

# Ways Out for Israel

To the Editor:

In criticism of my article on Israel, L. Shields raises a few points that have some **abstract** importance, but do not affect the determination of Israeli policy.

(1) Shields points to the theoretical possibility that an oppressed minority may **legitimately** react unfavorably to the idea of uniting with other nations (especially its former oppressors) as a result of its historical experiences. Granted. But does that apply to Israel concretely? The facts are that a majority voted, at least programmatically, for some form of confederation with the Arab peoples. I refer to the Mapam and the Mapai. The liberal bourgeoisie in general and Dr. Weizman in particular accept the principle of confederation. Even the Stern group sometimes talks in terms of confederation.

(2) Pride in statehood is one thing. Pride alone to the exclusion of the vital problems of the new state is another. The citizens of Israel, India and Pakistan, according to all reports, have this pride and it is legitimate. The ISL's founding convention recommended favorably a resolution that declared that this pride should be shared by the international socialist and working-class movement since we too have a feeling of joy and pride when an oppressed minority frees itself and especially when it is accomplished in battle against the imperialists. But that does not exhaust the subject. Israel has a very important problem—a problem that could almost be classified as a problem of survival. Israel is now a beleaguered isle in an Arab sea. Shields himself

points to a continual possibility of renewed warfare.

Some people's pride in statehood may be satisfied with a beleaguered isle. But the citizens and especially the more conscious elements in Israel are not satisfied with such a state of existence.

(3) In case there is any misunderstanding, I want to declare that I believe the state of Israel has the right, and moreover the **duty**, to conduct diplomatic dealings and even maneuver with **all** governments. No other position is possible either for a state or for revolutionary socialists. Marxists live on **THIS** planet.

What I did criticize is, to quote Shields, "the counterposing of an appeal to the Arab people as against a course based on the attitudes of the present government." My criticism of the Israeli government is precisely that it counterposes the two and relies **SOLELY** and **EXCLUSIVELY** on diplomacy and attitudes of existing governments.

The main point of my articles has been that **MORE** is needed, i.e., an appeal to the Arab masses that **COULD** aid Israel in the long run and even in its diplomatic moves.

One of the saddest facts in the present situation is that, despite military defeat, the semi-feudal Arab governments are afraid to make peace for **fear of the reaction of the masses**. This can be eliminated, or at least reduced, by coupling an appealing program for the Arab masses in addition to dealing on a diplomatic plane.

This is the classic lesson of Brest-Litovsk and of all progressive movements. This approach stems not only from theory but from the realities of

the Near East. The Arab governments are totally unlike Germany or Russia. These are strong and totalitarian regimes. The Arab governments are weak and **UNSTABLE** regimes with reported unrest among the masses. The Israeli labor movement can and should attempt to use the unrest and **channelize it in a progressive direction**, for the good of both the Israeli and Arab masses.

One of the **greatest** problems facing Israel is how to cease being a beleaguered isle in an Arab sea. Such a position will force the small state to use an inordinately large portion of its meager resources on unproductive armaments. How can this be done? By relying on the Arab governments which, according to Shields, are planning a new war? The answer is too obvious to need elaboration.

There are only three ways Israel can survive: (1) As the beleaguered isle. (2) Under the protection of a powerful foreign state. (3) By breaking through the hostility of the governments and creating a rapprochement with the Arab masses.

The first is not desirable nor is there any assurance that it can last. The changes taking place in the Arab Near East make it likely that in the future Arab numerical superiority may also become military superiority. The second method is unreliable and will deprive the state of any independence that it can be proud of. The third, while not guaranteeing victory, offers the only real road to freedom and survival, especially when one remembers that it **does not exclude** diplomatic maneuvers when conducted in such a fashion as to aid the only long-term policy that Israel needs.

**AL FINDLEY**