Security Council to take action for the cessation of hostilities in Palestine. During discussion, it was, however, obvious that the general consensus was that it was beyond the competence of the Security Council to implement the partition plan as it was a political action.

At the 28th meeting on April 23, the United States representative proposed a draft resolution, which provided for the establishment of I Truce Commission for Palestine, composed of those representative of Security Council which had career consular in Jerusalem, except Syria, whose function

would be to assist the Security Council in bringing about the implementation of the Council's resolution. The Commission was to report to the President of the Security Council within 46 hours, regarding its activities and the development of the situation.

THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION:

Meanwhile the 2nd Special Session of the General Assembly began on April 16 in accordance with the request of the Security Council. Security Council then referred the further consideration of this question to the 1st Committee.² Debate started in the 1st Committee on the 20th April. Representative of Arab Higher Committee; Jewish Agency and Chairman of the Palestine Committee participated in the discussion.

The representative of the United Nations initiated the debate and said that it had been conclusively proved that resolution 181(II) of the General Assembly which called for the partition of Palestine with economic union, could not be implemented by the peaceful means, contrary to the hopes of the United States. Moreover, the Security Council had failed to adopt a United States proposal to place the Council formally behind the partition plan. He feared a further deteriorating of situation. He, therefore, suggested for a Temporary Trusteeship for Palestine (A/C.I/277). These suggestions were based upon the draft statute for Jerusalem prepared by the Trusteeship Council pursuant to the Assembly resolution of

2. GAOR, Second Special Session, 131st meeting.

November 29, 1947. This suggestion provided for Governor General, appointed by and represented to the Trusteeship Council; whose own role would be supervisory. Pending the establishment of an elected possibly a bi-cameral legislature, the Governor General should be authorized to legislate by decree. He should also be empowered to call upon the countries listed in the Trusteeship Agreement, for assistance in the maintenance of law and order, if need be. This was also contain provisions for immigration into Palestine on some agreed basis, for a policy concerning land purchase, and for the protection of, and access to, the Holy Places. The representative of the US emphasized that the Temporary Trusteeship should not be regarded as a substitute for partition plan. It was an emergency measure to safeguard human lives and to create an atmosphere in which negotiations for a permanent solution could proceed more smoothly, and trusteeship could be terminated promptly as soon as a general solution of the Palestine problem had been found.

The representative of the United Kingdom was of the opinion that the partition resolution could only be enforced by the use of arms. It might be advisable for the General Assembly to give a second thought to the whole question again. He also exhorted to those who proposed to address the resolution of November, to consider squarely whether their governments were prepared to assist in its enforcement, whether any enforcement action could secure the essential cooperation of the local population, and whether the necessary forces could be provided by May 15. He also suggested that

following the example of the United Kingdom, other states should also open their gates to the Jewish refugees so that the pressure on Palestine would be reduced.

The Arab Higher Committee again reiterated the firm resolve of the Arab people of people to oppose Partition Plan which was illegal and against the Charter. He also said that the UNSCOP had been given objectionable terms of reference and its composition had likewise been not above suspicion. Since it numbered among its members three persons known for their connections with Zionists.³

Other members as usual were sharply divided in their opinion. Countries like USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, New Zealand, Canada were as usual were highly agitated that the United Nations was not implementing the Partition Plan. Arabs categorically rejected any solution other than an unitary state. However, significant development was that a newly emerging states, plus quite a few who had supported the Partition Plan like France, Rannma, Sweden were of the opinion that the world body should again think over the question in light of subsequent development.

3. Sir John Fletcher Cooke, who was adviser to the British delegation in 1947-48, has given a vivid discription conspiracy at the United Nations against the Arabs & that the representatives of the Gautemela and Uruguay, was served on the eleven member Special Commission on Palestine were committed Zionists.

Sir Girja Shanker Bajpai of India reiterated India's opposition to the Partition Plan. He pointed out that the problem was not only political or legal, fundamentally it was a human problem. He said that simply because two third majority had passed the 29th November resolution did not mean that it was going to solve the problem. Majority were not infallible. He appealed to both the Arabs and the Jews to approach the United States proposal realistically. According to him India's views on the conditions of trusteeship were as follows: any agreement for trusteeship should be for a short and specific period, it should provide for self-liquidation if agreement were reached before the end of that period, and during this transition period, both Jews and Arabs should participate in the Government. A further condition was one which was found in the United Nations draft, namely, that the agreement would be "without prejudice to the rights, claims or position of the parties concerned"(A/C.I/277). This particularly referred to the existing arrangements regarding immigration and land purchase.

With regard to enforcement during the transition period, hitherto thinking had been in terms of quotas from national armies, in which objectionable features were involved. He agreed with the French proposal of voluntary enlistment. With regard to protection of Jerusalem and the Holy Places, he suggested to the appeal that the Assembly make urgent arrangements for their security.⁴

4. GAOR, Second Special Session, Main Committee.vol.II, pp.63-65.

Subsequently, the attention of the Ist Committee was, however, diverted towards the city of Jerusalem by Sweden and Ebrahîl representative. The representative of France introduced a draft (A/C.I/280) at the 121st meeting of the Ist Committee on April 22. The resolution was a recommendation by the Ist Committee to the General Assembly suggesting that the Assembly as the Trusteeship Council to study and in consultation with the Mandatory Power and other interested parties take suitable measures for the protection of the city and its inhabitants considering that the maintenance of order and security in the Holy city is an urgent question which concerns the United Nations as a whole.⁵

In the course of deliberations several amendments came Czechoslovakian representative wanted to introduce the words "pursuant to the General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947..." However, on the objection of the Pakistan representative that this was a mischievous attempt to inject into a non-controversial matter an element of the Partition Plan, the French representative did not accept the amendment. The French proposal was passed as amended by Sweden. Then at the suggestion of several representative the Chairman contacted the President of the General Assembly who agreed to convene a plenary meeting of the Assembly immediately.

The Assembly on April 26th endorsed the recommendation of Ist Committee and passed the resolution I85(S-2).

5. Ibid., 121st Meeting., p.75.

Subsequently the Trusteeship Council studied the problem and submitted its conclusions to the Assembly on May 5 (A/544). After a long debate and several amendments it was adopted by 35 affirmative votes and 17 abstention. The resolution 187(S-2) recommended that the mandatory power appoint under Palestine legislation, before 15th May 1948, a Central Commissioner, which had to carry out the functions performed by Municipal Commissioner.

In the 1st Committee also and Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee IO) was established at the proposal of the United Nations on May 11 (A/C.I/297) for the purpose of considering further the question of city of Jerusalem.⁶

The Sub-Committee which held sixth meeting reported back to the First Committee on May 13. The report (A/C.I/296) proposed for a Temporary administration of Jerusalem by the United Nations being designated as administering authority for Jerusalem. The Trusteeship Council under the supervision of the General Assembly was to exercise the function of administering authority. This Government of Jerusalem was to consist of the United Nations Commissioner with wide ranging powers.⁷

The 1st Committee began to examine the Trusteeship proposal on 21st April. After several amendments and much discussion the resolution (A/C.I/292)⁸ was accepted.

6. The Sub-Committee was composed of the representative of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, France, Iran, Iraq, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Sweden, USSR, UK, US.

7. Vol.II.

8. Ibid., p.35.

First paragraph of the resolution set forth the composition of the Sub-Committee which consisted of, officers of the 1st Committee (China, Poland, Norway) and the representative of Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Guatemala, France, India, USSR and United States.⁹

Another Paragraph of the resolution said that in the light of the situation in Palestine and of the work of the Security Council and Trusteeship Council; and taking into account all suggestions made in the course of the Committee debate, shall formulate and report to the Committee a proposal for a provisional regime for Palestine.¹⁰

Sub-Committee-9 held eleven meetings before it finally adopted a US resolution (A/C.1/SC.9/I) with various modifications. The report of the Sub/Committee-9 reached the 1st Committee at its 139th meeting. This draft resolution including the amendments was put to vote after the representatives expressed their views on it; and was adopted by a vote of 35 to 6 with 10 abstention and was forwarded to the General Assembly for its decision.¹¹

The General Assembly in the concluding meeting of the 11th Special Session¹², deliberated upon the draft resolution presented by the 1st Committee. Different paragraphs and parts of the Doc.A/522 was adopted by varying

9. Sub-Committee establishment was Sub-Committee-9. 11th Special Session, vol. II. Main Committee. p.228.

10. Annex., p.35.

11. GAOR, Second Special Session, 139th meeting,
vol.II., p.262.

12. GAOR, Second Special Session, 132 to 135 meetings,
pp.10-47.

margins. The resolution as a whole was then adopted by a vote of 31 to 7 with 16 abstentions.¹³

The resolution established a United Nations Mediator in Palestine chosen by the permanent members of the Security Council. The Mediator was to use his good offices with the fiscal authorities in Palestine, to arrange services for the safety of the population; to ensure the protection of the holy places and to promote peaceful adjustment of any question that might arise in Palestine. He was also directed to cooperate with Truce Commission which the Security Council had established. The Committee ^{of} ~~the~~ General Assembly (China, Britain, France, USSR and USA) then appointed Count Folke Bernadotte, President of the Swedish Red-Cross, as United Nations Mediator in Palestine.¹⁴

On 14th May 1948 the 11th Special Session concluded its last meeting and the same day the Jewish state of Israel was born.

Within hours of its birth, Israel was recognised by the United States and three days later the USSR also recognised the Jewish state. Thus culminated the strongest period of the United Nations where the two cold-war warriors were on the same side of the fence. It has never happened in the history of the International Organization since then, when both these super powers have tried to outsmart each other in supporting the same cause.

13. Ibid., pp.44-45.

14. See Annex 10, vol.I&II, UN Official Records of the 2nd Special Session of General Assembly, pp.7-12.

This strange but bitter truth was brought home by the representative of Arab Higher Committee, Mr. Husseini in his speech is the adhoc Committee of the General Assembly.¹⁵

He said that the two great champions of freedom the USSR , the US had joined hands, prompted they said by humanitarian motives - to support the monstrous perversion of the principles of self-determination in Palestine. They had disagreed on everything constructive in the United Nations and had agreed on only one thing - the partition of Palestine. They had prepared for that destructive policy for divergent motives, the one to please Jewish voters in the US, the other to send tens of thousands of immigrants to inundate Palestine in order to propagate its theories and political aims.

Throughout the deliberations in the Second Special Session, the Indian delegate maintained a comparatively low profile. It would be remembered that this was the time when the question of Jammu & Kashmir was being hotly debated in the Security Council. On the 1st January 1948 the Indian representative through a letter to the Security Council President (8/628), and invoking article 35 of the Charter had placed the question of J & K at the disposal of the Security Council. From January 6, 1948, a seemingly interminable debate on the question had started. And the Indian delegation had to devote its full time and energy to redress the blunders committed during the initial presentation of the problem.¹⁶

15. GAOR, Adhoc Committee, 31st meeting, 24 Nov., pp.199-200.

16. We shall briefly analyse the mistakes in the presentation of the Kashmir question, in the next chapter.

Section - II

DEVELOPMENTS UPTO 1950: On the 14th March, 1948, Israel was born amidst great bloodshed and violence. And immediately after its birth, the Jewish state was engaged in war with the four neighbouring states - Egypt, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon, who had mould their forces into Palestine to prevent the dismemberment of the country.¹⁷

The Arab states through telegrams informed the Security Council of the reasons of their entree into Palestine. The Secretary General of the Arab League, in a cablegram, dated May 15, (S/745) set forth the reasons which had prompted the Arab states to intervene in Palestine.¹⁸

At the 292nd meeting of the Security Council the various parties to the dispute expressed their opinion and in the next meeting the US submitted a draft resolution ordering the warring parties to cease hostility immediately. At the same time it also submitted a questionnaire to the Arab states, Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee. It was agreed that the replies to the questions (S/753) should be received within a time limit of 48 hrs. counting from noon May 19, New York Standard time.

Transjordan said in its reply (S/760) that the United States, the author of the proposition of addressing questions to the Arab states, had not yet recognized the government of Transjordan, although Transjordan for the past two years had met all the required conditions for such

¹⁷. The reaction of the Secretary General Mr. Trygve Lie to the creation of Israel makes a very intriguing reading. He described "the establishment of the State of Israel
(contd. next page)

recognition. At the same time, the U.S. had recognized the so-called Jewish state within a few hours of its proclamation, although the factor for this recognition were lacking. The reply from the Transjordan also pointed out that the Security Council had failed on several occasions to recommend Transjordan for membership in the United Nation or these reasons the Govt. of Transjordan did not feel that there was a room for reply to the Council's questionnaire.

Other Arab states, Egypt (S/767) Iraq (S/769) Saudi Arabia (S/772), Syria (S/768) and Lebanon (S/770) replied that they had entered Palestine to prevent the annihilation of the Arab majority by the Zionist terrorists.

The provisional government of Israel in its reply (S/766) accepted that its forces were operating outside the 'State of Israel' (as devised in the Partition Plan) in self defence.¹⁹

During the debate in the Council it was however evident that many a member considered any coercive course of action by the Security Council as unjustified. The representative of China said that he could not find anything in the Charter which justified the United Nations in ordering the partition of any country or territory. Similar views were expressed by other delegates also.

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In Palestine without a major war" as "one of the epic events of history", (Annual Report of the Secretary General on the work of the Organisation, 1st July, 1948, 1949, Doc. supplement No. I(A/930).

18. For details see UN Library Document, UNX/9567-A/658

19. For detailed discussion see, official Records of Security Council, 1948

However, the representative of USSR, Ukrainian, SSR, France, US were in favour of firmer actions on the part of the Council.²⁰

The Arab states also raised a legal point. After the termination of the Mandate, Palestine was an independent state and recognized as such by the other Arab states. From that perspective this was the internal affair of Palestine beyond the jurisdiction of the Security Council. However, on 29th May a British sponsored resolution (S/795) was passed as amended by the United States. This resolution provided for immediate ceasefire for four weeks; that a cessation of hostilities would not "prejudice the rights, claims and positions of either Arabs or Jews; that no Government or authority should introduce fighting personnel or war material either into Palestine or Arab states; that the UN mediator and the UNTSCO should supervise the observance of truce; that all parties should communicate their acceptance by June 1948 and that action under Charter VII should be considered if the resolution was rejected or violated.

20. The Partition Resolution of 29 November 1947 had recommended the creation of a Jewish on 56% of the territory of Palestine, an Arab State on 42% and an International Zone of Jerusalem and environs on the remaining 2%. The resolution further stipulated that the Jewish and Arab States were to come into being two months after British withdrawal on 15th May 1948. However, in clear violation of the UN resolution, the Zionists proclaimed the state of Israel without waiting for the Palestine Commission to take over. Moreover by May 1948 the Israelis had clearly occupied 77% of the area of Palestine.

Several days of intense diplomatic activities both inside and outside the United Nations finally brought the truce. The Mediator, Count Folk Bernadotte fixed June 11 as the beginning of the truce. He declared that during the truce Israel could admit immigrants of military age but should not train or mobilize them. He asked US, France and Belgium to supply military observers to help supervise the truce. Despite USSR's declared desire, it was not called to send its observers.

Following the ceasefire Bernadotte submitted a tentative proposal to Arabs and Provisional Government of Israel with a view to permanent settlement of the Palestine dispute. These proposals provided for a Palestine Union, embracing Transjordan and Palestine but divided into two autonomous units one Arab and the other Jewish. Each unit would be free to control its own domestic affairs. A central Council was to supervise over-all defence and economic problem. The boundaries mentioned in the partition resolution would be altered to give the Arabs the Negev, Ramleh, and Lydda; the Jewish State would get Western Galilee. Haifa would become a free port. Jerusalem would be placed under Arab control but with a specific United Nations status with guarantee to access to holy places.²¹

21. See Progress Report of the UN Mediator on Palestine GA Official Records, 3rd session. Supplement No. 11(A/648) & 11A(A/689, A/689/Corr.I and A/689/Add.I).

Obviously the Bernadotte plan was more favourable than the original partition plan, to the Arabs, yet the Arabs submitted their own proposal which provided for an unitary state of Palestine (S/970). Israel also rejected Bernadotte's plan on the ground that it fostered false hopes among Arabs, wounded Jewish feelings and contradicted the partition resolution.

On July 9, 1948 the truce was to end. The Mediator, therefore, urgently sought a prolongation of the truce to prevent renewal of fighting and to gain time for further mediatory efforts. Two days before, however, the Security Council passed a British draft resolution(S/567) appealing "to the interested parties to accept in principle the prolongation of the truce for such period as may be decided upon in consultation with the Mediator". Israel agreed, but the Arabs did not and the conflict resumed.

United States presented a draft resolution (S/890) which blamed the Arabs and ordered for a ceasefire in three days / failing which sanction was threatened. By 7 to 1 (Syria) with 3 abstentions (USSR, UKranian SSR and Argentina) the Security Council passed the resolution on 15 July.

Significance of this truce was that this time the Security Council had forced this truce upon the warring parties.

Bernadotte again submitted a revised plan. The significant portion of this plan was that Arab Section of Palestine was not to be allowed to become an independent state but to be annexed to Transjordan. Except Britain, however, all the nations rejected this proposal. In fact, later in the 1st Committee (4 Dec. 1948) a curious combination of pro-Israel and pro-Arab states voted unitedly to defeat this proposal. This was the only occasion when the two rival factions had voted unitedly.

Though Israel authorities had also opposed this proposal of Count Folke Bernadotte²² but it did a good job for them, as it, created a rift between King Abdulleh of Transjordan and the rest of the Arab states.

The Arab League, with the support of the three Arab countries and despite Transjordan's propects, established on 20th September 1948 an 'all Palestine Governmennt, except Transjordan ultimately recognized as the official spokesman of all Palestinians. On his part, Abdulleh assembled some Palestine Arab leaders in Jerusalem on 1 December 1948 and got them to pass a resolution calling for the annexation of Arab Palestine by Transjordan.

22. Count Folke Bernadotte and the UN Observer Col. Andre Serot (France) were assassinated on 17th September 1948 in the Jewish occupied part of Jerusalem. "Deeply shocked" Security Council passed a resolution (S/PV.358) to pay tribute to him.

Later Ralph Bunch was appointed to succeed Bernadotte as UN Mediator.

Meanwhile the General Assembly passed the resolution I94(III) which established a conciliation Commission consisting of three state member of the United Nations to assume the functions of the United Nations Mediator. Jerusalem was to be the headquarter of the Conciliation Commission consisting of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The Commission was also instructed to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of the compensation and to maintain contacts with the director of the United Nations. The Conciliation Commission was also instructed to render the progress report periodically to the Secretary General for transmission to the Security Council and to the Members of the United Nations.

Later four among the five permitted members (France, US, UK & China) selected the representative of US, France and Turkey to be represented in the Conciliation Commission. Though USSR opposed it by this was approved by the General Assembly by a vote of 40 to 7 with 4 absententees.

The Conciliation Commission was concerned with four outstanding questions; the resettlement and repatriation of 940,000 Arab refugees; the delimitations of the frontiers of Israel, the creation of a permanent international regime for Jerusalem; and arrangements to protect and provide free access to Holy places in Palestine.

However, these questions were far from being solved and Palestine was still engulfed in the strife and bloodshed, when the Security Council accepted Israel's request for the membership to the United Nations, on May 4, 1949. Subsequently, the General Assembly also through a resolution (GA Resolution, 273(III) granted Israel the membership. India had voted against Israel's becoming a member of the United Nations. The Indian delegate categorically stated that 'India could not recognize an Israel which had been achieved through the force of arms'.²³

23. GAOR, 207, Plenary meeting, 1949, p.330.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

Chapter - IV

C O N C L U S I O N S

The United Nations' handling of the question of Palestine only served to emphasize the fact that the United Nations is first and foremost a political body. And not withstanding the lofty charter ideals, the members states use the United Nations only as an instrument of national diplomacy. The members sitting in the General Assembly are not jurists to consider the issues on merit. The only consideration is political and each nation judges an issue purely from the point of view of its own interest. And the treatment of the Palestine question by the United Nations was no exception.

In the course of foregoing analysis, we have already seen how the United Nations was manipulated into doing what was clearly beyond its legitimate jurisdiction. It is also obvious that the Great Britain had 'passed the buck' to the UN General Assembly only to place on it the onus of subjecting a whole population to a tragic fate for generations, and from which no redress is yet in sight. These conclusions are enevitable from our foregoing analysis. In this chapter, however, we have made an attempt to analyse, in comparative detail, some of the more obvious conclusions.

As we have already noted, the very reference of this question to the United Nations by the British Government was with the intention to exploit the political complexion of the United Nations to achieve its own desired objectives in Palestine without being responsible for it. But there was another dimension to it. The United Nations' involvement in the Palestine question was also in tune with the policies of the two super-powers. In fact, this makes a very intriguing reading that at this most intense period of cold war, both the super powers were at the same side of the fence. This convergence of the super power interests ensured that the helpless Arabs could not escape the ~~colwele~~ netted by the Zionists in and around the United Nations with the help of these powers of both East and West. It was this political complexion that facilitated the task of the pro-Zionists nations and they went through the most bizarre drame, that has even taken place in the United Nations. It may look anamolous to-day, but this is a bitter truth that the ~~cokwele~~ of international power politics had so much swallowed up the General Assembly at that time, that committed Zionists managed to sneak into such important body as the United Nations special Committee On Palestine (UNSCOP). Officially they belonged to Belgian and Gautemalan delegates, but they were confirmed agents of the Jewish Agency.

There is another very significant point which shows how the two super-powers were acting in collusion to serve the Zionists cause. When the Ad-hoc Committee of the General Assembly was discussing the partition plan, it was agreed to form three sub-committees to discuss the partition plan; administration of Jerusalem; and conciliation. All the 57 members of the United Nations had option to join any of these committees. And both the US and the USSR opted for the sub-committee on partition, and made a joint effort in increasing the territory of the Jewish state from proposed 38 per cent to 56 per cent.

This unbridled play of power politics also helped in getting the required number of votes in the General Assembly for the partition of Palestine. The votes cast in the Ad-hoc Committee on the partition plan were; 25 for; 13 against; and 17 abstentions. This was far less than the required two-thirds majority to get the partition plan through the General Assembly. However when finally voting took place in the General Assembly, the partition plan had got one vote more than the required. How the delegates were coerced to change their votes, we have already seen in earlier chapters.

It is in the context of these intrigues, conspiracy and power politics, that India had participated in the deliberations on the question of Palestine in the United

Nations. India did try to prevent, what it thought was injustice to the Palestinians and advocated what according to it was a more just solution. However, the situation as it existed then in the United Nations and India's own limitations guaranteed a far from decisive role of India on this question. There is no escape from the inevitable conclusion that India's role did not move much of an impact on the course of the progress of this problem. Still it would be more pertinent if we analyse India's role on the question of Palestine within the context of India's over-all perception of the United Nations.

The most notable feature of India's association with the United Nations has been its full cooperation with it. Even while not agreeing with the majority decisions on several occasions, India has accepted the majority decisions in good faith, once it has been passed.

India's participation on this question, through the United Nations was very much in line with its over-all perception of this international organisation. In this context two variables stand-out clearly. Firstly, India definitely believed in the usefulness of the UN as a very important vehicle in the conduct of international diplomacy,

as is obvious from the statements of Nehru.¹ And secondly to guard against any possible 'misuse' of the world body - by the interested powers.² This was a kind of idealistic perception which was reflected in the manner of India's participation in the United Nations in those early years, particularly on the question of Palestine and Kashmir. However, this does not mean that India did not comprehend the true nature of the United Nations. In fact, India fully understood the political nature of the United Nations, but considered this institution too important and vital for the newly independent, developing nations to allow it to go the League's way. That is why India opposed any such move which might jeopardize the very existence of the United Nations or its very *raison d'etre*. This has led India to

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1. For Nehru's perception of the UN, See, Jawaharlal Nehru, "India's foreign Policy", Selected Speeches, Sept., 1946, April, 1961, Publication Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961, pp. 162-179.
 2. However while using such words "as 'misuse' one should be cautious. As an observer points out "...it is a fact that one of the most important functions, the Organization performs is to serve as an instrument of national diplomacy. And if the UN has been able to survive various crises during the past thirty-two years of its existence it is not so much because it has promoted the interests of the world community successfully - it has certainly done so to a considerable extent - as because it has served the national interest of all Member States, though not to the same degree". K.P. Saksena, "India and the Diplomacy in the UN", p. 802. in Bimal Prasad (ed.), India's Foreign Policy Continuity and Change, Vikas, New Delhi, 1978.

opt for a somewhat 'conservative' attitude on matters relating to the International Organization.³

This rather conservative attitude of India on these various questions has led some observers to believe that India has rejected nearly all efforts to put teeth into the UN."⁴

This criticism is amiss; to say the least. What is referred to as an attempt to put teeth to the UN, were according to Indian perception, nothing but super-power manoeuvres to use United Nations' ⁱⁿ their global cold-war strategy. And opposition to such attempts was only logical.

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3. For example, India always opposed, at least in those early years, any attempt to tinker with the Charter, particularly on the question of veto, the establishment of a machinery for collective security, of the Uniting for Peace Resolution etc. India has never been an admirer of the veto provision, yet it has always discouraged any attempt that seems to undo the veto powers. India's acceptance of the veto provision emanates from its understanding of the real nature of the UN. This is evident by the remarks of the Indian representative in the Interim Committee during the discussion on the veto provision in mid 1948. According to him India did not regard it as an evil in itself, but rather as the reflection of fundamental difference between the Great powers and that "only if the Great powers were in accord with each other could international peace be ensured". Summary Record, Interim Committee of General Assembly. A/AC.18/SR.18 p. 10.
 4. Ross N. Berkes & Mohinder S. Bedi, The Diplomacy of India, Indian Foreign Policy in the UN, Stanford University Press, Stanford/California, 1958, p. 3.

It is correct that United Nations serves as an instrument of national diplomacy. However, it does so more by harmonizing various conflicting national interests, than by accentuating them. And this is the key to the survival of this Organisation. But not many nations recognize this vital aspect of the UN functioning, and try to use it in a way which threatens the international peace, destroying its very *raison d'être*. Attempts at establishing a Jewish state in Palestine through the UN machinery, was one such case, which threatened the international peace. It is in this context that we have to appreciate India's enthusiastic participation in the United Nations' activities for the solution of the Palestine problem.

Thus we see that Indian attitude towards the Palestine problem and its participation in the United Nations activities was conditioned by two factors. Firstly it was based on India's sympathy to the just cause of the Palestinian people, as we have seen in the first Chapter. And secondly, it was also required in the larger interest of international peace and security. But was this also in India's own national interest? Presently we shall discuss this aspect.

As we have seen in the earlier chapters, India had opposed an independent Jewish state in Palestine which was

sought to establish at the cost of its original inhabitants. Nonetheless, Israel was finally created in May, 1948. Soon after its coming into being, Israel requested the Government of India for recognition. The Government of India, however, deferred the question. It is also to be remembered that almost similar responses were made by most other Asian countries to the overtures made by Israel. Only one Asian country, Philippine had supported the partition plan for Palestine while one another - Taiwan had abstained. It is almost possible, to measure the impact of American connection in their responses. And in fact, apart from these two close allies of America; no Asian nation had accorded recognition to Israel immediately.

However, this did not mean that there was no difference between the Indian approach and that of the Arabs on the question of Israel. And accordingly, the Government of India recognised Israel on the 17th September, 1949. It was, nonetheless, emphasized that recognition did not mean that there was no difference between India's attitude and that of Israel over questions like the status of Jerusalem and Israel's frontier.

It is also interesting to note, as to how the Israeli press interpreted the Indian recognition, most of whom believed this was a recognition of the fact that

Israel was not a foreign factor in Asia. And also since, recognition had come on the eve of the General Assembly session, the Israeli press believed that it was an indication of the fact that India believed that certain similarity of outlook on international affairs existed between the two countries.⁵

Though India had accorded recognition to Israel, but full diplomatic relations did not follow automatically. In February-March 1952, possibilities of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel were explored. Dr. Walter Eyton, Director General of Israeli Foreign Ministry, paid an official visit to India in March 1952. This mission, however, did not succeed in establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. All that Nehru agreed to have was an Israeli Consulate General since early 1953 not in Delhi, but in Bombay, which is sometimes termed in journalist~~s~~ jargon as "India's diplomatic Siberia."

According to Eyton; earlier Nehru had agreed to establish diplomatic relations but later when he met Nehru at Berne in 1953, to discuss the matter the mind of the

5. See, "The Jewish Agency's Digest", 29th September 1950, p. 46.

Government of India had already changed.⁶

Mr. Eyton further added, "No body in fact, outside Nehru's intimate circle has ever discovered, why the Government of India did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel in the Spring or Summer of 1952 and no convincing explanation has been given for its sudden change of mind."⁷

Michael Brecher has volunteered a very curious explanation for this "sudden change of mind" which "may not be convincing but... almost certainly accurate". According to him, this sudden change of mind was 'due to the forceful intervention of Maulana Azad' - who 'as a Muslim' was 'naturally pro-Arab'. Michael Brecher has elaborated this theme in his biography of Nehru also. He says, "Azad's views were crucial on the two aspects of foreign policy - Indo-Pakistani relations and Middle-East. The Muslim minority in India, may properly be termed another basic source of India's world view, and Azad's was its acknowledged spokesman". He further adds, "India's staunch support for the Arab states in their conflict with Israel and its refusal to establish normal diplomatic relations with the Jewish state - a glaring

6. Quoted in Michael Brecher, "New States of Asia - A Political Analysis" (London 1978), p. 129.

7. Ibid, p. 130.

violation of Delhi's oft-proclaimed view on the need to accept the political facts of life was very largely due to Azad's advice.⁸

The least that can be said about this statement, is that it is an over-estimation of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's influence on Pandit Nehru. To say that Nehru changed his stance under Azad's pressure is to overlook the objective factors which were the primary factors, conditioning Nehru's stand. It can be safely asserted that objective forces were so compelling and overriding that Azad or no Azad, Nehru had taken the same stand on this question. Lal Bahadur Shastri, was admittedly more conservative and had no Muslim adviser like Azad. Rather some of his friends and advisers like Jay Prakash Narayan and Parliamentarians like Raghunath Singh and Prakash Vir Shastri were known to be in favour of developing close relations with Israel. And not only Shastri, but the successive Indian governments including that of Janata Party followed a more pro-Arab policy than Mr. Brecher would like to admit.

Moreover, there is another equally significant implication of Mr. Brecher's observations - which requires some detailed

8. Michael Brecher - Nehru - A Political Biography (London 1954), pp. 571-72.

9. Ibid, fn. no. 6, p. 130.

consideration. He maintains that Nehru needed Maulana Azad's advice to assuage the feelings of the Indian Muslims otherwise "it might have affected the loyalty of Indian Muslims".⁹ As the least, it is quite an absurd statement. Firstly, foreign policy issues have never been of much significance in the electoral politics of India.¹⁰

Moreover, the Indian Muslims have never been that much articulate on foreign policy issues as to make any substantial impact on foreign policy in terms of electoral politics. To express sympathy with the plight of Muslims abroad and to pressurise the government to take or reject a particular stand on some foreign policy issue is two different things.¹¹

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10. Krishna Menon's case is invariably cited to establish the link between the foreign policy issues and public opinion. It is said that vicissitude in his electoral career directly corresponded to the success of his policies as Defence Minister. For a clear exposition of this line of thinking see J. Bandopadhyaya, The Making of India's Foreign Policy, pp. 131-32.

This however, is not very convincing. Krishna Menon was demoted and finally ousted from the Cabinet, not because there was any unavoidable pressure from the public against him but because Mr. Nehru wanted to make a scapegoat for India's humiliation for Menon's defeat in 1967 elections there can be several reasons - he was now an independent candidate - with no party to support and fighting against the powerful and ruling Congress.

11. Also this should not be forgotten that this was time when the Muslims in India had not yet overcome the trauma of partition and were suffering from some kind

Michael Brecher has referred to Kashmir and Hyderabad questions, - that till they are alive in the UN, India would follow the anti-Israeli policy. By implication it means that India's whole Palestine policy was determined by these temporary considerations. It is only partially true. No doubt these considerations also conditioned India's attitude towards Israel. But these were only immediate causes,

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of guilt conscience. Thus to suggest that in this mental conditions the Muslims could make the question of Israel an issue in electoral politics, is only to betray a lack of understanding of Indian political realities. Even now, when the new generation of Muslims have overcome the trauma of partition, they have not made the foreign policy questions, much of issue in the electoral politics of India. Several instances can be cited to prove this point. For instance on the question of Russian intervention in Afghanistan the Muslims' sentiment was very much echoed by Mr. Charan Singh - the then Prime Minister when he said, "hands off Afghanistan". In contrast Mrs. Gandhi took a stand which was not to the likings of the Muslims. And yet, as is well known the Muslim voted en masse for Mrs. Gandhi in the subsequent election (1980). Similarly, the Government of India's attitude on the Camp David Question is not in harmony with the general Muslim opinion. Most important of all the case of Pakistan. It is not a secret that Indian Muslims with half of their relatives in Pakistan has always desired for friendly relations with Pakistan. On the question of Pakistan the Muslim sentiment was represented by the Janata Party, but in the 1980 elections, the Muslims voted for Mrs. Gandhi whose Pakistan policy was not to the likings of the Muslims.

while it is obvious that India had opted for this limited policy toward Israel; keeping in view the long term considerations. This can be seen in successive Indian Government's policy. Moreover India's policy toward Israel was conditioned by India's attitude to the question of Palestine, which was formed, as we have seen in the foregoing chapters, much before India's own independence. The subsequent developments only served to strengthened Indian attitude, which reflected in the form of India's Israel policy.

What were those objective factors which conditioned India's attitude or towards Israel ? We will attempt to analyse those factors.

Broadly there can be two major categories that have conditioned India's policy, towards Israel. Firstly, the political tradition and secondly the vital discernible interests of the nation that may be affected, one way or the other in persuing a particular policy or not persuing another.

Among the significant political traditions that played a significant role in the present case were - the idealist view of politics and power; anti-imperialism, anti-recialism and Asianism, which are worth mentioning.¹²

12. For details see J. Bandopadhyaya, no. , pp. 69-81.

It is well known that the idealist approach to politics has always dominated the Indian political scene - from Ashoka down to Gandhi. During the movement for national independence, this idealist view had taken very strong and deep roots in the mind of Indian leadership, which simply meant that they projected Satyagraha, non-violence etc. to the international problems. It was this tradition which had conditioned Gandhi and Nehru's approach to the problem of Palestine and subsequently to the question of Israel. These idealistic variables continued to influence Indian policy makers even after independence.

Anti-imperialism and anti-racialism are the aspect of Indian foreign policy developed out of India's own experience of British imperialism. Initially these aspects were directed against the British rule in India, but gradually they became "categorical imperatives of Indian national mind, and Nehru only expressed a deep Indian sentiment when he declared in 1946, as the Prime Minister of the Interim Government of India, that anti-imperialism and anti-racialism were 'the kernel of our foreign policy'.¹³

From the very beginning Zionism and the movement for a Jewish state in Palestine had an impression upon nationalist

13. Ibid, p.75.

Indian mind as a machination of British imperialism. This suspicion proved to be true when Israel was created in Palestine. From the end of the First World War the theme of 'Asiatic Federation' or Asianism was a constant feature of the Congress Revolution. This attachment to Asianism had emerged out of the common experience among the Asian nations, of the horror of colonialism. Very naturally India, as most other Asian nations, found it hard to reconcile with the manner and nature of the establishment of the Jewish state, which though in Asia has nothing in common with other Asian nations. And the Israeli leadership was not unaware of this non-Asian image of Israel.¹⁴ And for them it was highly crucial to make themselves acceptable to the Asians and in this strategy India was the most vital factor for

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14. Apologists of Israel would like us to believe that Israel is more Asian than the Asians themselves. For instance according to Michael Brecher, "Afro-Asian brings to mind many images. To some it is merely a geographical expression. To others it is the home of great religions, whose teachings have withstood the ravages of time. A third symbol is colonial rule and underdeveloped economies. A fourth is race and colour. Finally the term, Afro-Asian suggests political and economic change of such dimension as to transform the classical system of international relations... whatever image is selected, Israeli clearly falls within the meaning of Afro-Asia." Brecher, no. 2, p. 123.

These arguments are not at all convincing. The people who constitute the present state of Israel have never suffered the colonial rule. It is the lakhs of Arabs refugees who have suffered and are still suffering at the hands of colonialism. Moreover, Israel which altogether identified itself with the West, is not an under developed economy in the sense the most-Afro-Asians are. Though, geographically located in Asian continent the present state of Israel has nothing in common with the other Asian nations.

many reasons. "Israel's early quest for Asian acceptance centred on New Delhi."¹⁵ There were solid reasons behind this. Firstly, India at this stage was emerging as the most prominent among the Afro-Asian nation, and both China and Japan were relegated to the background at this stage.¹⁶ But Israel which after sitting on the fence for some time had finally joined the Western camp had raised many doubts in the minds of the Asians about its credibility.¹⁷ Thus until 1952, there were no full-fledged Israeli diplomatic missions east of Ankara and in 1957, only two in Tokyo and Rangoon. And as late as 1960 Israel's diplomatic status in Asia was not much improved. There were only two embassies in Burma and Thailand and two legations in Japan and Phillipines, a charge d'affair in Ceylon and non resident missions to Nepal, Laos and Cambodia.

15. Ibid, p. 128.

16. It is interesting to note in this context that during the first Asian Relations Conference (ARC) in New Delhi in March 1947, invitation was sent to the Vaad Leumi (The General Council of the Jewish Community in Palestine) and on the Jewish delegation did attend the ARC. On the other hand except for Egypt, other Arab countries boycotted it. However, in January 1949, the second ARC was held in New Delhi to discuss the Indonesian question. And in this Israel which had come into being, was not invited, while the Arab countries participated in full strength. For details see, Ran Kochan - "Israel in Third World Forums", pp. 247-69. in Michael Curtis and Fusan Aurelia Gitelson (ed.), 'Israel in the Third World' Transaction Books, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1976.

17. On several occasions it was proved that Israel wanted to be identified with the West, sometimes even at the cost of Asian nations. For instance - following

However, the most decisive variable that influenced the Indian policy makers on the question of Palestine was and still is; the Arab factor. Over the years it is maintained in India, both by the supporters of the India's Palestine policy and critics of it that Arab factor alone has conditioned the Indian policy. There is, in fact, much struth in it though not the whole truth. The Arab factor has influenced the Indian policy makers in two-ways- politically and economically.

Politically the twenty (now forty) odd Muslim Afro-Asian nations have almost echoed the Arab sentiments on the question of Palestine. And these nations by their sheer number have become a major force in the international forums. And it has been a consistent policy objective of the Government of India, not to offend these nations if it can be avoided. And the question of Palestine was one such issue.

Another factor which had restrained India's manoeuverability vis-a-vis Arabs was the reflection of sub-continental rivalry in the Arab world. During this time Pakistan had sought to exploit its Islamic character

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Armistice Agreement on Korea in July 1953, when the General Assembly considered and put to vote the issue of inviting India a non-belligerent - to participate in the high level political conference - Israel abstained and the proposal was defeated.

in the Islamic world against India. It is correct that Pakistan could not make much headway, because for one thing, most of the countries in that region were too engrossed with their domestic problems to pay any attention to pan-Islamic notions. But India's calculated policy on Israel also helped in building India's image. This also behind all Pakistani propaganda that being predominantly a Hindu state, India was essentially anti-Muslims.

This is however to be noted that Nehru's Israel policy was not entirely conditioned emotional variables. It was based on a very clear understanding of India's concrete gains. A Jewish critic of India's Israel policy Murray Gordon admits himself, "It (India's policy) is not a cut whole from the cloth of Arab diplomacy - it is not inspired by an anti-semitic animus, nor is intended to undermine the Jewish state.... Rather it is calculated to advance that vague yet compelling notion of the national interest as conceived by the political elite of the Indian National Congress."¹⁸

This statement is basically, true, only that the notion of national interest compelling as it is; it is not

18. Murray Gordon - India-Israeli Relations - Perspective and Promise, pp. 13, Midstream, Nov. 1974.

vague. However, here the question may be asked as to what India has gained in terms of political support by supporting the Palestinian cause. For a correct understanding of this question, we shall have to see it in a wider perspective. It is true that most of the Arab countries have friendly relations with Pakistan and sometime it has proved very disappointing and embarrassing for us. For instance, during the Indo-Pak rounds of 1965 and 1971 most of the Arab countries had shown either their sympathies with Pakistan or a sort of neutrality. During the Sino-India war of 1962 also, most of them remained neutral. But can these factors outweigh other considerations? The answer is no, and for various reasons.

For one thing if the Arab countries did not side with India against Pakistan or China, so did Israel. In fact, it should be more surprising that Israel should also take a neutral posture when it is obvious that both China and Pakistan were clearly hostile to Israel while India had never been. Beyond appreciating India's restraint and forbearance during the various stages of border dispute with China, the reply of Ben Gurion the then Israeli Prime Minister to Nehru's message was absolutely non-committal. Rather he found no better situation than this to give a lengthy account of Israel's own endeavour "to maintain peace

in West Asia.¹⁹ Similarly during the 1965 Indo-Pak War also Israel maintained a neutral posture. Golda Meir said in the United Nations on 7th October, 1965 about the futility of local wars for the settlement of dispute.²⁰ It is then obvious that Israel did not consider India's friendship very essential - at least not at the cost of displeasing China or Pakistan in those years. It therefore, did not provide India any reason to switch-over to Israel.

Moreover it is also not correct that all the Arab States had been a neutral observer or sympathiser of Pakistan or China. During the war with China, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen extended sympathy to India. Thus politically also India can always count on at least two or three Arab countries for support on international forums. This more than compensates Israel's political support even if assumed that Israel would support India without any reservation on every question, if we develop relations with it. And political variables that we have already analysed is only one of the concrete interests of India's involvement in this issue. Another, as earlier mentioned, is economic variable.

19. Cited in R.K. Srivastava - India-Israeli Relations, The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. XXXI, No. 3, July-September 1970, p. 250.

20. Ibid, p. 252.

The economic variable, in fact, acted as a major constraint in the development of Indo-Israeli relations. Though, initially they were secondary in importance, political factors being primary determinant, they gained in importance subsequently. From late 1950's, to early 1960's the economic factors gradually grew in importance and by the late 1960s and early 1970s they became the single most determinant of India's policy in the region ultimately-affecting India's relation with Israel.

At the outset, it must be pointed out that there is not much scope of any economic relation with Israel. For one thing the nature of imports and exports of the two countries are such that they cannot be of any help to each other, that is, it is non-complementary in nature. In fact, rather they are competitive in nature. Many of India's export to and import from Africa and Asia compete with those of Israel. In the African market, for instance, Israel is India's serious rival in the field of cotton textiles and high engineering products.

Moreover Israeli exports have a limited range; artificial diamonds, citrus fruits and its products, manures, chemical and fertilizers etc. while food grains, raw materials for canning industry and machinery for various development and engineering products dominate the Israeli imports - On the other hand, India's traditional exports comprise tea,

cotton, and fibre textiles, jute products, tobacco, spices etc. - and its main imports have been food grains, minerals, oils and heavy and light machinery. Therefore, notwithstanding the political inhibitions, the Indo-Israeli trade has been negligible.

On the other hand, the Indo-Arab trade is complementary in nature. India's main exports to the Arab world are cotton textiles, tea, jute, products and light engineering products.- and its main imports from the regions are mineral oil, phosphates, raw cotton and some foodgrains. Whereas the Arabs have the alternative market for their produce and alternative source of supply for their requirements, India does not enjoy that benefit - for instance whereas the Arab states have easy source of supply of tea (Ceylon and China) cotton textiles (Japan, China and Pakistan) Jute (Pakistan and now Bangladesh) and light engineering goods (Japan and China) - India's alternative source of mineral oils, cotton and phosphates are far away to be commercially advantageous to it. The West Asian region is also a very fertile ground for Indian joint ventures. Currently there are 30 Indian joint ventures active in West Asia.

In short there are significant facets of economic variable which justify India's close relations with the Arab world. And India's stand on the Palestine question not

only helps to build India's image as a truly non-aligned nation and counters all Pakistani propaganda in the region. But also serves India's vital political and economic interests. In short India's approach to the Palestine problem is a very important variable of India's West Asian policy. That is why we have surveyed the Indo-Arab connection in rather detail.

Seeing in this light, we cannot but appreciate and justify India's attitude on the question of Palestine. And India's performance on this question in the United Nations becomes all the more appreciable, when we see that almost at the same time, India had bungled on the question of Kashmir.

India definitely showed a lack of finesse in tackling the Kashmir issue in the United Nations, which it had shown on the question of Palestine. For instance, the initial memorandum submitted to the Security Council, invoked Article 35 (Chapter VI) and not Article 39 (Chapter VII), which should have been the case. Article 35 of the Charter relates to disputes and situations, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 39 refers to the actual existence of a threat to peace or act of aggression, which in fact was the case subsequent to the Pakistani aggression.

The memorandum also contained self-contradictory arguments. For example it said that India cannot tolerate foreign aggression on a neighbouring state and the very next paragraph proclaimed that the instrument of accession had made India legally responsible for the defence of Kashmir. These two arguments together considerably weakened India's case. Firstly, the 'first argument had no validity in terms of the Charter, and the second lost much of its thrust when combined with and preceeded by, the first one. The oral presentation was even more tardy. The Indian representative said that India had agreed to plebiscite on Kashmir under international auspices to choose between India, Pakistan or the United Nations as an independent nation. Mention of Pakistan was highly anachronistic. The actual case should have been that this referendum would decide only whether Kashmir would remain with India or not.

It is not surprising then, that India made a total mess of the whole issue and soon found itself in the doldrums.

One reason why India failed to show some kind of sophistication in tackling the Kashmir question, as it had shown in the case of Palestine, was because while in the later case the Indian leadership had a very clear perception of the issues involved, in the former, it appeared to be confused. The men at the helm of affairs were apparently

not sure what were the issues involved in the Kashmir question and how they could be related to the United Nations.

If it is, however, very difficult to pass final and all conclusive judgement about such complex issues. The wide range of issues, involved in such questions, their complexities and their various dimensions, all defy any simplistic generalisations. However, this does not derogate from India's performance. At least, India tried to do what it could do, within its limitations in arriving at a just solution to the Palestine problem. Moreover, it did help in sending the message around that this newly independent nation was not going to toe the line of any super-power.²¹

Finally, we may conclude our study by citing Nehru. The quote, though lengthy, is very significant because it not only shown why India acted the way, it did, but also sums up our own conclusions on India's performance on the question of Palestine. Nehru told the members of the

21. Nehru's observations are very relevant here. He said in the constituent Assembly on Dec. 4, 1947, "Last year when our delegation went to the United Nations, it was the first time that more or less independent delegation went from India. It was looked at a little askance." And that the super-powers did not like the way India acted. But, "this year a slight change in this attitude, ...they did not like that (India's policy)... nevertheless, they respected us much more because they realized that we had an independent policy, that we were not going to be dragooned this way or that, that we might make mistake just like anyone else, nevertheless we were going to stick to our own policy and programme...." Nehru, Speeches, No. , p. 25.

Constituent Assembly. "We took up a certain attitude in regard to it (the Palestine question) which was roughly a federal state with autonomous parts. It was opposed to both the other attitudes which were before the United Nations. One was partition which has now been adopted; the other was a unitary state. We suggested a federal state with, naturally, an Aroie majority in charge of the federal state but with autonomy for the other regions - Jewish regions.

After a great deal of thought we decided that this was not only a fair and equitable solution of the problem, but the only real solution of the problem. Any other solution would have meant fighting and conflict. Nevertheless, our solution - which, as the House will remember, was the solution given in the minority report of the Palestine Committee - did not find favour with most people in the United Nations. Some of the major powers were out for partition; they, therefore pressed for it and ultimately got it. Others were so keen on unitary state idea and were so sure of preventing partition at any rate or preventing a two-thirds majority in favour of partition that they did not accept our suggestion.

When during the last few days somehow partition suddenly became inevitable and votes veered round to it, owing to the pressure of some of the Great powers, it was realized that the Indian solution was probably the best and

attempt was made in the last 48 hours to bring forward the Indian solution, ~~so~~ not by us but by those who had wanted a unitary state. It was then too late. There were procedural difficulties and many of the persons who might have accepted this solution had already pledged themselves to partition. And so ultimately partition was decided upon by a two-thirds majority... with the result that there is trouble in the Middle-East now and the possibility of a great deal of trouble in future.... I have no doubt that the position we had taken was the right one and I still have no doubt that it would have brought about the best solution."²²

22. Ibid, p. 26.

APPENDIX

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

Foreign Office
November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothchild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and the political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur James
Balfour

Source: - From the photographic reproduction of the original in the archives of the British Muslim, reproduced in John Norton Moore (-ed) The Arab-Israel Conflict. Vol.III Documents. New Jersey,Princeto University Press, Press, 1974.

Resolution No.181(II) of 29 November 1947

RECOMMENDING A PARTITION PLAN FOR PALESTINE

The General Assembly,

Having met in special session at the request of the mandatory power to constitute and instruct a Special Committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of the future Government of Palestine at the second regular session;

Having constituted a Special Committee and instructed it to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine, and to prepare proposals for the solution of the problem, and

Having received and examined the report of the Special Committee (document A/364)^I including a number of unanimous recommendations and a plan of partition with economic union approved by the majority of the Special Committee.

Considers that the present situation in Palestine is one which is likely to impair the general welfare and friendly relations among nations;

Takes note of the declaration by the mandatory Power that it plans to complete its evacuation of Palestine by 1 August 1948;

Recommends to the United Kingdom, as the mandatory Power for Palestine, and to all other Members of the United Nations the adoption and implementation, with regard to the future Government of Palestine, of the Plan of Partition with Economic Union set out below:

Requests that

(a) The Security Council take the necessary measures as provided

for in the plan for its implementation.

(b) The Security Council consider, if circumstances during the transitional period require such consideration, whether the situation in Palestine constitutes a threat to the peace.

If it decides that such a threat exists, and in order to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council should supplement the authorization of the General Assembly by taking measures, under Articles 39 and 41 of the Charter, to empower the United Nations Commission, as provided in this resolution, to exercise in Palestine the functions which are assigned to it by the resolution:

(c) The Security Council determine as a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter, any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged by this resolution;

(d) The Trusteeship Council be informed of the responsibilities envisaged for it in this plan;

Calls upon the inhabitants of Palestine to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put this plan into effect;

Appeals to all Governments and all peoples to refrain from taking any action which might hamper or delay the carrying out of these recommendations, and

Authorises the Secretary-General to reimburse travel and subsistence expenses of the members of the Commission referred to in Part I, Section B, Paragraph I below, on such basis and in such form as he may determine most appropriate in the circumstances, and to people the Commission with the necessary staff to assist in carrying out the functions assigned to the Commission by the General Assembly.

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