

**SIR M. ZAFRULLA KHAN**

**PALESTINE  
IN THE U.N.O.**

**THE PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
KARACHI**

*Price Annas Eight*

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*By*

SIR MUHAMMAD ZAFRULLA KHAN

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## PALESTINE IN THE U. N. O.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of Palestine, even in its modern phase, has a history extending over 32 years. I shall, in order to give you a background of it, sketch in broad outline the history of the matter prior to its being placed before the United Nations Organisation. This will occupy me for a few moments, but I think you will find it interesting and in any case it is necessary for you to know something of the past before you can fully understand the implications of what happened in the United Nations.

In 1915 during the first World War when Turkey declared on the side of Germany, the then Allies felt that the balance in the Middle East had been too seriously upset against them. The one way of redressing this balance and of retrieving the situation in the Middle East, which was a very vital region, was to persuade the Arab countries to side with them. But these countries at that time owed political allegiance to Turkey. The British opened negotiations with Sharif Hussein, who subsequently became King Hussein of Hedjaz, with a view to persuading the Arabs to side with the Allies in the struggle. King Hussein consulted other chieftains and found that most of them would be ready to adopt the suggested course provided the Allies gave a pledge or a promise that at the end of the War, when victory had been achieved, the Arab lands would be free and independent. The British agreed to the Arab terms, and after some discussion there was also a settlement about the boundaries of the region within which the Arabs were to be settled. There has been some controversy whether Palestine, as it exists today, was or was not intended to be included within these boundaries. But the documents are there and nobody after reading them can fairly or justly contend that Palestine was not intended to be included. Well, the Arabs joined on the side of Britain and her Allies; victory was won. As we know all the Arab countries except Palestine have now achieved their independence,

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered at an Institute meeting at Karachi on December 7, 1947.

even though they had for many years to suffer the rule of foreign Powers who held "mandates" over them.

On the 2nd November 1917, the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Balfour, wrote a letter to Lord Rothschild in which he stated that His Majesty's Government viewed with favour the establishment in Palestine of the Jewish National Home and that they would be willing to afford all facilities for the purpose subject to the position of the Jews in other countries not being adversely affected and the civil and the religious rights of the population of Palestine being safeguarded. This is known as the Balfour Declaration. After the War, the mandate for Palestine was committed to Britain and by its terms, she, as the mandatory power, was put under an obligation to establish a Jewish National Home in Palestine and also to foster the development of self-governing institutions so that ultimately Palestine might be free and independent. Thereafter the Jewish immigration into Palestine started and the struggle between the Jews and the Arabs began.

During the course of this struggle there were from time to time uprisings and disturbances. Several attempts to achieve a settlement in Palestine were made by the British Government. Efforts were made so that the Jews and the Arabs might agree upon some scheme about the constitutional future of the country. But they all failed. In 1939, the British Government invited representatives of the Jewish Agency and the Arabs to London in order to bring about some sort of conciliation or settlement between them, but it failed. The Arab leaders refused to sit at the same table as the Jews. The British Ministers held separate conferences with the Arabs on the one hand and the Jews on the other. Eventually, when no agreement was arrived at, they published their own solution of the problem, which was embodied in a document known as the White Paper of 1939.

The main provisions of the White Paper were that Jewish immigration should continue for another five years and at the rate of 15,000 a year, that is to say, it should be upto but not exceed 75,000. Thereafter, any further Jewish immigration must be subject to the consent of the Arabs. The High Commissioner in Palestine was also instructed to frame regulations so as to restrict the purchase by the Jews of agricultural land owned by the Arabs; and in certain areas, which were specified, such purchases could only take place with the permission of the Palestine Government. After 10 years, that is to say in 1949, Palestine was to be independent.

Taken as a whole the White Paper meant that Palestine would be independent in 1949 with only 75,000 more Jews than there were in it in 1939. Obviously this would have been an Arab State, for the Arabs would still have been in a majority.

The Jews did not accept the White Paper and the Arabs did not accept it either; and thus the matter was once more left unsettled. In September 1939 second World War began and nothing further could be done about Palestine. After the War, the Labour Party came into power in Great Britain. Inasmuch as that Party had opposed the White Paper of 1939, the Jews had great hopes that they would succeed with the Labour Government, whom they had heatedly helped to put into power by their support during the General Election of 1945. In the new Parliament there were 16 members who were Jews. One Minister and two Under-Secretaries of State were also Jews. Subsequently, there were two Jewish Ministers and two Jewish Under-Secretaries of State. But when the Foreign Secretary began to study the question, he found it was not so simple as the Jews had tried to make it out. Mr. Bevin had some previous experience of the Palestine problem; he had tried to settle it while he was in the Coalition Government. He had almost arrived at a solution on the basis of a settlement between the Jews and the Arabs when he received

information that the President of the United States intended to make a public request to Great Britain as the mandatory power to admit 100,000 Jewish immigrants into Palestine immediately. When Mr. Bevin got to know of this, he sent an appeal to the President begging him not to make his public request at that moment as there was a settlement within sight and that if he would withhold it for a few days, the problem of Palestine might be settled by the consent of the Jews and the Arabs. But the President wired back to say that he could not withhold his request. The reason for it was that if he had not made it, the Republican Party would have made it and they would have got all the credit for it and received all the Jewish votes in the United States in the Election. Mr. Bevin protested against the conduct of international affairs being influenced in this manner by domestic politics. Nevertheless, the President made his request and, by publishing it, he prevented an agreed settlement between the Arabs and the Jews that seemed possible at that time.

In the meantime, Great Britain was getting sick of the whole business. British soldiers, occasionally administrators, sometimes even civilians, were being killed by Jewish terrorists in Palestine. The Arabs were getting impatient and the Jews also. It seemed that the time had come when Palestine should be free and independent. But Great Britain did not know what line to adopt, while her policy was criticised by all the Powers. So, Great Britain said: "Since we can find no solution of this problem, we shall refer it to the United Nations and ask them to solve it". That is how the matter came to the United Nations.

A special session was summoned, in last April, I believe, of the General Assembly of the United Nations to deal with the matter. This special session appointed a Special Committee on Palestine and asked it to visit the country, to investigate on the spot and to make a report as to what the solution ought be. This Committee consisted of 11 members. They went to Palestine;

they took evidence; they visited some places outside Palestine also and eventually made two reports, a majority report and a minority report. The majority report was signed by 7 members and the minority report by 3 members and one member, Australia, remained neutral. The minority report was signed by the representatives of Yugoslavia, Iran and India, the Indian representative being the Honourable Mr. Justice Abdur Rehman. The majority report was signed, as I said, by 7 members and they put forward the solution of partition. The minority report put forward the solution of a federal State having two units, the Jewish State and the Arab State. Neither scheme was acceptable to the Arabs, but the Jews declared that they were prepared to accept the majority scheme.

The report of the Committee on Palestine was taken up by the General Assembly at its annual session, which concluded on the 29th of November 1947. Everybody felt that this was a most important matter. The Assembly, therefore, at the very outset appointed a Special Committee to deal with it and to report to the Assembly. The Assembly has six permanent Committees, but this seventh Committee was constituted for the time being to deal with Palestine. In all such Committees every country that is a member of the United Nations Organisation is represented; so that all the 57 nations are members of each one of them. And the same was the case with the Palestine Committee. Thus we were also represented on the Palestine Committee. Quite two or three weeks were taken up in this *ad hoc* Committee by the general discussion of the report of the Palestine Committee. At the end of this general discussion it appeared that nobody was paying much attention to the minority report and that there were two trends of opinion in the Committee. One was in favour of the majority report and the other was in favour of a unitary independent Palestine, in which naturally the Arabs being in the majority, they would have been in control.



At this stage it is necessary to keep a few facts in mind. The population of Palestine today is approximately 2,000,000, out of which 1,300,000, are Arabs; but remember this includes round about a couple of hundred thousand Christian Arabs. On the future of Palestine the Muslim Arabs and the Christian Arabs have taken up an identical stand and there are no differences between them on this question. There are roughly 700,000 Jews. The city of Jerusalem has a population of 205,000, of which 105,000 are Arabs and 100,000 Jews. Approximately, there are 200,000 Jews in the city of Tel Aviv, which is a wholly Jewish town, though almost next door to and practically connected with the town of Jaffa, which is almost entirely Arab. The area of Palestine is 10,000 sq. miles, equal to about, say, four average districts of the Punjab or, say, about two or three average districts of Sind. Of this area of 10,000 sq. miles, 5,000 sq. miles are waste desert and the rest is plains or hills or desert which is culturable when there is a rainfall. So, it is a very small country in area and only a very small number of human beings is directly concerned with it. But it raises very troublesome problems inasmuch as Palestine is the holy land of the three big religions,—Jews, Christians and the Musalmans.

As I have said, there were two trends in the Committee, one in favour of a unitary State with safeguards for the minorities and the other in favour of the majority report, which recommended partition with economic union, i e., for economic purposes the two States would be together and for other purposes they would have their own separate arrangements.

These two proposals were committed to two Sub-Committees of the Committee on Palestine. These Sub-Committees were asked to study the various resolutions or proposals which had come before the Committee and to make their reports. One Sub-Committee was constituted of those delegations who supported the partition scheme. This was known as Sub-Committee No. 1 on

Palestine. The other Sub-Committee was composed of delegations that supported the unitary scheme. It was composed of the Arab States, Afghanistan and Pakistan, that is, eight countries. There are six Arab States that are members of the United Nations, namely, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. The delegate for Poland was elected the Chairman of Sub-Committee No. 1 and I was elected the Chairman of Sub-Committee No. 2. I accepted this responsibility very reluctantly. Mr. Ayub, the Secretary of the Pakistan delegation, did all the drafting, and he did it so well that later on when our report was published the Polish delegate said to me: "Your report is very much better than ours", by which of course he meant to pay a tribute to the exposition and arrangement of the matter contained in the report and not that he approved of its recommendations. We had our report ready earlier than the other Sub-Committee. They were faced with the difficulty created by our contention, which was supported by a large number of delegations, that the United Nations had no legal or juristic authority to partition Palestine. This was their problem and they had to find a solution for it. They could have found a solution very easily if they had had the co-operation of the mandatory power, that is, Great Britain. But Great Britain's attitude was: "Whatever solution the Assembly adopts, we shall not oppose or obstruct; but we ourselves will not support either partition or any other solution that may be suggested unless it is a solution which the Arabs and the Jews are both willing to accept." So, at every stage the Sub-Committee had to ask Great Britain: "Are you willing to help in what this scheme visualises?" Great Britain's reply was "No; we won't. Whatever you suggest will have to be done by U.N.O." The ultimate British attitude was: "Upto the date on which we terminate the mandate—and we shall decide that date—we shall not share authority for the administration of Palestine with anybody else. We shall be the sole authority as the responsibility is ours and it is our troops that have to keep and maintain law and order. From the date of the termination of the mandate upto the date of

the evacuation of our troops from Palestine, we shall be responsible for law and order only in our military camps to which we shall have withdrawn our troops. With regard to the rest of the country, we shall not be responsible and we shall withdraw our troops from Palestine at the latest by the 1st of August 1948". (They have since announced that they will terminate the mandate in May 1948.)

I will now give you a brief account of the two reports. Our report had three sections. The first section dealt with legal questions about which we suggested that the General Assembly should ask the International Court of Justice to express its opinion. These questions were:—

- (1) Was not Palestine included in the pledges given by the British, and subsequently confirmed by the French, to the Arabs during the first World War, because if it was, then the Arabs were entitled to have it as a free and independent Arab country?
- (2) In view of these pledges, did the Balfour Declaration have any validity? Was it valid at all?
- (3) If it was valid, what was its meaning? Obviously, if you tell somebody that he shall be free in a certain country, then you cannot give him away to somebody else afterwards. And the Balfour Declaration must be read subject to the pledges given by the British to the Arabs.
- (4) Was the mandate for Palestine which was based upon the Balfour Declaration legally valid? But the League of Nations which had created the mandate had ceased to exist and therefore the mandate must be deemed to have come to an end. But the mandate continues. In any case, as the mandatory power had itself declared this year that it was going to terminate the mandate, Palestine must be free.

- (5) Did the United Nations have any legal authority to partition Palestine into two States, Jewish and Arab, without the consent and contrary to the wishes of the population of Palestine ?

We had particularly in mind the first article of the Charter itself which says that one of the objectives of the United Nations is that people should have the right of self-determination and that the form of government to which this shall lead shall be settled with the consent of the people. This was the first part of our report.

The second part dealt with the question of the Jewish refugees. There are roughly at the moment 200,000 Jewish refugees and displaced persons collected together in camps on the continent of Europe, mainly in the central countries. A good deal of humanitarian feeling was sought to be excited by appeals to the different delegations by saying that if you do not agree to the partition of Palestine, then these 200,000 people, who are homeless and who have suffered a great deal during the war and after the war, will have to perish. We dealt with that in the second section of our report and said that since the beginning of the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, Palestine had already taken more than 300,000 Jewish refugees and having regard to its area and its resources it should not be asked to have any more. Therefore, we went on to recommend that in accordance with the unanimous recommendation of the Special Committee, which the General Assembly had sent to Palestine, this question should be dealt with at an international level. Our agreed proposals, therefore, were :—

- (1) That as many of the Jewish refugees as can be repatriated to the countries from which they had been expelled should be repatriated to those countries.
- (2) Such of them as could not be repatriated to those countries should be distributed among the

members of the United Nations according to the resources, area, population, capacity, etc. of the various States.

- (3) That a Committee should be set up to settle quotas for the Jewish immigration to various countries.

Our third section dealt with the future constitution of Palestine. We recommended that Palestine should be a unitary State in which all minorities would participate and in which the minorities would have ample safeguards with regard to their language, culture, education, religious instruction, holy places, etc.

The report of the first Committee was that partition should be carried out as recommended in the majority report of the Special Committee on Palestine with economic union. They put forward a map, more or less the same map as the Palestine majority report had put forward, with certain modifications, most of them in favour of the Jews. According to it the whole of this tiny country was divided into eight parts—three Jewish portions, three Arab portions, the city of Jerusalem to be an international city to be governed under international arrangement and the city of Jaffa to be a part of the Arab State. They also recommended, as had the Special Committee on Palestine, economic union which was to be administered by a Joint Economic Board, which would be constituted by nine members, three representing the Arab State, three representing the Jewish State and three appointed by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This Joint Economic Board would be in charge of customs, currency, foreign exchange, communications, development of irrigation and agriculture, water resources and so on and would distribute the proceeds of these different kinds of taxes and resources of the country between the two States according to a plan that they had put forward and would also finance the Government of the city of Jerusalem. In effect, as I pointed out in some of my

speeches, this was not a scheme for the independence of Palestine at all. This was a scheme which would make the State of Jerusalem both in name and in practice international for ever. It would make the rest of Palestine a State to be governed by an Economic Board, but actually it was to be governed by a Council of 9 members, 3 Arabs, 3 Jews and 3 to be appointed by the United Nations. That is to say, the United Nations would for ever keep Palestine.

Now, let me make some comments on how this Federation would look in actual practice. In the city of Jerusalem, as I have already stated, there would be to start with a population of 205,000—100,000 Jews and 105,000 Arabs and others. In the Arab State there would be a population of roughly 747,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews. If it had to be and if it was fair to partition the country, there was nothing wrong there; it was mainly an Arab State. But when one came to look at the map and figures of the Jewish State, one was astounded that this should be put forward as a fair solution of the problem at all. The proposed Jewish State, before Jaffa was excluded as a result of my efforts, contained 509,780 Arabs and 499,020 Jews, and this was going to be a Jewish State. That is to say, to start with the majority would be of Arabs though, of course, it was pointed out to us that the Jews by immigration would increase their numbers and become a majority. After the exclusion of Jaffa from the Jewish State, its population on the present frontiers which are accepted by the Assembly would consist of about 498,000 Jews and about 435,000 Arabs. I pointed out, first of all, the legal complications, historical claims and everything else. The argument in reply was that in the whole of Palestine there are 1,300,000 Arabs and 650,000 Jews and it is unfair and unjust to make this Jewish population for ever a minority to be governed by the Arabs. I said: "Supposing that is unfair, how can you say that it is fair to make 435,000 Arabs a minority in a Jewish State which had 498,000 Jews? If it is unfair that 33 per cent. of the population of the

whole of Palestine should be subject to 67 per cent. of the population, it is much more unfair that 46 per cent. of the population should be subject to 54 per cent.?" However, the other side were not under obligation to accept any argument and they ignored it.

From the point of view of land-ownership inside the borders of the present proposed Jewish State 60 per cent. of the privately-owned land is owned by the Arabs and only 40 per cent of the privately-owned land is owned by the Jews. Take economic resources. Citrus, that is to say, oranges, are the biggest export from Palestine. Citrus production is owned almost half and half by Jews and Arabs. Almost the whole of citrus area owned by the Arabs and not by the Jews has been placed within the Jewish territory. The Jewish State has the greater part of the plains culturable for some time. The Arab State consists mostly of hills and very little cultivation can be carried on in the hills. The greater part of the resources which can be expanded and developed have been assigned to the Jewish State and the obvious reason given is that the Jews want to bring in more Jews and there must be room for expansion. The Arabs have been given areas in which further development is extremely difficult and, in any case, there is not very much scope for it. It is admitted that to start with, and for a long time and perhaps for ever, economically the Arab State would not be able to stand by itself and therefore would be in need of subsidy, as it were, from Joint Economic Board over and above its share of the revenues of the Joint Economic Board.

When the report of the first Committee was under discussion in the main Committee, I pointed out, as we have throughout maintained, that there was no legal basis for the action which the first Sub-Committee had proposed that the Assembly should take, that the United Nations had no authority under their Charter to partition a country and to set up separate sovereign States in it and that no modification of the details of the maps or of

the populations would make the scheme valid. Nevertheless, if there were delegations which were of the view that the scheme was legally valid and that the United Nations had authority to enforce it and thought that it was workable, then it was upto them at least to modify the harsh and obviously unjust features of the report. In view of that I put forward certain amendments with the details of which I need not worry you. I shall mention only one amendment.

With regard to the boundaries I put forward an amendment, but I had no hope that it would be accepted because if it had been accepted, the Jewish State could not have been set up. But I put it forward as a test of the good faith of the delegates. It was also put forward with the object that if they rejected it, it would give us a greater moral right to object to partition even if it was otherwise legally valid. Our amendment was such that I could not think that any fair and reasonable person would take objection to it. The amendment was to the effect that the boundaries of the Jewish and Arab States should be drawn by a Commission of three boundary experts to be appointed by the Security Council with the object of ensuring (a) that within the Arab State there shall not be included Jewish-owned land which would constitute more than 10 per cent. of the total privately-owned land area in that State; and (b) that within the Jewish State there shall not be included Arab-owned land which would constitute more than 10 per cent. of the total privately-owned land area in that State.

Our object was that the Arab State should be almost entirely Arab-owned and the Jewish State should be almost entirely Jewish-owned. It was true that had they accepted this amendment, the area of the Jewish State would have been reduced practically to the lands which the Jews owned. That is to say, it would have given the Jews only 40 per cent. of what is now being included within the Jewish State and it would



have made the constitution of an independent Jewish State practically impossible. The United States Government, as was to be expected, did not accept the amendment.

These matters were put to the vote. As to our legal questions, the Committee rejected the resolutions on all the first 7 questions, but on the 8th question, i.e., whether the United Nations had any legal authority to do what they were proposing to do, the resolution to the effect that it had the authority was passed by 21 votes to 20. It is interesting to analyse these figures. In all, the members of the Committee were 57. Only 21 who gave a positive vote were satisfied that the United Nations had authority to do what they were proposing to do and 36 were not satisfied.

Now a word about our proposals with regard to Jewish refugees. The two paragraphs of our first proposals for repatriation of as many as possible and the distribution of the rest among the member States were carried by a bare majority. But the whole resolution, when it was put to the Committee, got an even number of votes, 16 on each side, and it was not carried. Our main constitutional proposal, which we knew would not be accepted, was lost by 21 votes to 8.

Then came the other report, which was the main thing. We were fighting all the time to avoid partition and we knew nobody would accept our unitary scheme. It is necessary here to explain that voting in all Committees is by majority. Whatever is carried by majority, the Committee adopts. Decision in the Assembly on procedural matters, such as, when it will adjourn, or for how long it shall sit, is by bare majority; but a decision on an important question in order to be effective has to have a majority of two-thirds in support of it. So, our objective was that if we could secure a sufficient number of delegations to oppose partition, so that it is not passed by a two-thirds majority, we would have won because without this majority the United Nations would not be deemed

to have given a positive decision. The matter came before the Committee and there were 25 votes in support of partition out of 57 and 13 votes against it. If that had been the voting in the Assembly also, partition would have been lost, because 25 is not double of 13. But we knew that in the Assembly partition would get more votes. For instance, New Zealand had abstained on a technical point, but we knew that they would vote in support of partition in the Assembly. On the other hand, we also knew that we had got promises from some delegations that though they would abstain from voting in the Committee, they would vote against partition in the Assembly. The reason was that they were under great pressure from the United States Government and they did not want to show their hands too soon and we had every reason to believe that these delegations would vote against partition.

Most of you are aware that the President of the United States of America, which is a great position for any man to hold, is elected every four years. He is elected every leap year; and so next year the President is going to be elected. I was told by good many Americans that for about a month or two before the election, the nation goes mad. These are their words. At any rate, they attach great importance to this election: parties fight tooth and nail over it. Again, as you are aware, the Democratic Party has now been in power for nearly 16 years and those who have their ears close to the earth in political matters in the United States are of the opinion that there is going to be a swing over at the next election and the Republicans are going to win. Actually Mr. Truman was elected Vice-President in the last election. He stepped into the shoes of President Roosevelt because he died while he was in office, and it is provided in the constitution that if the President dies during his term of office, the Vice-President becomes President automatically. It is unusual for any one to have the personality and influence of Mr. Roosevelt. The Democratic Party is very nervous with regard to the result of the next election and

every group of votes matters a great deal to it. The Jews command quite a large number of votes, their own and of those who are under their control.

There are, I believe, roughly 5,000,000 Jews in the United States, half of whom are concentrated in the State of New York. But the importance of Jews both in the administration and the finances of the country is very much in excess of what you may infer from their numbers or even their wealth. There was great pressure from these Jews upon the United States Government that they should support partition and see it through by the exercise of their influence. This was no secret; it was talked about in the press. As a matter of fact, one of the Jewish delegates representing the Jewish agency told me with reference to the complaint of the Arab delegates that the Jews were putting pressure: "Why should we not put pressure on the Government when we have got votes". I said: "I consider that it is unfair on the part of the Government of the United States to be influenced by your votes, by your money and by your power; but I do not blame you". Though there was a formal denial on behalf of the United States Government, they did not deny it in private conversation. However, that was the main reason for the attitude of the United States.

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 mobilised their forces. The delegations 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 or four days so that nobody should know where he was and they should not be able to get hold of him. He had said: "Leave me alone. If I do not come into the Committee, you must not mind it. I will come to the Assembly; I will deliver my speech; I will condemn partition and I will tell my alternate delegate to oppose partition." One of the big British ships, *The Queen Mary*, was sailing that day and good many delegates were leaving by it. 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 for Greece came to the rostrum, condemned partition and said that he was going to vote against it. That made 15. The Haiti delegate then came to the rostrum, condemned partition and said he was going to vote against partition. That made 16. We still had the promise of Liberia and we were trying to influence Columbia, whom we thought we might win. In the meantime, as you are aware, there was a revolution in Siam and the Siamese delegation, after the revolution in their country, ceased to attend the meetings. But three or four days later, after they had received the news of the revolution, I persuaded the leader of the delegation to start attending the meetings. I told him: "There is a Government in your country and that Government has not withdrawn your credentials. Why should you assume that you have no longer authority?" And he started attending the meetings. Actually, he was the Vice-Chairman of the *ad hoc* Committee on Palestine and in that Committee he had voted against partition. He was with us too. But unfortunately by the time we got to the Assembly the Siamese delegates had received a telegram of the President withdrawing their credentials. Whether that telegram came from the Government of Siam or from some other source, we do not know. But we lost the Siamese vote and that brought down our strength to 16 again.

In order to win, the other side had to get 32 votes

and there was no means by which they could get that number. We knew that certain delegations were bound to abstain. Great Britain, France, Argentina and some South American States were abstaining, 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 blocked. But they had apparently some other dodges up their sleeve. By about half-past three a rumour began to go round that the session would not be held that evening and that it would be postponed to Friday, the 28th November and votes would be taken on that day, Thursday, the 27th November being the 'Thanksgiving Day' in New York. Thereupon, Dr. Jamali, the Foreign Minister of Iraq, and I went to the President and asked him whether the session was going to be held and whether the Vice-President was going to preside. He said: "I am not going to announce a session for the evening as tomorrow is 'Thanksgiving Day' and the Secretary-General tells me that it would be hard upon the staff to work at night." I said: "It is not a question of your fixing a session for the evening because the session has already been fixed and announced. There are three sessions fixed for today—one at 11 o'clock, the other at 3 o'clock and the last at half-past eight." He said: "Is that so?" He further said: "You know there are 8 more speakers and we cannot possibly finish tonight. We cannot take the vote: it will take too long." I said, "There are 8 speakers and out of them Dr. Jamali and myself were going to make long speeches, but we shall not speak. The Indian delegate also intended to make a speech, but we will persuade him not to make a speech at all. Russia is speaking and you may have one or two more speakers. That leaves you 3 speakers and you can easily take the vote." I further said: "You take the vote on the partition tonight and do the rest of the business tomorrow." He said: "Tomorrow is 'Thanksgiving Day'". I said: "Last year you sat on 'Thanksgiving Day' and you should sit this year also." He said: "What is your trouble?" Dr. Jamali said: "I have got to go tomorrow." I said:

“Passages can be postponed. But the real trouble is, as you are doubtless aware, that the delegations are under great pressure and we do not know which of them might fail us because efforts are being made with their Governments to get their instructions countermanded. He said: “The delegations which were in doubt have declared themselves clearly. For instance, Haiti, Greece and the Philippines have expressed their case clearly and you are now quite certain that nothing will happen to their votes”. He further said, “I will help you. I will come to the Assembly and find out whether they want a session this evening or not.” Now, it is not fair to the President to say that he did not say definitely that the Assembly shall sit that evening. He did say so. But somebody moved for its adjournment, and the Assembly was adjourned. We realised that we would lose because of the interval of two days that was thus created.

The press gave publication to very significant news. We had it in the New York press and no doubt other newspapers must have carried the story that during the interval Jewish leaders saw Mr. Truman in Washington and said: “What is this? Those delegations that had never voted against you are going to vote against you now. The State Department is not doing proper canvassing.” They further said: “If partition fails, the European Recovery Programme Bill is off.” This last was of course not in the papers. The State Department got in touch by telephone and cablegram with the Governments of some of the delegations and persuaded them to countermand their instructions. The result of these machinations was that our votes were reduced to 13. During the interval we talked to the delegates that had promised us their votes. For instance, I went to the Liberian delegate. He said: “We, as the delegation, are still determined to vote against partition and in your favour. But last night when I came back from the Assembly our Ambassador rang me up from Washington and tried to persuade me to vote in favour of partition. I have declined but he is an ex-President of the Republic

of Liberia and is held in great prestige. Now, the trouble is that they will get on to the President of Liberia and instructions will be issued to us to vote against partition and then we will be helpless." I said: "If a telegram comes, you could put it in your pocket and forget all about it." He replied: "How long could I withhold it? The delegate of Haiti met us on Friday morning in the delegates' lounge and came up to me. There were actually tears in his eyes and he said: "What am I to do? I have spoken under instructions from my Government; I have announced that we shall vote against partition and I have now received instructions to vote for partition." I said: "We realise your position and we are grateful to you." But that was the way in which manoeuvring went on and they got the votes. On Friday I spoke and others also spoke not because we thought we could influence the decision but in order to point out to the Assembly that if it decided in favour of partition, what trouble it would cause. Then, finding that partition was bound to go through, two delegations tried to help us. The French delegate moved the adjournment of the Assembly for 24 hours to enable the delegations to see whether any solution other than partition could not be found. The Columbian delegate in the course of a speech said that even if partition went through it would have no moral validity. How many delegates are voting in favour of it freely? There was not even a bare majority. In the Committee it had only 25. That is all the support it had out of 57. Pressure was being put on some delegations to vote in favour of partition against their will. An effort must be made to find some solution which would be less open to objection than partition and, if possible, acceptable to both the Arabs and the Jews. He, therefore, put forward a resolution that the Assembly should adjourn and remit the matter back to the Palestine Committee and ask them to explore some other possibility, possibly the minority scheme which meant two units constituting a federal State, and report by the 29th February 1948. Their report should then be circulated to various Governments and a special session should be

called by April or as soon as possible and some solution be then arrived at. Though the Assembly was adjourned for 24 hours, no solution was found and eventually partition went through. But it is a very sad decision. Most delegations, even some of those that had voted in favour of it, were very unhappy about it.

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