

Black "Normalcy" Settles On Palestine

By AL FINDLEY

A black "normalcy" has settled over Palestine. When five or six people are killed on one day, the correspondents call it a "quiet" or normal day. It takes a catastrophe like the Ben Yehuda Street bombing that killed 54 people to make the front pages.

The Arabs are shifting their method of attack from small bands of five to twenty each, to guerilla bands of a few hundred each. Many of these are Palestinian Arabs trained in other countries. The largest proportion are "volunteers" from the Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi armies. The total number of Arab volunteers whom the British have allowed to cross the frontiers, is estimated at about 7,000. This Arab army, while not possessing heavy arms, is well-equipped for the job it proposes to do—harassing, and hit-and-run fighting in order to upset the precarious imperialist balance in favor of partition.

Arms for this army came from three sources: (1) Arabian governments who have arms and are still getting limited amounts at present from England. (2) From the "merchants of death"—armament dealers and black marketeers. (3) From Czechoslovakia's famous Skoda armament works.

Arabian agents have signed an agreement with the nationalized Skoda works for \$100,000 worth of armaments. The first shipment, consisting of 180 machine guns with 120,000 rounds of ammunition, 130 sub-machine guns, 600 pistols and 1,150,000 rifle bullets, was made on December 28. Two smaller air shipments were made on January 8 and January 10.

The Czechs no longer deny shipping arms. In reply to a question from the Jewish press, Stalinist Interior Minister Nocek replied that officially they were selling only to legitimate governments and that he was not concerned with the ultimate destination of the arms.

ARAB DIVISION

A three-cornered fight is taking place among the Arab politicians for control of the Arab forces in Palestine. First, there is the struggle of the Arab League for supremacy over all Palestinian Arabs. There is also the personal struggle between the Mufti, claiming to represent "political authority," and the "military" led by Kawukzi. A temporary truce has been arranged dividing the fronts between different commanders representing different factions, but ultimate disposition has not been reached.

In addition, there is Abdullah. The Syrians and Lebanese want an immediate "guerilla" struggle to forestall any attempt by Abdullah to absorb Arab Palestine. LABOR ACTION has in the past given full information on Abdullah's plans for a greater Syria. Herald Tribune correspondent Rogers reports that Abdullah now has the support of the U. S. for his plan, but that Abdullah wants the

U. S. to win over Russia and tip the scales in favor of those in Britain who support his scheme by which he will be "called in" by a group of Palestinian Arabs and will "pacify" the country, but will stop at the borders of the proposed Jewish state. In return, the U. S. is to prevail on Russia to withdraw her veto against Abdullah's admission to the UN and England (with U. S. backing) should continue its subsidy for his Arab Legion.

BRITISH FOSTER CHAOS

The British are doing their bit to create chaos. An army of 100,000 which in the past has conducted house-to-house searches in large cities, now claims inability to prevent the entry of 7,000 Arabs. The British administration is rapidly deteriorating in Palestine and each local commander is a law unto himself. No attempt is being made for the orderly transfer of power into the hands of the inhabitants of the country. Large stocks of arms are purposely being left in such a position that a struggle for possession will take place. Individual British soldiers have undoubtedly taken part in attacks on the Jews. The outrageous bombing of New Jerusalem's main street was carried out by a group that consisted of British and Polish volunteers.

One point upon which the overwhelming majority of Jews and Arabs agree, is the demand that the British leave as soon as possible. It is tragically funny to hear, after all this, an appeal by Chaim Weitzman for a British-Jewish rapprochement.

England has also acted to paralyze the economic life of the country and to force an economic agreement favorable to the London "City." Palestine had a surplus of dollars, but the British prevented their use, and forced their conversion into pounds on the grounds that Palestine was in the Sterling bloc. These pounds have now been frozen. Without consulting any of the inhabitants of the country, Palestine has been excluded from the Sterling Bloc. Of the approximately 100,000,000 pounds due Palestine, only 4,000,000 pounds are to be at the disposal of Palestine trade and industry. The rest is frozen until an arrangement can be made by His Majesty's Government with either the UN Commission or with successor states.

The British Foreign Office has been attempting to capitalize on the fact that it was the only great power to oppose partition to induce the Arabian countries to sign treaties favorable to England. The growing nationalist sentiment amongst the Arabs has defeated this plan. With the result that the "model" British-Iraq treaty has been repudiated.

JEWIS DISCUSS "ATTACK"

The Jews too are preparing. They possess arms given them by the British in World War II, and are receiving arms via international smuggling. They have recently bought 21 de-

crepit airplanes and other surplus supplies from the British. For a time the Jewish leaders have alternated between boasts that their armed might is sufficient to patrol all of Palestine (Ben-Gurion) to a plea for an international army. They are concentrating on trying to get the U. S. to lift the embargo on arms for the Jewish militia.

The Haganah has until now limited itself to defense, and to reprisals around the borders of the proposed Jewish state. There is some talk of adopting a policy of "attack" on the main centers of Arab mobilization deep in Arab territory. The main proponents of this policy are the Irgun, the Stern group and the Revisionists. Those who doubt the close connection between Revisionists and the Irgun or Stern group, should note that all three groups adopted and began propagandizing for this plan at the same time. The unity agreement between the Irgun and the Haganah that was initiated is now dead. The primary reason was excessive Irgun demands for independence to raise funds and to engage in political propaganda. Open fights in the streets of Tel-Aviv are now taking place between Irgunists and Haganah members.

U. S. POSITION

Prospects for an imperialist International army to enforce partition ended with the statement of U. S. delegate Austin to the U.N. Security Council. While reaffirming the principle of partition, he declared that the UN charter did not give the security council the right to enforce partition and called for a Big Five agreement on whether or not the sit-peace, and to "consult." Since Britain and China are part of the Big Five, it is obvious that no action will take place. The U. S. delegate solemnly called upon the UN as a "matter of urgency" to "do nothing—at once." This legalistic statement is a retreat from the American argument used to swing smaller nations behind the original partition scheme. Palestine joins the growing list of "issues," along with South Africa, Korea, the Balkans and Trieste that expose the UN as being little more than a chessboard on which some moves in the international game of diplomacy are made.

In effect, what the U. S. said was that if partition could be carried out, it would not oppose it. If the situation in Palestine was a threat to partition got worse, the U. S. is free to act, either to reconsider or to take a position to enforce the partition. The United States hopes for one of the following: (1) The Jews will be able to establish a state by their own power. (2) Some scheme can be worked out with Arab politicians. (3) England can be induced to stay and keep the situation in hand.

England's latest declaration that after May 15 she will consider the UN as the "legal government" of Palestine, has dimmed State Department hopes that England will stay. At the same time it undermines Austin's legal statement to the Security Council, since it "legally" takes the issue out of the category of "threats to the peace" and puts it into the realm of "law and order" that is so appealing to the U. S. rulers. The report about the United States' support to Abdullah's plan is only one of the ways in which the United States attempts to eat its cake (partition) and have it too (Arab oil and alliances).

It is of course not excluded that if these schemes should fail to achieve partition and a stabilization of the Palestinian situation, the present small retreat by the U. S. will be but the beginning of a long series of retreats that may lead to complete abandonment of the partition plan. However, as yet the U. S. has not reached that decision.

ZIONISTS RUSH PLANS

The reaction of Zionist leaders to the American statement has been a speeding up of the process of forming a provisional Jewish government. Officially, this action will be taken, a little early, to be sure, to conform with the April 1 time table of the UN partition plan for the establishment "of provisional councils of gov-

ernment." Actually, it is an attempt to concretize the partition plan before the sands run out. This provisional government may declare its independence May 15, when the British leave. It is also rumored that this declaration of independence will have the consent of the "five lonely men" who make up the UN partition commission.

Russia has remained silent. The Zionists have little hope that Russia will take any other position than Austin did, since Austin argued for the fundamental positions of Stalinist diplomacy—that the UN cannot enforce its political decisions and that basic action must be taken by the Big Five. It may also attempt some kind of demagogic appeal to Zionist innocents. (As we go to press, the first of these predictions has been proved true with Gromyko's statement to UN.—Ed.)

LABOR ACTION long ago reported its opinion that a UN army would hardly be formed as a result of the conflicting imperialist rivalries. Even if a UN army would have been formed, it would not and could not bring peace to Palestine. All it could do would be to perpetuate foreign control of Palestine, and prolong the dangerous transitional period, thus continuing the incentive to bloodshed and violence. Neither will bloodshed in Palestine stop if partition is defeated by the Mufti and his cohorts. Peace will not come to Palestine by imposing Arab rule on Jews or Jewish rule on Arabs.

The only effective way to minimize bloodshed in Palestine is by the immediate granting of independence to both the Jewish and Arab peoples of Palestine. This can be done in a matter of days, at most weeks, if there is a will to do this—for example, India. The braided geographical borders and the realities of the interdependent economies of the two people would then be able to operate to give free play to those forces among both Jews and Arabs who will work toward peace and unity.

Palestine Discussion

We have been compelled to omit, for lack of space, our column of discussion on the Palestine issue. In addition to contributions listed last week, we have received an article from Albert Goldman. We shall try to allot a greater space to the discussion in next week's issue.

Los Angeles Class: Trotsky's Theories

LOS ANGELES—A class in the "Theories of Trotsky," under the general heading "Development of Socialist Thought," will be held by the Workers Party of Los Angeles on Friday nights, beginning Friday, March 12. Albert Gates, organizer for the Los Angeles branch of the WP, will be the instructor of the class, which will meet at the headquarters of the Workers Party, 3314 So. Grand Avenue.

CHARGES FALSIFICATION OF REPORT ON LOCAL 45 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

CLEVELAND, Feb. 23—As brazenly as after the January membership meeting, one of the officers of Fisher Body Local 45 released to the press an account of Sunday's membership meeting which has nothing in common with what actually occurred.

At the previous meeting, an endorsement of Wallace had been secured. However, the largest minority vote registered in the local in a long time was recorded against the endorsement. Leo Fenster, recording secretary, then told the newspapers that all but THREE members had voted for Wallace! This time the officer involved is not specifically named, but it is probably the same Fenster.

The meeting of February 22 (see last week's LABOR ACTION) recorded itself by a voice vote as being overwhelmingly for instructing incoming officers to sign Taft-Hartley affidavits. There was a definite "No" vote, however, and Charles Kennedy, in the chair, specifically asked Fenster if he wanted a hand or standing count made. Fenster did not take advantage of this offer, and everyone conceded the vote was for compli-

Then the story went on, "A spokesman for the present officers, often accused of left-wing leanings, said: 'Only about eight or so members voted on the resolution and the rest of the members abstained from voting, thereby showing their disapproval of the measure.'"

In the next paragraph this same officer is quoted as saying this was an "unimportant" feature of the meeting! Further on in the story, this spokesman tells of his surprise at the large turnout by the membership.

The Stalinists in this local, as elsewhere, are but a tiny part of the membership. They have advanced to leadership and maintained themselves there by opportunism of the worst sort, deals with all kinds of elements, and false claims to militancy. Those who dared to oppose them were subject to character assassination and slander. Now for the first time in years, the Stalinist pleas for unity and unanimity have failed and they were beaten fair and square on the issue of isolating the local from the rest of the UAW.

The Stalinists can't take it, and

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