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37

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Herald Tribune, Washington Evening Star, reprint of "America and
Partition", 1948.

America and Partition

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1948

The Fact of Partition

The report of the Palestine Committee of the United Nations reveals candidly how little has been accomplished by this body in implementing the partition resolution of last Nov. 29. It foresees in Palestine, unless adequate outside help is forthcoming, "administrative chaos, starvation, widespread strife, violence and bloodshed." At the same time, in a solemn declaration, the General Zionist Council has asserted that an independent Jewish state will be established on May 16, the day following Britain's departure. The vacuum left by the Palestine Commission is thus being filled by the Zionists themselves; and partition, which has had its setbacks as a theory, is being transformed into a solid fact.

That the Zionists have been driven to act without the official blessing of the international organization is regrettable; yet it is difficult to see how any other result could have been anticipated. The partition resolution of the United Nations fanned to consuming flame the long-held hopes of the Jewish world; it was not to be supposed that Zionists could wait indefinitely upon the hesitations and delays of outside powers. As the Arab opposition to a Jewish state forced upon them the need for military action, so the Western indecision has forced on them the political initiative. Though we dislike to see the international authority by-passed, we cannot as Americans be wholly insensitive to the reasons which impel a people to declare its independence, not wholly unmoved by the courage which makes such a declaration possible.

The rapidly developing situation in Palestine calls our policy-makers to a re-examination of their course. They still tend to act as if partition were something which depended on their will, and could be given or withdrawn by turns. They talk, if reports from Washington are correct, about sending troops to maintain security in the Holy Land only if a truce between Jews and Arabs has first been achieved—ignoring the fact that the Arabs will make no truce with partition, and that the Jews will not surrender the goal they have desired so long and which they have seen coming so near. The United States must seek to limit its involvement in this troubled area and apply its force in the most efficient possible way. But the time has come when a course must be laid which accepts our full responsibility and is shaped to the unescapable factors—military and political—of the Palestine situation as a whole.

On the Other Hand

By Lowell Mellett



Washington.

When the United Nations convenes in a special assembly on Friday, strangers in the visitors' gallery should be able to pick out the representatives of the United States of America by the color of their faces. Their faces will be, or should be, red.

The American representatives will occupy a humiliating position, humiliating to themselves and to the great country for which they undertake to speak. They will have come to argue that the world organization should crawl before the threats of a coup of small Arab countries and reverse itself on a decision made a little more than four months ago. This decision, the partition plan for Palestine, was reached in large part because of the public and private urging of these same American representatives.

On orders from Washington the American delegation back in November worked day and night, in the Assembly chamber and in hotel rooms, to line up a majority of the nations for the partition plan—the only plan that seemed to contain the elements of justice and practicality. They were completely successful. Even the Soviet Union agreed.

Now, on a change of orders from Washington, the embarrassed Americans must undertake to undo one of the truly constructive jobs thus far accomplished within the U.N. This of itself would contain no cause for humiliation if anything had happened to reveal that the original action was unwise, unfair or in

any way improper. But nothing of that kind has happened.

The Arab countries, to be sure, have declared they will not accept the authority of the U.N., of which some of them are members; that they propose to keep on killing off the Jews and nobody can stop them. But no great power—certainly not one that professes itself prepared to "contain" Russian aggression wherever it may show itself—could be expected to capitulate to such threats and ask the rest of the world to join in the capitulation.

To replace the partition plan the American government will suggest a trusteeship under the U.N. This is acceptable to neither the Arabs nor the Jews. For one thing, there is no reason to believe that it can be made to work or can even be set up before the date of May 15, when Great Britain is due to relinquish her Palestine mandate. For another, it is flagrant affront to both the Jews and the Arabs.

"It certainly seems to imply," said Dr. Herbert V. Evatt, Australian Foreign Minister, "that the peoples to be placed under trusteeship are not sufficiently 'advanced' for self-government. Such a suggestion would seem to be untenable in relation either to

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and

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the Palestinian Arabs or to the Palestinian Jews."

If it seems that way to the Australian statesman, it is easy to understand how it seems to the Jews and the Arabs. The Jews have reason for pride in the capacities they have shown in developing their corner of Palestine. The Arabs could take pride in their ability to throw a great power such as the U.S. off its stride. Both can feel they are capable of governing themselves. In any case both are dead set against the trusteeship idea and that means double trouble if the plan is forced on them.

The U.S. is engaged in a series of brave adventures—all part presumably of a concerted whole—to win the world to our concept of democracy. What doth it profit us that we gain the whole world and lose our own soul? has long been asked. An even more devastating question, however, is raised by this proposed abandonment of our self-respect. It is: What will it profit us if we lose our soul and yet fail to gain the whole world? That is one risk we should not even calculate.

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