

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

RECENT BRITISH EDITORIAL COMMENT ON
THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

1. THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN of 3 April 1948 states that "nothing has happened to alter the opinion that a United Nations Trusteeship will require almost as many troops as partition." If the Assembly cannot find an international force to make trusteeship effective, "it might be better to leave its first decision untouched." If the Assembly rescinds partition but provides no effective alternative, the position of the Jews will be even worse than it is now, since they will "still be faced with civil war without even the moral and judicial right to defend their State against the Arabs... If the United States or Russia, or, unlikeliest of all, Britain were to offer some assistance, there would be some point in considering trusteeship though that in itself would only postpone an eventual settlement".

In either case, the editorial continues, the Assembly should and must consider the problem of Jerusalem, for which a plan already exists. "...Dare one ask that, if such an international regime were established, the British Army might at least undertake to protect convoys until it too leaves Palestine on August 15?"

2. THE TIMES of London of 10 April 1948, in an editorial entitled "Peril in Palestine" describes the present situation as "undisguised civil war" and warns that unless the fighting is halted "Palestine, with the prosperity built up in a generation of British rule shattered, will be ruined.... The country, now at a loss to pay for imported food after May 15, faces bankruptcy on top of its other troubles, and there can be no hope of better times until peace is restored. This is the picture presented to the United Nations -- and to the conscience of the world. The only sure hope would be a general cease-fire. If no truce can be made now the harder task will fall upon the United Nations of restraining the intransigents on both sides by international force."

3. The Economist of 10 April 1948 doubts whether the United Nations appeal for a truce in Palestine will be heeded, since "fighting generates an emotional momentum which it is hard to reverse." If America is still toying with the idea that Britain could be induced to carry on after May 15, here is "yet another momentum to be reversed," since the British withdrawal is now so far advanced that it could hardly be undone even if the British Government so wished. "What external force can do, the British feel they have done; and it has failed. An external force under a United Nations Governor-General could do no more.... Unless some startlingly new proposal lies up Mr. Austin's sleeve, the Special Assembly is not likely to contribute more than its predecessor to a solution in Palestine."