

BRITISH STAND PAT ON PALESTINE ISSUE

Anglo-American Ill-Will Seen at Highest Pitch Since Labor Party Came to Power

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LONDON, May 20—The British Government grimly stood pat today on the Palestine issue in the face of a mounting wave of American criticism. This problem appears to be causing more Anglo-American ill will than any issue that has come up since the Labor Government took office nearly three years ago.

Foreign Secretary Bevin would not even talk about Palestine in his otherwise comprehensive review of foreign policy at the annual conference of the Labor party in Scarborough today. He refuses to budge on the question of recognizing the state of Israel or of taking any action with regard to the activities of the Arab forces in Palestine.

The telegram yesterday of Moshe Shertok, Israeli Foreign Minister, asking for recognition, has not been answered and will not be unless Britain decides to grant recognition. It was stated at the Foreign Office that this was normal diplomatic form.

As a matter of fact, the Government simply feels that it is too soon to decide one way or another. In this, as in many other facets of the Palestinian problem, Britons are fully as critical of the Americans as the latter are of the British. It is felt that American recognition was not only unwarranted and irregular, but that it wrecked what little hope remained of achieving reconciliation at the last moment of the warring parties in Palestine.

Intensity of Feeling Unusual

There is nothing new about British resentment against Washington and American Zionists on the Palestine issue, but the intensity of feeling today is unusual. It has been believed here—and Mr. Bevin has said as much on several occasions—that but for United States' interference on the side of the Zionists and continuous American advice unaccompanied by any willingness to share the burden of implementing a policy, there would have been a fair solution of the Palestinian problem long ago.

As seen from here, American criticism today is aimed primarily at what is believed to be Britain's favoritism toward the Arabs in the present situation.

The British reply is first that this country is not actively supporting either side but is seeking only tranquility in the Middle East whereas the United States openly supports Israel against the Arabs.

So far as the Arab Legion and other Arab forces are concerned, it is asserted here that Britain's alliances with the Arab countries date back many years and they served not only Britain but the United States and the rest of the Allies very well in World War II. But for Britain's treaty with Egypt, it is asserted, the Mediterranean would have been lost.

Support Is Obligation

The only recent treaty is that with Trans-Jordan, signed last March, but it is denied that any feature of it was aimed against Palestine. British support for the Arab Legion is a treaty obligation, and Britain sees no reason to

break this treaty unless the United Nations condemns Trans-Jordan.

In this connection it is stated here that Britain's alliances in the Middle East do not give this country the right to control the foreign or military policies of the Arab countries. That type of British imperialism has gone into history, it is asserted, and Britain today feels it is in no position to order King Abdullah to do anything.

The British declare that while Americans criticize them for being pro-Arab, the Arabs blame Britain on many counts for favoring the Zionists and especially for having made Zionism a reality.

British policy is also undoubtedly affected by the bitterness felt here over Jewish terrorism in Palestine. The King David Hotel explosion, the hanging of the two British sergeants and shooting and casualties of all kinds have left a deep mark on British public opinion and on Government policy.

The British feel that the United States has never shown adequate sympathy or understanding for the realities of the Palestinian situation.

The result of all this mutual misunderstanding and criticism is the present ill-will between the United States and Britain on this issue. Each day that has passed