

## The Road to Peace in the Middle East

The Israeli-Arab conflict goes on. The Palestine problem has not been solved. The acute crisis, brought about by the June, 1967 war, is still with us. The Middle East remains one of the main trouble spots of the world, a prospective hotbed of war. The cause of peace, the cause of the rights of the peoples, demand a solution.

In the minds of many, the problem appears entangled and complicated. In contradistinction to the Vietnam problem, the Middle East problem finds progressives and anti-imperialists still divided over the solution.

Understanding is made more difficult by the false thesis that there are irreconcilable contradictions between the people of Israel and the Palestinian Arab people, between the state of Israel and the Arab states. The anti-Marxist thesis is advanced that it is a question of right against right, and sometimes Israeli nationalism tries to get its position accepted by conceding the right of nationalism to the Arab side.

Many progressives are taken in by official Israeli propaganda because it uses the slogan of peace, although they should be immune to it by virtue of their experience that in our times there is no aggressor that does not do this. A big part of public opinion in Western countries, led astray two years ago by the appealing David-Goliath story, have sobered up, have freed themselves of hollow emotions, have started to think.

At the end of the solution, there must be lasting peace. Lasting peace can only be just peace. Surrender to *diktat*—even if feasible—would carry the germs of a new round of war. A just peace must answer the just strivings of the peoples of the region. It must give recognition to the right of the people of Israel to independent existence and unhindered security to build up their country. It must give the Palestinian Arab people the fulfillment of their legitimate national rights. It must give the peoples of the Arab countries the security which will free them of the danger of renewed aggression.

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the possibility freely to develop their national liberation movement. All this is not to be achieved overnight. With problems entangled and hatred accumulated, it will be a long drawn-out process. No details can now be given for all the stages; no blueprint can now be drawn of how the Middle East will look after ten or twenty years.

### *Growth of Opposition to Occupation*

But a start has to be made now. The question facing us is how to get into the correct direction, what way to choose.

The occupation is now in its third year. Two years after the June, 1967 aggression, the Israeli rulers relied on, and were backed by, the United States. The Israeli rulers tried to serve the imperialist aims of liquidating the anti-imperialist regimes in neighboring countries. In this they failed. They also tried to advance their own Zionist aims of territorial expansion. In this, they were temporarily and partly successful. Now, they want to gather the fruits of aggression. They can do so only with the backing of the United States. To retain this backing remains the main object of their political tactics.

In their other political objectives, they have already failed. They have failed to break the unity of the Arab world against the occupation of Arab territories. They have failed to come to separate terms with Jordan at the expense of the U.A.R. or with the U.A.R. at the expense of Jordan.

They have failed to come to terms with the Arab population of the occupied territories. The Arab population has rejected cooperation with the occupying power. No representative collaborator could be found. They had to replace a policy described as "liberal" by the policy of the iron fist. Opposition to occupation is mounting all the time. It has risen from passive non-cooperation to mighty strikes and demonstrations where women and school-girls take their proud place. Israeli soldiers describe how they feel, surrounded by enemies. By every means the Arab population manifests its urgent desire to see occupation ended, to greet the wished-for day of withdrawal of the occupation forces.

Terror against the population mounts. Hundreds of houses have been blown up under various pretenses. Mass arrests are on the agenda. Searches are a daily occurrence. Torture is practiced in dungeons. Economic pressure is applied, particularly in the Gaza strip, aiming at a mass exodus of the population. While the second wave of refugees were, in the main, not allowed to come back,

additional people are being deported to the East Bank of the Jordan river. Deportation orders are especially directed against leaders of the people, against prominent members of the Communist Party of Jordan.

Attempts at uprooting the Arab population go hand in hand with Jewish settlement, urban and rural. Military and civil-paramilitary settlements have been set up in Arab Jerusalem and in the West Bank, in the Syrian heights and in the Sinai peninsula. Jewish presence in the areas should become a *fait accompli*.

This has greatly increased hatred and enmity. Occupation engenders opposition to occupation. The population of the occupied territories expresses its opposition to the continuation of occupation in various ways, mainly through mass struggle such as strikes and demonstrations.

The population of the occupied territories has the right to struggle against occupation, and only it has the right to choose the means for such resistance that it considers the most useful. At the same time, irresponsible actions occur. Bomb outrages in Israeli towns, terror acts against the Israeli population, do not serve the struggle against occupation; they only play into the hands of the Israeli rulers, oiling their propaganda machine.

#### *Aggressive Acts Continue*

Bloodshed is mounting at the cease-fire lines. Except for the days of attack in October-November, 1956 and June, 1967, there has never been since 1949 such a daily toll of human lives on both sides of the dividing lines as there is now. The Israeli press has revealed that figures given by the Ministry of Defense on killed, wounded and missing among Israeli soldiers are incomplete and that reports are selective.

The Israeli war machine makes a practice of carrying out commando, marine and air raids over the cease-fire lines into U.A.R., Jordanian and Syrian territory, and over the international boundaries into Lebanon. According to the theory propagated in Israel, the Israeli government is fully entitled to decide when, where and how to strike. Men, women and children are killed, maimed, burnt by napalm. Electric high-tension lines are attacked in Egypt; bridges, dams and irrigation canals are destroyed on the East Bank of Jordan. Israeli official propaganda boasts of driving the civil population away from the cease-fire lines, of creating a third wave of Arab refugees.

The Israeli rulers have still not abandoned the hopes of achieving with these means what they failed to achieve two years ago: to

topple the anti-imperialist regimes in Arab states, and particularly that of President Nasser in the U.A.R. Successful Israeli attacks feed imperialism and reactionary anti-Nasserist agitation asking: Why doesn't he act? Why doesn't he go to war?

Aggressive acts are accompanied by threats of renewed large-scale aggression. Ministers vie with each other in shaking fists, fulminating and calling for further escalation.

The Israeli rulers do everything to increase their military might. The Phantom deal is a major case. Whether the report in *Der Spiegel* on Israel having atom-bombs is true, I do not know. But it is a fact that, like West Germany, Israel refuses to adhere to the non-proliferation treaty, and obviously the Israeli rulers would not be adverse to adding nuclear blackmail to their arsenal.

There can be no doubt that this situation is fraught with the greatest dangers—dangers for the Arab peoples but not less for the people of Israel. The present situation imperils peace in the region, and not only in the region.

The political Zionist line to which the Israeli ruling circles adhere, stands exposed. Its consequences are already today being borne by the people of the country. Economically, the working people bear the main brunt of the extraordinary military budget. Politically, democratic freedoms, especially the freedom of the trade union struggle, are more and more restricted. Restrictive orders and virtual house arrests are imposed on activists of the Communist Party of Israel and other opponents of official policy. And morally, occupation has a very bad influence on the values of the young people.

It is no accident that political life, government and parties, are steering to the right. The Golda Meir government is even more under the influence of the extremists than was the Eshkol government. The Labor Party is successfully blackmailed into supporting the most blatant expansionist aims. The Mapam leadership has renounced political independence by joining the alignment with the Labor Party, not to speak of the Mikunis-Sneh group of renegades that supports the official Foreign Office line.

There must be a change. An alternative must be found—a road that leads not to war but to peace.

#### *False and Correct Solutions*

Parties and currents participating in the broad Israeli government coalitions are divided among themselves on questions of tactics—on whether the time has come to announce major expansionist aims.

All are united in the basic strategic conception: to keep what they have, or, at least, as much of it as possible. Prime Minister Golda Meir has reiterated the official position laid down in the Basic Principles of the Government: "Israel will persist in her readiness to conduct negotiations—without prior conditions by any party—with every one of her neighbors, for the purpose of concluding a peace treaty. In the absence of peace treaties, Israel will continue to maintain fully the state of affairs determined by the cease-fire, and will fortify her position with due consideration for the vital needs of her security and development."

Stripped of its demagogic trappings, the meaning of this principle is clear: not to budge one inch from the territories occupied in the June, 1967 war, until a peace treaty is signed.

The Israeli government disqualifies itself as partner for negotiations by its refusal to accept and implement the UN Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967. Negotiations under conditions of occupation means surrender of the Arab states. Signing a peace treaty under conditions of occupation means acceptance of the Israeli *diktat*. At best, the Israeli government would be prepared to discuss what territorial changes might be conceded from the present cease-fire lines. It knows very well that no Arab government is prepared to surrender and to start discussions under the shadow of the bayonet. The meaning of the principle is therefore: no withdrawal, no political solution, no peace.

Government propaganda inside Israel is not far from acknowledging the essential roots of official policy. It tries to mobilize public opinion not in the name of peace but in the name of territorial expansion. The fact that the Israeli government has declared its opposition in advance to any findings of the four Great Powers on the Middle East proves that the Israeli rulers are afraid of peace, as the devil is of holy water. Their road is not the road to peace.

On the other hand, the programs advanced by extremists within the Arab resistance movement do not show political maturity. They aim not only at the liberation of the occupied territories, not only at fulfilling the just national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, but also at the liquidation of the State of Israel. This contradicts the just national rights of the people of Israel. It cannot form the basis of a political solution of the Palestine problem. It does not lead to peace.

This holds true also for the proposal to establish a Palestinian state, giving equal rights to Moslems, Christians and Jews. Such solutions proved to be unrealizable even in 1947-48; they are not

realistic today. Advancement of such slogans only tends to unite the people of Israel behind the present leaders. It makes liquidation of the present conflict more difficult. It perpetuates occupation. This is not the road to peace.

### *Need to Implement UN Resolution*

The correct solution can only be a political solution. The possibility of such a solution is given in the resolution of November 22, 1967. This resolution contains all the elements needed to solve the pressing problems of today in the region. It provides for withdrawal of Israeli troops from the territories occupied in June, 1967. It provides for an end to the state of belligerency. It guarantees the right to independent existence to all states, including Israel. It assures the right to security, free from the danger of attack, and the right to secure and recognized borders, to all the states in the region. It provides for the solution of the Arab refugee problem in accordance with UN decisions. It provides for freedom of navigation in international waterways in the region.

Implementation of this resolution is in the highest national interest of the people of Israel and the Arab peoples alike; it serves the cause of peace.

Implementation of this resolution would solve the most urgent questions tormenting the peoples of the region. It would constitute a major stepping stone towards the solution of the still outstanding questions, guaranteeing that these also would be solved in a peaceful way.

Discussion has been going on for many months about the concrete forms and stages of the implementation, about the drawing up of a time table meeting the requirements of all sides. The quadrilateral meetings of the Great Powers and the bilateral meetings between the Soviet Union and the United States serve the purpose of drawing up a complete program of implementation. The press of various countries has reported on the idea of a package deal, covering all points of the resolution and guaranteeing that no side could pick out some paragraphs and leaving others unfulfilled. It is to be hoped that discussions will be trustfully concluded at an early date, for time is running short.

Implementation of the resolution has become possible, since the U.A.R., Jordan and Lebanon have authoritatively announced their acceptance and their readiness to implement it in full. It is to be regretted that Syria has not done so, but there are clear signs that

when the question becomes acute, Syria will not exclude herself from the will of the other Arab states.

The main stumbling block is the refusal of the Israeli government to accept and implement the resolution. The Communist group in the Knesset has on various occasions proposed a motion that the Knesset calls on the government to accept the resolution and declares its readiness to implement it. These motions have been defeated by the Knesset majority. The policy of the Israeli rulers, their attempts at making the Jarring mission fail, their attempts at making the Big Four discussions fail—all testify to the refusal of the Israeli rulers to accede to the Security Council resolution.

They are consistent in this. For implementation of the resolution would mean an end to expansion and expansionism. It would prove that Israel's future is not on the side of imperialism, but on the side of the Arab peoples.

Full implementation of the Security Council resolution will lead to the establishment of a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arab countries.

#### *The Forces Fighting for Peace in the Middle East*

There remain the questions often asked: how to overcome the opposition of the Israeli rulers and what are the forces which could do so.

As in other questions of world peace, the major and uniting force for peace is the international Communist movement. The Meeting of the 75 Communist and Workers' parties, held in June, 1969 in Moscow, rallied around the demand to implement the UN resolution.

On a broader basis, even if not accepted by all, this demand was voiced by the majority of those speaking on the Middle East crisis at the World Assembly for Peace, held in the same month in Berlin, capital of the GDR, and this was confirmed in the decision accepted by the jubilee meeting of the World Peace Council. A similar decision was taken at the World Congress of Women, held also in June, 1969 in Helsinki.

These decisions testify to the world-wide powerful front supporting a political solution of the Middle Eastern crisis.

Within this front, the mightiest force is the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is in the forefront of the fight for peace in the world. The Soviet Union has never been against the interests of any people, and the attempts of Israeli reaction at depicting Soviet policy as anti-Israeli are nothing but calumny. The Soviet Union is against aggression, against the aggressive policy and acts of the rulers of

Israel. The Soviet Union is at the side of the victims of aggression. By its peace policy, the Soviet Union acts in the best interests of the people of Israel.

The Soviet Union is a great material force, influential in the Middle East. Today it throws all its weight into the balance to enforce a political solution of the crisis, to implement the Security Council resolution, to establish lasting peace.

These powerful international forces join with the national liberation struggles of the Arab peoples, the struggles of the population of the occupied territories against occupation and for liquidation of the crisis.

In many capitalist countries this struggle, led by the Communist parties, gains momentum. Mobilization of public opinion has not reached the level attained in solidarity with the Vietnam people. But in relation to the Middle East, public opinion is also coming round to seeing who is obstructing peace. The demand for the implementation of the Security Council resolution is definitely gaining ground.

All this increases the pressure on the U.S. administration to yield to public opinion and to demand of the Israeli rulers that they do their part in implementing the resolution. It may be added that not only peace forces work in this direction, but also sections of big capital who see in a change of tactics the only way to retain strategic and economic positions in the Arab countries.

On the Israeli scene, more and more people feel that the war has not solved problems. Increased insecurity makes itself felt. There is a growing anxiety of parents over the fate of their sons stationed at the Suez Canal or the Jordan River. Many youngsters are not happy about being part of the occupation army. This leads to questions, even if the correct answer is not yet accepted.

An increasing number of intellectuals give realistic answers. University professors appear in the press and even on the public platform against the continuation of occupation. They question the wisdom of annexationist policy. They affirm the rights of the Palestinian Arab people. They complain about the impact of occupation on human values among the people.

Likewise, class battles are reappearing on the Israeli scene. In the months following the June aggression, ruling circles succeeded in persuading the working people that it was unpatriotic to press for their demands at a time of national emergency. Now this argumentation has become thin. Workers of the Ashdot port led a magnificent struggle for their rights. They were not deterred by the

admonitions of government representatives and the trade union bosses that they were helping the enemy. Solidarity actions of the Haifa port workers forced government and Histadrut (Trade Union Federation) leaders to accede to the workers' demands.

The Tel Aviv postmen struck in solidarity with one of their colleagues who had been discriminated against. On the first day of the strike they added demands for better pay and better working conditions. They were joined by postmen in many other towns of the country. The government failed to convince them that it was their patriotic duty to return to work. It had to issue work orders, on the basis of British Mandatory Emergency Regulations, threatening the strikers with two years in prison if they did not return to work. This was the first time that such orders were issued against striking workers; so far they had been used only against Communists and other opponents of government policy.

On September 2, elections will take place for the Histadrut Congress, and on October 28 for the Knesset and municipal councils. The ruling parties try to exclude questions of foreign policy and security from the election campaign on grounds of "national unity" against the enemy. But they will not succeed in doing so. It will be especially the Communist Party of Israel that will put these essential questions before the people. The Communist Party of Israel, at its 16th Congress held at the beginning of this year, called for the implementation of the Security Council resolution as its main plank for the immediate future. At the same time, it explained to the people of Israel that it is the bridge and link to the socialist world and to the Arab peoples. The Meeting of Communist and Workers' parties in Moscow has proved the correctness of this statement. In fighting for a peaceful solution of the present crisis in the Middle East, the Communist Party of Israel is fulfilling its responsibility toward the people of Israel, just as it is fulfilling its responsibility towards the international working class and Communist movement.

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There is a crying need to choose the road to peace in the Middle East. The road is there. It lies in the full implementation of the Security Council resolution. Mighty forces are pressing for implementation. Their strength has to be increased. It can be increased.

The U.S. administration and the Israeli government can be compelled to accede to the wish of the peoples of the world. This can bring about a just and lasting peace in the region, for the benefit of all the peoples in the region and in the world.