

Canadian Perspectives and Concerns about the Wider World: Britain and the Partition of Palestine, 1946-1948

(国際社会へのカナダの視点と関わり：
イギリスとパレスチナ分割 1946-1948年)

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SUMMARY IN JAPANESE: 第二次世界大戦で、カナダは「母国」イギリスとの政治的・文化的関係を再び深め、国際的な視野を広げた。そして、より広い国際視野を持ったカナダは、争点の多いパレスチナ問題で調停者としての役割を担うこととなった。この新しい国際的な視野は、イギリスから受け継いだ明確なリベラル・デモクラシーの伝統を強化する一方で、カナダの外交政策をイギリスの姿勢や政策と一線を画すものとした。

イギリスがパレスチナの委任統治権を放棄した時期は、中東政策の分岐点であり、またイギリスの外交政策の転機でもあった。以前重要視していた地域からイギリスが手を引くにつれ、カナダは国際社会との関わりを増していった。パレスチナはゼロ・サム・ゲームの見本となった。イギリスはパレスチナから撤退せざるをえず、それが大国としての地位にマイナスの影響を与えたが、カナダにとってはそれが好機となり、利益をもたらした。国連でのイギリスの外交イメージに傷がつく一方で、カナダの優れた調停役としての、また、有用なミドルパワー(中規模国)としてのイメージが向上することとなった。イギリスが外交的・政治的に運に見放された時、カナダはより重要な国際的役割を果たす機会を得たのだった。パレスチナ問題が国際的な注目を集めるのと時を同じくして、「ピアソンの国際主義」が成果を上げ、マッケンジー・キングの政治的力は衰え、引退していった。パレスチナ問題が国連で重要視されるようになると、カナダは否応なく巻き込まれることとなった。カナダはパレスチナ危機の間に独自の政策を進め、皮肉にも、パレスチナ問題という適切な解決策が見つからない問題があったからこそ、利益を得ることができたのである。

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In the early Cold War years Canada had concerns about the burgeoning Cold War, but also the Canadian Government had worries about the relationships with a "mother country," Great Britain, and with some countries more peripheral to the Cold War, like Palestine. Considering Canada in a wider world context provides an opportunity for analyzing literature on the period and defining more clearly Canadian attitudes towards the world. These attitudes manifest themselves in policies of internationalism and international cooperation that led Canada to play a significant part in the thorny issue of the partition of Palestine. After a discussion of the significant literature and historical issues that pertain to the early Cold War period and general topic of partitioning Palestine, this article is concerned with the perplexing position that Canada was in over Palestine.

The historiography of the early Cold War years has been an acrimonious debate for many eminent scholars and also puzzling for some students analyzing this period of history. Although attaching labels, often unwanted, to historians of the origins of the Cold War has spawned an industry of academic writing in itself, the results now appear to have been very productive in widening the parameters of the academic debate about the origins of the Cold War. Given the passage, but not the eradication of traditional, revisionist and post-revisionist writing, by largely American historians concentrating on the period dealing with the birth of the Cold War, a less bitter and less hostile tone has developed. This is, of course, despite the continued presence in the field of many of the established academics who "cut their teeth" on the controversial question of who was to blame for the Cold War. History may not be dead, but the Cold War has concluded, the Vietnam War has become subject to new academic considerations, Soviet and East European documents dealing with Soviet foreign policy under Stalin are more widely available, there is a more open and technological dissemination of information and significant studies are no longer American-centric. John Lewis Gaddis clearly argued for a synthesis of ideas and schools of thought in the early 1980s, but he also argued for more comparative and empirical work.¹ Not necessarily as a consequence, but certainly as a healthy development within the field, scholars in Western Europe clearly provided a European perspective on early Cold War problems. Within this context European and related Cold War problems in the Middle East have attracted some attention, notably from Professor Ritchie Ovendale. He has looked directly at *Britain, the United States, and the End of the Palestine Mandate, 1942-1948* and separately at *Britain, the United States and the Transfer of Power in the Middle East, 1945-1962*.² Wm. R. Louis in *The British Empire in the Middle*

East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States and Postwar Imperialism has produced a seminal work in this contentious field.³

What role did Canada play in these historiographical developments? Have studies that emphasize Canadian attitudes towards a wider world helped to recast the historiography of early Cold War history? Canadian memoirs have clearly left their mark on the debates relating to early Cold War issues. However, it did take time for Canadian politicians and diplomats to publicly chronicle their contributions and exact involvement in important international Cold War events.⁴ Of Lester B. Pearson's memoirs, the first volume was published in 1972 and the third volume in 1975.⁵ The diplomat and academic, John Holmes, was not to contribute a full academic coverage of early Cold War events until 1979 and 1982 when his two volumes covering *The Shaping of Peace* were published.⁶ Two rather seminal works on the origins of NATO and Canada's role at the United Nations were produced by Escott Reid. His *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947-1949* was published in 1977 and his account of the making of the United Nations, *On Duty*, was released in 1983.⁷ A Department of External Affairs colleague of Escott Reid's, George Ignatieff, published his memoir, *The Making of a Peacemaker*, two years after *On Duty* in 1985.⁸

By the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, Canadian public servants produced a convincing array of published arguments and support to the proposition that Canada contributed towards early post-Second World War diplomacy and international affairs. However, the Americans had clearly been at the head of the publishing field and taking credit for many policies with memoirs by Edward R. Stettinius, Harry S. Truman, James F. Byrnes, Dean Acheson, William Leahy and George F. Kennan all published before 1970. Also the edited diaries of James Forrestal, Henry Morgenthau and Edward R. Stettinius were published in 1951, 1967, and 1975 respectively.⁹ Of course, in establishing a Canadian orthodoxy, Pearson, Reid, Holmes and Ignatieff helped to put an end to the rather belittling view that the Americans and Soviets had dominated international affairs and events after the Second World War, and they along with British historians helped to eventually stop an American academic domination of early Cold War history. Canadian diplomats established, through their memoirs and commentaries that early Cold War international diplomacy was more complicated than the positions presented by many American politicians and academics. The Canadian "establishment" view, for want of a better term, was also used to counter the academic position of some Canadian historians that Canada had rather meekly

followed the positions of President Harry S. Truman and Dean Acheson (American Under-Secretary of State and also later when Secretary of State).¹⁰

A range of Canadian literature including memoirs and historical texts have analyzed the role of Canada with regard to the partition of Palestine. The obvious texts dealing directly with this issue are Eliezer Tauber's *Personal Policy Making: Canada's Role in the Adoption of the Palestine Partition Resolution* and David J. Bercuson's *Canada and the Birth of Israel: A Study in Canadian Foreign Policy*.¹¹ Interesting coverage is also given to the broad issues of Canadian relations with Israel in *The Diplomacy of Prudence: Canada and Israel, 1948-1958* by Zachariah Kay.¹²

It has been a little surprising, that authors within the edited volume by Wm. Roger Louis and R. W. Stookey, *The End of the Palestine Mandate*, largely ignore Canada. They do not give Canada any bibliographic coverage, do not index Canada and although acknowledging the work of the Guatemalan member of the United Special Committee on Palestine, Jorge García-Granados, and also the work of Spanish diplomat Pablo de Azcárate, no Canadian is mentioned.¹³ In his chapter "British Imperialism and the End of the Palestine Mandate," Wm. R. Louis refers to the comparison drawn by British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, between Palestine and two Commonwealth countries, Canada and South Africa.¹⁴ The notion of Palestine having self-government and autonomous provinces had some appeal. However, Bevin is cited as making a direct comparison between the problem of Palestine in 1947 and 1948 and the famous report of Lord Durham on pre-Confederated Canada in 1839. Whether or not Lord Durham's suggestion of local self-government for the British or French in Canada encouraged Bevin to support a bi-national solution for the Palestine problem is open to question, and whether or not it reflects any satisfactory comparison can be debated. Certainly the geography and demography are so different between Canada and Palestine as to make the comparison inappropriate. Bevin surely should have been wary of any comparison with the Durham Report, particularly since French-Canadians received the Report with distaste. Eminent historian, Arthur Lower, suggested the Report and the hostile reaction to it was one of the reasons for French nationality being preserved in Québec. Perhaps Durham's famous words on Upper and Lower Canada are appropriate for the Palestine problem:

I expected to find a contest between a government and a people: I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state. I found a struggle not of

principles but of races.¹⁵

Canadian Perspectives on the British Government and the Partition of Palestine

By the winter of 1946-47 it was apparent that the United Kingdom, acting alone, could not bring the Arabs and Zionists to agree.¹⁶

In this memorandum from the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Louis St Laurent, to the Canadian Cabinet, a basic decline in British foreign policy fortunes in the Middle East was summarized. It did, nevertheless, neglect the basic problem, that Britain, even acting in concert with other nations, was unlikely to deliver Arabs and Zionists into some form of agreement on the future of Palestine. The Canadian perspective on the dilemmas faced by Great Britain over Palestine provides an interesting analysis of Britain's inability to use the United Nations to advance its own ends and explains how Palestine became a political and diplomatic wedge between the United States and Britain. The Canadian Government was also aware of Britain's troublesome economic position, making the continuation of a British balance of power in Palestine improbable.

Lester Pearson, through his memoirs, has provided us with only a very limited account of Canadian interest in Palestine.¹⁷ Although Pearson would seem to be correct, that before the Second World War, Canada had no exact guiding principles towards Palestine or the British mandate, he rather understates the case to say that Canada had a "cautious" policy towards displaced Jews at the end of the war.¹⁸ He also embroiders the picture that the British handed the complex issue of the Palestine mandate to the United Nations out of the blue. This according to Pearson put the United Nations into a "tailspin," and by implication leads to Canada becoming involved through Pearson's chairmanship of the General Assembly's Political Committee.¹⁹ George Ignatieff in a memoir that is also limited in its coverage on Palestine, makes a similar point to that made by Pearson in suggesting that Britain "dumped" the problem with the United Nations.²⁰

Great Britain had obviously, if rather rapidly for some at the United Nations, come to a conclusion that they should not push a policy on one community in Palestine at the point of a bayonet, and had recognized that they did not have a workable recommendation for the United Nations. This reflected the irresolvable

dilemma of Palestine for the British. The British were conscious that they did not have to take the problem of Palestine to the United Nations under the terms of its Charter. However, they were also aware that the final League of Nations resolution on Palestine and the British mandate had meant that future arrangements should be agreed with the United Nations. Ernest Bevin informed the British Cabinet, in January 1947, that it was unimaginable that any extensive plan for partition of Palestine would not go before the United Nations.²¹ The destiny of Palestine was felt to be of international concern and Bevin told the Cabinet that no doubt some government would direct the issue to the United Nations because the solution adopted by the British was unsatisfactory.²² In a much more cynical way the British knew that even if withdrawal caused bloodshed and chaos, it would at least not be British lives expended or British resources that would be depleted as a consequence of failure.²³

Canada was showing an interest in Palestine much earlier than Pearson would have us believe. Arnold Heeney, Secretary to the Cabinet, wrote to the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Air Marshal Robert Leckie, in October 1945. It was clear from this that the Canadian High Commission in the United Kingdom was keeping the Department of External Affairs up to date with British difficulties over Palestine. As Heeney pointed out:

Officials of the UK government anticipate the possibility that serious trouble may soon break out in Palestine. One division has been sent there already and it is estimated that five or six might be required to handle the situation²⁴

The situation in Palestine was also to be rather publicly beset with acts of violence and this received newspaper coverage in Canada. It was predictable that the Canadian press would criticise the use of terror tactics by Jewish groups in Palestine in 1946. Although it was a little more surprising that a number of the comments were anti-semitic in tone. Zachariah Kay cited the *Montreal Star*, *L'Action Catholique* and the *Sudbury Daily Star* as exhibiting anti-Zionist and anti-semitic feelings in the wake of the bombing of the King David Hotel on 22 July 1946.²⁵ The deaths of 91 Arabs, Jews and British as a consequence of the explosions severely tested public and press support for Zionism in both Canada and Britain. Kay's overall conclusion is that the Canadian press, despite Jewish terrorist activity in Palestine, largely showed a favourable opinion towards Zion-

ism and adopted a sympathetic view of Jews as victims.²⁶ The more approving Québec newspapers included: *La Patrie* and *Le Temps*. These particular newspapers compared the French-Canadian position with the Jews in Palestine as if the situations were similar.²⁷

Canadian worries over increased hostilities in Palestine existed in conjunction with fear of a British-American split over immigration. The United States had criticised Great Britain for not increasing immigration into Palestine, but they did not volunteer to share any responsibility and the British were subsequently voicing their criticism of the United States. President Truman had called for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine after the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry supported his recommendation in April 1946. Prime Minister Clement Attlee felt this should be considered alongside the other recommendations of the Committee and in particular did not wish to upset Anglo-Arab relations in the Middle East or encourage Soviet penetration into the volatile region. Not only was the problem of displaced Jews not a priority for the British, it equally was not a priority for Canada.²⁸

Canada, Palestine and the United Nations

Discussions within the Mackenzie King Government did not run gracefully. This was particularly so because Lester Pearson disagreed with his Prime Minister over Palestine. The aging Mackenzie King saw Palestine as a far-away issue concerning the British that should be avoided by Canada, if possible. Pearson's internationalist instincts and liking for the United Nations made Palestine a clear concern for Canada. The excellent reputation of Canada within the United Nations meant Canada came under pressure at the United Nations to be on the Preparatory Committee on Palestine. On 24 April 1947 Mr. George Ignatieff (Canadian permanent delegation to the United Nations), Mr. R. Gerry Riddell (First Political Division of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, United Nations Affairs) and Miss. Elizabeth P. MacCallum (Second Political Division of the Canadian Department of External Affairs) pointed out:

The situation in Palestine has reached a deadlock and without United Nations intervention there seems no way of settling the issues without continued resort to force. It was agreed that if other members of the United

Nations strongly desire to have Canada serve on the Preparatory Committee this country ought to be prepared to appoint to the Committee a representative possessing outstanding qualifications for the work—preferably someone having a thorough training in history and international law.²⁹

This illustrates Canadian engagement in the Palestine problem developing through invitation, and also the earnestness being given by Canadians to their involvement in Palestine through working with the United Nations. Lester Pearson's view expressed to Louis St Laurent, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, was that it would be difficult for Canada to explain any refusal to serve.³⁰ Although Canada had the strong Commonwealth connection, Pearson believed other countries felt that this was not a weighty connection and this would not make Canada unacceptable for membership of the Preparatory Committee on Palestine. If the United States and the United Kingdom were excluded from the Committee then Canada would be in a preferred position in not having to choose between them. Interestingly, the United States became glad to nominate Canada to the Committee, although Gerry Riddell at the United Nations was still displaying reservations in early May 1947. Louis St Laurent shared some of his reservations about the burdensome responsibility if only small and middle powers were represented. The United States were so keen on Canadian representation, that Senator Warren R. Austin, Delegation of United States to the United Nations, approached Lester Pearson informally on the issue of Canada's membership. Austin then, through the United States Embassy in Ottawa, pressed for support of the United States proposal for neutral countries and in particular Canada to be included on the Palestine Commission.³¹ As David Bercuson points out, it is not entirely clear why the United States wanted Canada involved and it is, as he suggests, ironic that Canada became involved as a consequence of resisting participation in the past.³²

Since Lester Pearson was the chairman of the General Assembly Political Committee it was hard for him to escape involvement in the Palestine question and he was prominent in establishing the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). Canada was, despite their own initial reservations, accepted formally as one of the eleven neutral states chosen to be on UNSCOP. Canada was officially represented by Mr. Justice Ivan C. Rand of the Supreme Court of Canada, and assisted by Mr. Leon Mayrand (Third Political Division) of the Department of External Affairs.³³ Neither Rand nor Mayrand were associated

with any particular expertise on Palestine, Bercuson suggesting most of Mayrand's knowledge coming from the controversial book *Palestine Mission*, by British Member of Parliament, Richard Crossman.³⁴ Crossman had been a member of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine and was a known pro-Zionist whose book British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, had wished to prevent from being published.³⁵ Attlee wrote to Bevin wondering whether or not Crossman was in breach of the Official Secrets Act in having *Palestine Mission* published, and in reply Bevin showed disdain for Crossman:

Nothing I can say will make him alter his ideas about Palestine which derive from his lack of judgement and his intellectual arrogance.³⁶

The appointment of Mr. Justice Rand was raised as an issue in the Canadian House of Commons, but not because it was felt he was personally unsuitable. In fact, Mr. John T. Hackett (Progressive Conservative, Stanstead) raised the opposite point in the House of Commons on 28 May 1947, suggesting an eminent Canadian judge should not be launched into the political controversy that surrounded the issue of Palestine.³⁷ Elizabeth MacCallum was, according to Bercuson, the only serious Department of External Affairs expert on Middle Eastern affairs and warned that Rand might influence St Laurent to support Rand's views because they had both served on the Canadian bench.³⁸

Canada Advocates Partition of Palestine

The UNSCOP committee of inquiry, after visiting Palestine, made a majority recommendation (including the support of Canada) for the partition of Palestine. The United Zionist Council of Canada received the majority report of UNSCOP with positive enthusiasm. Lester Pearson also believed very strongly in the partition idea, and his views prevailed against opposition even within the Canadian delegation to the United Nations. Mr. James Lorimer Ilesley, Minister of Justice, despite some personal reservations, presented the Canadian official view of support for the Special Committee recommendations. Ilesley, who held views close to those of Mackenzie King, expressed his worries to Lester Pearson. Ilesley's anxiety was that Canada had not:

... made any effort to meet the very strong moral and political claims which the Arabs have made, in spite of the fact that we are making a decision essentially against their interests.³⁹

Lester Pearson's response was, despite his training as an historian, to ignore the historical arguments put forward by the Arabs, and to suggest that the empirical arguments presented by Canada were sensible.⁴⁰ One of these empirical arguments again brought forward the observation that Canada and its own problems of national unity were not unlike those of Palestine. Since Canada had largely two peoples and two cultures the situation was seen as analogous to Palestine. As Ilsley said before the General Assembly of the United Nations in a speech prepared with the help of Pearson and Riddell:

During almost two centuries, both before and after the attainment of self-government in Canada, a number of solutions have been tried, including both partition and complete union. Eventually we reached a satisfactory working arrangement in a federal state which is now 80 years old. Every year which passes confirms the wisdom of the decision we made and strengthens the interdependence and the mutual respect which made it possible.⁴¹

I am not sure all French-Canadians would recognize this 1947 description of Canada as being applicable today and even Ilsley was aware that it was stretching a point for Palestine. However, as Tauber highlights "Ilsley continued describing the Canadian experience of 'a nation of two peoples with two cultural traditions,' which bore some resemblance to the Palestine position."⁴² The Canadians did not expect an accommodation between Jews and Arabs within a single state, but hoped for some form of federal solution sometime in the future.

The difficult issue of partition went formally before the United Nations for a decision. On 29 November 1947, in the General Assembly vote for partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states with economic union (with Jerusalem under international control—a *corpus separatum*), Canada voted in favour, alongside the United States, the Soviet Union and thirty other states. Great Britain was amongst ten abstentions, with only thirteen states voting against.⁴³ The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 fixed the termination of the mandate as no later than 1 August 1948. It went on to situate partition and independence in the following terms:

Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem . . . shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power [United Kingdom] has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948.⁴⁴

Canadians were a little perplexed by the vote of the United Kingdom at the United Nations and the Canadian delegation attempted to assess why the United Kingdom announced their intention to surrender the mandate at the earliest opportunity, and were not prepared to force a settlement by use of arms. The Canadians found the British to have a rather detached approach, and even found them rather reluctant to be involved in discussions or in providing information that was needed. In private, the Canadian delegation to New York managed to assess some of the British worries:

They [United Kingdom delegation] suggested that the plan for partition could not fail to cause prolonged bloodshed and implied that the adoption of this plan would be a source of great embarrassment to the United Kingdom.⁴⁵

It was believed by the Canadians that this view presented by the British was driven by strategic and economic considerations, particularly with regards to the Arabs, and thus the United Kingdom authorities did not necessarily wish to see the United Nations reach an agreement on Palestine that might upset these relationships. It became even more confusing when the United Kingdom appeared reluctant to make their own plans clear as to how troops would be withdrawn and authority within Palestine transferred. Clearly the British Government did not like the partition plan, but in a memorandum of the Canadian delegation to the second session of the General Assembly, the Department of External Affairs drew comfort from the belief that their own wisdom had made the situation far more agreeable:

There can be no question however that the plan for partition which was finally voted would have been far more objectionable from the point of view of the United Kingdom had it not been for the modifications introduced by

the Canadian delegation.⁴⁶

The major biographer of Ernest Bevin, Alan Bullock, makes the opposition to partition from the British Government appear much wider than the Canadians contemplated. Bullock concludes that Attlee, Bevin and the British Chiefs of Staff were opposed to partition for long term reasons.⁴⁷ Ernest Bevin was not so much concerned about the concept of partition as about the consequences that would be brought about because of implementation in Palestine. In the long term, Bevin believed, the annexation of Palestine by Jews would remain the most significant problem. The Canadian assumption that the British prevaricated over partition in discussions at the United Nations because of the principles involved may well have been ill conceived.

Mackenzie King: a Voice in the Wilderness

Mackenzie King was unhappy with Lester Pearson for wanting Canada to figure more prominently in international affairs, claiming that Pearson should have spent more time in Ottawa.⁴⁸ King famously criticized Pearson's involvement in international affairs, particularly because of the difficulties and potential obligations that might result from Canada's involvement in areas such as Palestine and Korea. The record left by Mackenzie King makes this clear:

I feel a good deal of concern with the part Pearson takes in New York [United Nations]. I think he is much too active in the name of Canada. His own report shows that he does not hesitate to advise both the United Kingdom and the United States as to what is the wisest for them to do.⁴⁹

The state of affairs between them deteriorated even more when Pearson wanted to support an American resolution at the United Nations which put forward the use of force to partition Palestine.

With Britain taking the issue of Palestine to the United Nations they obliged the United States to develop a more carefully thought about policy on Palestine.⁵⁰ As Mackenzie King commented:

As I said to Pearson we would raise a very serious question in Canada if it

came to be seen that what we were doing was requiring war in Palestine in order to support the United States in an attitude which was being wholly and strongly opposed by Britain.⁵¹

The Prime Minister went on further to suggest that Canada, like Britain, should abstain from voting, and this might help to deny ammunition to his critics in Canada who believed he was being dominated by the United States. Mackenzie King largely supported the British position, but his two senior foreign policy decision-makers, Secretary of State, Louis St Laurent, and his Under-Secretary, Lester Pearson, clearly did not. Having elevated Pearson and St Laurent to senior positions of authority, it was difficult for King to put a stop on their more zealous approach to world involvement. There was, despite general differences in approach between King and St Laurent, a similar fear held by both of them over the danger of a communication breakdown between the American and British governments. St Laurent pointed out in a memorandum to the Cabinet on 17 February 1948:

As far as we can tell, the two Governments have not discussed the matter with one another on any responsible level. An acrimonious public debate may break out between them at any minute. There is ample material for recriminations on both sides, and much ill feeling.⁵²

Some impatience was shown by Lester Pearson towards the differences that existed between London and Washington, and he acknowledged to his friend and High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Norman Robertson, that once partition failed there was very little that Canada could do.⁵³ Mackenzie King, so close to political retirement, was rather self-satisfied in that his warnings proved to be trustworthy.

British and Canadian Differences

A rather pessimistic outlook developed at the United Nations for the future of Palestine. By February 1948 the Palestine Commission of the United Nations was plainly aware that partition could not be implemented without considerable military and political support and the greatest likelihood was civil war in Palestine. With the end of the British mandate on 15 May, an ignominious end to

British control and influence was brought about.

There are fascinating differences in what the role of the United Nations over Palestine meant for the Canadian and British Governments. The Canadians believed the General Assembly decisions on partition should be affirmed. According to Canadians, not to have done so would have meant the United Nations gave into a minority of states (Arab) who were resisting the decision. A further serious consideration of the Canadians was that the Soviet Union might take the opportunity to unilaterally interfere in Palestine in support of the United Nations' recommendation. Canadian delegates to the United Nations believed other nations must also act. A military group of peacekeepers was required from the United Nations, but the Canadians were aware in February 1948 that there was not the available time to meet the present emergency with peacekeeping forces. The United Nations believed it would take six to twelve months to recruit a volunteer international force made up from the regular armies of "small" powers.

An extremely significant problem caused by the partition after the outbreak of war in Palestine itself, as perceived by Canada, was the diplomatic rift that appeared between the United Kingdom and the United States. Clearly there was a breakdown in communication between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States over partition in Palestine. Canada, during February 1948, continued to pass information to the British on how they believed the position of the United States was developing, but the British felt no obligation to work with the United States.⁵⁴ Partition itself did not work and war in Palestine broke out immediately after the General Assembly vote in the United Nations.

The issue of peace in Palestine quickly came before the Security Council of the United Nations. Canada as a non-permanent member of the Security Council was consequentially involved in the ramifications of the violence. Diplomatic affairs did not improve when it became apparent that the United States would support Israel's recognition at the United Nations and Britain opposed it. Canada shared some British reservations about timing and wished to defer the decision until an Arab reaction would be minimal. Although Pearson was happy to recognise a Jewish state in late 1948, he had long suggested that a full commitment had to be shown by Jews towards a full peaceful settlement. To confuse matters, the Canadian Cabinet, although not accepting Israel's membership of the United Nations, did extend *de facto* recognition of Israel on the grounds that it exhibited the conditions of statehood.⁵⁵ Canada later became a co-sponsor of the resolution to admit Israel to the United Nations and Canada's vote in support of Israel in

April 1949 represented Canada's *de jure* recognition of Israel. Britain again abstained from voting. This difference from Britain was one way of Canada showing her autonomy over foreign policy matters and that Canada had its own views on world affairs.

British and Canadian "Cooperation"

British and Canadian civil servants cooperated in diplomatic circles in the United States in trying to analyze United States policies and problems relating to Palestine. On 11 February 1947, the British Embassy in Washington sent a confidential memorandum to the Canadian Embassy and this was forwarded to the Department of External Affairs.⁵⁶ In a typical British civil service approach the merits and drawbacks of partition were outlined. The rewards of partition were considered to be: partition had the backing of the Jewish Agency; independence was made available to half the Arabs living in Palestine; it provided a geographical area Jews could not manage for immigration; and it had prospect of providing an end to the problem. However, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the disadvantages outweighed the advantages and these prevailed in British thinking. In outline the shortcomings were: a substantial number of Arabs would be abandoned in Jewish controlled areas; it was problematic to leave out Jaffa, a large Arab town from the Jewish state; under the new suggestions an Arab state would be not capable of maintaining itself; including an Arab state within Transjordan had been criticised by Palestinian Arabs; some Arab governments were concerned about Jewish infiltration into Arab countries in the Middle East; and more broadly Arab states were predicted to make formal representation to the United Nations. The British Foreign Office felt that Canada and the United States would see eye to eye in this analysis and shared these thoughts with them.

R. L. Rogers (Third Secretary at the Canadian Embassy) went to see Mr. T. E. Bromley (First Secretary of the British Embassy in Washington D.C.) to ascertain which Zionist organisation in the United States were "reputable" and which "extreme" (i.e. advocating the use of violence). The report by Rogers contained some frank comments from Mr. John Balfour, Minister in Washington, addressed to Sir Alexander Cadogan of the United Kingdom delegation to the United Nations, a necessary development in March 1947 given the imminence of the Palestine question in the United Nations.⁵⁷ Bromley had been in Washington for a year

and specialized on the rather large geographical area extending from Iran to Egypt (not including Turkey).

Alexander Cadogan along with concerned Canadians, became informed that the "reputable" organizations were considered to be: the American Zionist Emergency Council, the American Jewish Conference, the American Jewish Committee, the American Christian Palestine Committee, the American Jewish Labor Committee and the American Council for Judaism. Rabbi Silver of the American Zionist Emergency Council demanded the whole of Palestine as a Jewish state and was considered the "... outstanding Zionist figure in the United States" and an "... unscrupulous orator."⁵⁸ Silver made direct approaches to Harry S. Truman for his support for partition and also the settlement of 100,000 Jewish displaced persons in Palestine. Although not considered too extreme in terms of advocating violence, James Balfour noted that the American Jewish Labor Committee had communist leanings and had attacked Great Britain for helping "Fascist Poles" rather than "democratic Jews."⁵⁹ Great Britain accepted Poles as part of a post-war resettlement programme and in 1946 and 1947 obtained Canadian agreement to accept 4,527 Polish ex-servicemen as part of a resettlement scheme.⁶⁰

In the "black list" of extreme groups, the American League for a Free Palestine was considered a terrorist organization in favour of illegal immigration. It was the policy of the British Embassy in Washington not to acknowledge communications from this group. On the Political Action Committee, Cadogan had been warned by Balfour that the Chairman, ex-Representative Joseph Clark Baldwin was liable to contact him, and he was a "... conceited, foolish and somewhat mischievous man." Other organizations considered politically extreme included: the United Zionists Revisionists of America, who wanted a Jewish state covering both sides of the Jordan; the American Sea and Air Volunteers for Hebrew Repatriation; Asiria Zion Fund; an international body called the Hebrew Committee on National Liberation, committed to a reconstituted Palestine "... within its historic boundaries as a free state" allowing for the repatriation of all Hebrews who so desire it to a national territory of Palestine; and the Political Action Committee for Palestine. This shared information between Britain and Canada was useful preparation for developments at the United Nations.

The criticism by the Canadian delegation to the United Nations of the response of the United Kingdom to the partition vote has been mentioned earlier. However, it is apparent from communications between Lester Pearson and Norman Robertson, when Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, that

Canada worked quite hard to appease critics of the United Kingdom. The Canadians and the British worked hard to dismiss any suggestions that there was dissension between them. Although there is a fair amount of irony in the point, Pearson stated that the Canadian delegation:

... did our best to represent the United Kingdom position in the discussions where the United Kingdom did not participate and when we knew what it was. We also, at one stage, prevented the negotiations breaking down in a manner that would have fixed responsibility for failure squarely on the United Kingdom.⁶¹

A major implication of this comment was that the Canadians could not always sense what the position of the United Kingdom was. That the Canadians would try to support the British even when little clarity existed, shows a high level of commitment to Britain by Canada. For Canadian revisionist historians it can be used to illustrate the desire of Canada to follow a British position and not show disloyalty, even if they did not entirely know what the British position was. For post-revisionist historians of the Cold War it might show a level of misperception and miscommunication that produced unintended policies.

It is noticeable that Louis St Laurent did not wish to be seen as automatically supporting the British, but neither did Canada wish to be associated with a major rift with Britain. Canada could not make the British get involved in the enforcement of partition in Palestine, they did not have that kind of relationship or level of cooperation. On Palestine, Canada and Britain had moved in opposite directions over the involvement of the United Nations. Britain appeared to regret that they had taken the issue to the United Nations and might even have been happy for the United Nations not to reach agreement on Palestine. This is not suggesting the British "washed their hands" of the problem when they took it to the United Nations, but that they became quickly disillusioned with developments. In contrast, the Canadians had invested a lot of diplomatic energy into the United Nations and its specialised agencies and did not wish to fail at an early stage. They were embroiled in the Palestine problem, despite an initial reluctance to get involved, and a major failure would impact on their international reputation. Lester Pearson's faith in internationalism and rationality being at the heart of international relations meant Canada could not abandon the United Nations or Britain. Yet by late 1947 Pearson condemned the British for being uncooperative

at the United Nations. Even with this lack of cooperation, Pearson pressed on with proposals so that partition of Palestine could be implemented by the United Nations.

A level of courtesy remained between Britain and Canada over Palestine. In August 1948 Clement Attlee wrote to Mackenzie King explaining the line taken by the British. Attlee acknowledged that a separate Palestine-Arab state bound by economic union with a Jewish-Palestine state was impracticable. Since economic union was out of the question an Arab area would not be viable.⁶² The United Kingdom's High Commissioner to Canada, Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, also kept Mackenzie King informed of communications over Palestine, even when this included criticism of Britain from Arab governments. Mackenzie King was grateful for Clutterbuck's communications and pressed Pearson to have St Laurent and Pearson use the counsel of Clutterbuck. From the reports from Clutterbuck it appeared, although rather late, that Canada and Britain were finally singing from the same hymn sheet, both arguing that rational and legal arguments should prevail over the use of force.⁶³

Conclusion

It appears to be the case, that Palestine, for all its strategic and political importance in the Middle East, does not provide a very good example of Cold War problems. It is not clear that the Soviet Union could penetrate further into the Middle East and deny Britain and the United States access to oil as a consequence of the Palestine issue. In his memoirs, Lester Pearson set the issue of partition in a Cold War context, with the spectre of the Soviet Union exploiting the situation.⁶⁴ Pearson's memoirs are not unlike the political memoirs of members of the Truman Administration who have placed most post-Second World War international events in a Cold War context. The Soviet Union accepted partition and recognized Israel, and the real diplomatic disharmony lay between Canada, America and Great Britain. Although the United States and Canada had developed containment policies towards the Soviet Union by 1947, the Palestine problem was being handled by Canada before the Berlin crisis broke out in 1948 and the negotiations for a Western security organization developed via the Pentagon negotiations in the spring of 1948. Although Palestine was an issue in the background while a new Western security organization was being negotiated, it was only rarely brought

into the foreground of these negotiations.⁶⁵ Canada was able to play a role over Palestine because it was unencumbered by special interests and obligations, rather than as a consequence of them.

In an historiographical context, historians concerned with the early Cold War should be concerned less with apportioning blame between the two super powers. The post-revisionist, British and Canadian historians can be given credit for seeing international events of the early Cold War period as a rich mixture of problems, and not just those between the United States and the Soviet Union. Canada has a place in the historiography of the period. That Canada was intimately involved in this serious and unhappy diplomatic tangle over Palestine is incontrovertible. That Canada developed independent policies during the crisis is clear. Canada also seized the opportunity to play a more significant international role as it witnessed the diplomatic and political fortunes of Britain diminish.

The religious complexities of the Middle East region did not deter Canadian decision-making on the issue of Palestine. It may be unkind to describe the Canadian approach as a Sunday school approach, but the references in memoirs and Mackenzie King's diaries to the Holy Land, and in King's case also the Scriptures, tends to give this impression. More work could be done on the Christian religious zeal that generally drove Canadian decision-makers towards an anticommunist crusade in the early Cold War period, and for that matter, Canadian foreign policy towards the Middle East. Canada in terms of the Middle East in the late 1940s was not unlike Britain and the Far East in the 1930s; neither had many experts on the respective regions. Mayrand may have derived his expertise from the book *Palestine Mission* by Crossman, while Ilsley was borrowing books from Ignatieff to add to his knowledge of the Balfour Declaration and the life of Lawrence of Arabia.⁶⁶ As good historians, a lack of previous expertise did not deter members of the Department of External Affairs from analyzing the empirical evidence. Whether or not Mackenzie King's remarks, made after discussions over Palestine that the Department of External Affairs was "a dangerous institution" is fair comment, could be subjected to more scrutiny.⁶⁷

Great Britain relinquishing the Palestine Mandate is not only a watershed in Middle Eastern politics but also for Britain and the demarcation of her international responsibility. As Britain was relinquishing responsibility for Palestine, Canada was increasing her international commitments and involvement in Palestine. The Palestine problem became an international issue and helped to define the development of "Pearsonian internationalism." These developments coin-

cided with Mackenzie King entering his retirement from politics. Once the Palestine question was given to the United Nations for consideration, Canada was inexorably driven towards involvement. We do not know if Canada would have been so keen to become involved if the incompatibility of Jews and Arabs in Palestine had appeared so enduring. In terms of conflict resolution, Canadian rational and legal arguments and policies towards the Palestine problem, 1946-1948, exhibits a youthful naivete. This may sound patronizing, yet, it is the case that Canada, once it overcame its initial reservations and the conservatism of Mackenzie King, wanted the international system to conform to an image that would advance them internationally as peacekeepers, peacemakers, helpful fixers and internationalists. There clearly was a proud acknowledgement by Canadians that Canada was a middle power. Canadians actively developed middle power policies because they recognized British weaknesses and knew their own potential. Britain rather astutely in this early Cold War period clings to the profile of a great power despite having middle power capabilities. The illusion and delusion of great power status will go on to be a problem for Britain and Canada's middle power image a definition of their own world view.

For all of this, did Canada help to provide an answer to the problems of Palestine and British dilemmas over Palestine? The answer to the first question is no, and to the second only a partial yes. Britain extricates itself from Palestine, but sees an unworkable policy of partition adopted by the United Nations. Over fifty years later the violence that has beset Israel, Palestinians and the Middle East would suggest conflict was not resolved by Canadian or United Nations intervention. Canada favoured a solution, the solution that was of least disadvantage to all concerned.

Notes

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- 2 R. Ovendale, *Britain, the United States and the End of the Palestine Mandate, 1942-1948* (Suffolk: Royal Historical Society, 1989); *idem*, *Britain, the United States and the Transfer of Power in the Middle East, 1945-1962* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996). Also see R. Ovendale, "The Palestine Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-1946," *International Affairs* 53, no. 3 (1979): 409-31; and "1947: The Decision to Withdraw," *International Affairs* 56, no. 1 (1980): 73-93.
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- 5 L. B. Pearson, *Memoirs 1897-1948: Through Diplomacy to Politics*, vol. 1 (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1973; first published in Toronto in 1972); *idem*, *Memoirs 1948-1957: The International Years* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1974); *idem*, *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester Pearson*, vol. 3 (London: Gollancz, 1975).
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- 10 J. L. Granatstein, R. D. Cuff, "Looking Back at the Cold War, 1945-1954," *Canadian Forum* 52 (July-August 1972): 8-11.
- 11 E. Tauber, *Personal Policy Making: Canada's Role in the Adoption of the Palestine Partition*

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- Resolution* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2002); D. J. Bercuson, *Canada and the Birth of Israel: A Study in Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).
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 - 13 Wm. R. Louis, R. W. Stookey, *The End of the Palestine Mandate* (London: Tauris, 1986).
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 - 16 Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Canadian Cabinet, 17th February 1948. Department of External Affairs File, RG 25, vol. 3772, File 7802-40, Part 2, 1946-50, National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC).
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 - 18 See I. M. Abella, H. Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982).
 - 19 *Ibid.*
 - 20 G. Ignatieff, *op.cit.*, 102.
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 - 22 15 January 1947, "'Palestine': military implications of future policy; political implications of future policy: Cabinet conclusions," *ibid.*, 47.
 - 23 18 September 1947, "'Palestine': Cabinet memorandum by Mr Bevin on policy of withdrawal," *ibid.*, 75.
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 - 25 Z. Kay, "The Canadian Press and Palestine: A Survey, 1939-48," *International Journal* 18, no. 3 (1963): 366-67.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, 373.
 - 27 *Ibid.*, 367.
 - 28 D. Bercuson, *op.cit.*, 235.
 - 29 *Documents on Canadian External Relations* (hereafter DCER), vol. 13, 1947, edited by N. Hillmer, D. Page (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1993), 917.
 - 30 On 24 April 1947, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Riddell and Miss. MacCallum conferred with Mr. St Laurent. *Ibid.*, 918.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, 924.
 - 32 D. J. Bercuson, *op.cit.*, 60.
 - 33 Report of the Secretary of State for External Affairs for the year ending 31 March 1948 (microfiche, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds). Louis St Laurent discussed a number of potential nominations with Mackenzie King, including: Mr. Justice Rand, Supreme Court of Canada; Chief Justice Thane Campbell, Prince Edward Island; Chief Justice Martin, Saskatchewan; Mr. Warwick Chipman,

Senator Ferris; Senator Gray Turgeon; and Mr. Arthur Ford. *DCER*, *op.cit.*, 925.

- 34 D. J. Bercuson, *op.cit.*, 77. R. H. S. Crossman, *Palestine Mission: A Personal Record* (London: H. Hamilton, 1947).
- 35 *Bevin's Papers*, FO 800, 486 (microfilm, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds).
- 36 Letter dated 27 September 1946, *ibid.*
- 37 *DCER*, *op.cit.*, 927.
- 38 D. J. Bercuson, *op.cit.*, 113.
- 39 *DCER*, *op.cit.*, 932.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 *Ibid.*, 933-34.
- 42 E. Tauber, *op.cit.*, 33.
- 43 The countries that voted in favour were: Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Byelorussian S.S.R., Canada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Liberia, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Sweden, Ukraine S.S.R., Union of South Africa, U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Uruguay and Venezuela. Those against were: Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and, Yemen. The ten abstentions were: Argentina, Chile, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.
- 44 <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/>>.
- 45 *DCER*, *op.cit.*, 944.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 946.
- 47 A. Bullock, Ernest Bevin, *Foreign Secretary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 359-63.
- 48 J. W. Pickersgill, D. F. Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record*, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 135.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 161.
- 50 R. Owendale, *op.cit.*, 222.
- 51 J. W. Pickersgill, D. F. Forster, *op.cit.*, 163.
- 52 *Privy Council Office File*, RG 2, vol. 94, P-70, NAC.
- 53 L. B. Pearson, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, *op.cit.*, 216.
- 54 R. Owendale, *Britain, the United States and the End of the Palestine Mandate*, *op.cit.*, 266.
- 55 *DCER*, vol. 14, 1948, edited by H. Mackenzie (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1994), 114-15.
- 56 Department of External Affairs File, RG 25, vol. 2152, NAC. See also M. Thornton, "Ernest Bevin, George C. Marshall and Lester B. Pearson, January 1947 to January 1949: A North Atlantic Triangle?" in C. C. Eldridge, editor, *Kith and Kin: Canada, Britain and the United States from the Revolution to the Cold War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 209-10.
- 57 *Ibid.*, Part 2.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 *Ibid.*
- 60 See M. Thornton, *The Domestic and International Dimensions of the Resettlement of Polish Ex-Servicemen in Canada, 1943-1948* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000).

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- 61 Letter dated 30 December 1947, also sent to the Canadian Embassies in Moscow and Washington. *DCER*, *op.cit.*, 949.
- 62 "Personal message to Mr. Mackenzie King from Mr. Attlee," 28 August 1948, Privy Council Office File, *RG 2*, *op. cit.*, NAC.
- 63 Letter dated 30 August 1948. *Ibid.*
- 64 L. B. Pearson, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, *op.cit.*, 214.
- 65 John Baylis suggests Dean Acheson pressed an understanding with Canada over Palestine to also conclude a security pact. J. Baylis, *The Diplomacy of Pragmatism: Britain and the Formation of NATO, 1942-1949* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 104.
- 66 G. Ignatieff, *op.cit.*, 103.
- 67 J. W. Pickersgill, D. F. Forster, *op.cit.*, 188.