

National Whirligig

Washington
By RAY TUCKER

WASHINGTON—H. T. R. of Minden, La., raises such a provocative question this week that his letter of inquiry deserves publication in full. So sharp is the general sentiment—or passion—on the problem of Palestine that the reply must be more exhaustive than usual, especially as it is based on interviews with top American officials engaged in settlement of the Jewish-Arabian dispute.

Question: "To what extent is the United States responsible for establishment of a Jewish country in Palestine? David Marcus, a West Pointer, is given responsibility for creating the army of Israel. President Truman seemed in haste to recognize the new state."

ROLE—* * * "The Export-Import Bank has promised a \$100,000-000 loan. There have been several news articles dealing with the smuggling of arms from this country to Israel. The press has represented Great Britain as opposed to the establishment of Israel and Russia is ready to recognize and assist Israel, although, possibly, for the purpose of embarrassing the United States and causing dissension in the Middle East."

"The role played by the United States in creating Israel, and the reasons for this policy, which appear to be out-and-out aggression, is a topic of concern among many people. I would appreciate your discussion of it."

POLITICAL—* * * Answer: The United States had an important part in this drama. It is idle to deny that domestic political pressures and considerations, in part at least, have led recent American Presidents to lend their great influence to

the movement for a Jewish homeland. In fact, they have made it virtually a national policy.

It may be said, too, that they did so in order to appeal to the Jewish vote in this country. That, however, is no crime. All Presidents and would-be Presidents have "played for" such racial groups as the Irish, the Italians, the Canadians in New England, the Scandinavians in the middle northwest, even though their vote-getting actions involved grave foreign issues.

* * * **TRUE**—Thus it is true that President Truman recognized the new state, both de jure and de facto, "in haste." The Export-Import Bank has promised \$100,000,000, but under its charter it cannot do so unless the directors regard the advance as a worthwhile investment. As to David Marcus' role in organizing the Army of Israel, he was a West Pointer, but he was a private citizen when he undertook this task.

England did originally oppose the Israelis because of her historic friendship with the Arabian states in this area. In the years before the Palestine question became such a live issue, she negotiated treaties of mutual assistance with them.

London entered these arrangements to preserve her vital lifeline to India, Egypt and Burma, which were then an integral and economically important part of the empire. Arabian aid in both World Wars proved of tremendous help to the Allies athwart the bridgehead between the two continents.

* * * **INTEREST**—Like Britain, the U. S. has an interest in this area—oil—and we cannot afford to have this historically

troubled territory become the seat of permanent unrest or possible war. As H. T. R. notes, Russia barged in on the side of the Israelis solely to promote dissension, and to enable her to gain control of Turkey, the Dardanelles and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Here, as elsewhere, Stalin posed as the champion of a small state struggling for independence. For us to have taken an opposite stand might have jeopardized our prestige throughout the world, especially in the Balkans, Asia and China.

* * * **RECOGNIZED**—Given this political and diplomatic background, Washington saw a chance to settle this cancerous problem, which also threatened to estrange this country and England.

Despite official denials, the two nations jointly recognized Israeli and Transjordan, England's ally and the most powerful of the Arabian states. The Anglo-American intervention terminated a war that might have created world difficulties, as did the assassin's shot at Sarajevo in 1914 and Hitler's invasion of Poland.

* * * **AGGRESSIVE**—As to our action being "aggression," that may be true in a sense. But we have assumed the aggressive, in the same way and for the same reasons, in Western Europe, for a while in China, and in Indonesia.

Events seem to indicate that the time has passed, and the world has become too atomically tiny, when a great power like the United States can afford to adopt a mere passive and indifferent attitude toward erupting volcanoes hurling hot lava on our own doorstep.