

# Middle East Unity: Israel's Opportunity and Its Fate

We have received a mimeographed pamphlet entitled *Principles and Aims of "The Third Force" Movement in Israel*, consisting of two articles by Mordecai Stein reprinted from the latter's *Democratic Journal*. This is the newspaper which recently (see LABOR ACTION for Oct. 6) became the first Yiddish daily in the country, only to have its license later revoked by the Israeli government on trumped-up grounds.

One of the two articles has already appeared in LABOR ACTION (for May 26). The second is on the general theme, the need for Israel's participation in a unified Middle East in friendly collaboration with the Arab peoples. It begins with a discussion of the Middle East Command which the U. S. bloc is attempting to set up:

"The attitude of the Israeli government toward the Middle East Command," writes Stein, "may be summed up as follows:

"The most desirable solution would be for Israeli to participate in the Command while the Arab states do not do so. But even if the Arab states should participate in the Middle East Command, and perhaps even particularly in that case, Israeli should also participate, on condition that the Command grant the Arab states no advantages over Israel and in order to prevent the granting of such advantages. In any case Israel should maintain its connections with the 'West,' for the breaking off of those connections would lead to Israel's downfall.

"This attitude of the government has been supported by a large majority of the Knesset and by most Israeli newspapers. But this attitude is mistaken and harmful. . . ."

The first reason adduced is by way of a discussion of the relative military strength of the Stalinist bloc versus the NATO powers. Stein's purpose seems to be to argue that in all probability the former is militarily stronger, or at least is likely to have military superiority at the outset of a war, and that this is the reason why reliance on the West offers Israel no protection. It is a doubtful enough thesis—not made stronger by formulations which seem to imply that "democracies" *per se* are necessarily weaker in war than totalitarian countries—but it would appear to be an attempt to counter a much falsified viewpoint current among pro-Western Israelis: that military alliance of Israel with the Western bloc is its best protection against the ravages of war.

This illusion Stein also combats with less categorical arguments seeking to show how impossible it will be for even a benevolent U. S.—and he points out that the U. S. cannot be expected to be very benevolently concerned about the fate of a small country on the Mediterranean coastline—to keep Russian power from overrunning Israel. Moreover he points out that the conditions created by war, on top of the already visible consequences of the Israeli government's policy, will make the land extremely vulnerable to pro-Stalinist fifth-columnism.

He rejects the illusion of "neutralism," that is, the view that "if Israel does not join any of the rival parties, neither of them will harm her and in the coming war she will maintain her peace and integrity, as Switzerland and other small countries did in the last war." To it he counterposes a positive program for a "third force" in the Middle East. This section follows.

## Unity with Arab States Is Possible

"If Israel continues in her present situation, she will remain isolated, surrounded by enemies and politically and economically dependent on overseas countries. Whether she joins the Middle East Command or not, she cannot escape the terrible fate which awaits her.

"There is only one way out for Israel: to cease being a foreign

enemy body between the Middle East countries, and to become their friend and ally.

"Israel is as interested in peace in the Middle East as all the other countries of the region; more so, for she faces worse dangers. So it is vitally essential for her to do everything possible to remove the partitions which separate her from her neighbors. Here, next door, there is plenty of cheap food. Here there are markets for her produce. Here—and not overseas—are those as interested as she in the integrity and welfare of the Middle East. The peoples of the neighboring countries can and must be our allies in the hard times to come. With them we must conclude a Middle East pact. Them we can join.

"It is not true that this is impossible because the Arab states do not want it, do not want peace with Israel. The facts are different. The Arab masses are by no means interested in the continuation of the conflict with Israel; on the contrary, this quarrel is a never-ceasing source of suffering in their own countries. It is a hotbed of corruption, tyranny and oppression, and the Arab public desires its cessation. The fact can be clearly seen in the change which the contents of the declarations of its official spokesmen have undergone. Israel can make peace with her neighbors, if her desire to do so is sincere and not mere lip service.

"There is a reliable sign of preparedness to make peace: the will to pay for it. Peace must be paid for, and should be paid for. Who wants peace without paying the price, does not really want it. If our attitude is that territorial concessions cannot be considered, the return of the Arab refugees is out of the question, and the only subject for discussion is the question of reparations—which will result in the Arab states' having to pay reparations to Israel—if that is our attitude, it gives no evidence of a true desire for peace. Peace with the Arab nations is a vital and urgent need for Israel, and a serious effort should be made to achieve it.

"The main condition of the Arab states for peace with Israel is at present the repatriation of the Arab refugees. It is the principal—practically the only—demand; and it is a just demand, which should be fulfilled. The Arab refugees should be repatriated—not a hundred thousand or any other number of them but every Arab refugee should be given the opportunity to return home. Firstly, because that is his right, because it is his home. And secondly, for the sake of peace. If the Israeli government performs this act of justice out of its own free will, Jewish-Arab peace will become a fact, even if some powerful groups in the various Arab states should not desire it.

## Step to Asian Federation

"The repatriation of the Arab refugees does not mean that the new immigrants should be expelled from their houses and deprived of all shelter. Israel will be able to apply large sums to the reconstruction of the country, to the building of houses fit for human use for the immigrants. Also, the international funds allocated for the Arab refugees, which are at present squandered to so large an extent, can be of considerable and effective help in the rehabilitation of those refugees in Israel. Moreover, it is to be hoped that other international factors can be found who, in order to assist in the establishment of peace in the Middle East, will support the rehabilitation of both the Arab refugees and the Jewish immigrants. And if after all this any difficulties in the rehabilitation of the Arab refugees should arise, there are grounds to assume that it will be possible—for then it will be possible—to solve them by consultation and common action with the Arab states.

"Let there only be the will to this great and humane step, and it will be possible to carry it out systematically and decently, with no detriment to anyone and advantage to all.

"The repatriation of the Arab refugees will not weaken Israel. They will become no 'fifth column.' They have had a very bitter experience, and if the state of Israel returns them to their homes of its own free will, they will not be any less loyal than other citizens.

"More than that: an Israel which maintains peace and friendship with the other nations of the Middle East, which cooperates with them to defend the region against the world-wide storm which approaches its borders, will be no fertile ground for the growth of an Arab 'fifth column,' and there will be no such column.

"The fate of Israel is bound up with the fate of the Middle East, and the Middle East will have some grounds to hope for salvation only if it unites into one bloc which will and can guard its own peace and independence. WHAT THE MIDDLE EAST NEEDS TODAY IS NO COMMAND, BUT UNITY. A united Middle East bloc, which will soon be joined by the great power near it in a geographical and spiritual sense, India, will not be regarded as no-man's-land by the two rival powers; its peoples will not become their guinea pigs; such a great and united bloc can do much to counter the dangers which threaten it in the coming war. It may even be a stage in the consolidation of all Asia into a third power which would change the present balance of forces and might prevent the world war.

Without peace between the Jews and the Arabs, without the cooperation of Israel, the unity of the Middle East will not come about, and if this region remains divided against itself, as it is now, it will become a victim of the horrors of the war to come; and the country within it which will suffer most is the Jewish state. Then the state of Israel will be a passing shadow, not blessed but cursed by memory, because it has gathered-in the remains of European Eastern Jewry, only to lead them to more certain destruction.

"But another way is still open to Israel: to cooperate with the other Middle East countries for the peace and security of the whole region.

"This is the only way which leads to salvation for Israel; and it is the way in which Israel may bring blessing to the whole world."

## 's Won Out — —

the Republicans buy nation-wide radio or television time, the first thing the listeners at home hear is a continuing chant of 'I Like Ike,' and the general makes his appearance to a tremendous roar. The crowd has been rehearsed for about five minutes in advance so its members will chant in unison at a signal from the platform."

The Reporter of October 28 editorializes: "The great 'anti' movement is aimed particularly at anything that has to do with reason or with the mind. Indeed, for some people, 'intellectual' and 'un-American' have become interchangeable words. The general himself, it is said, has come to realize that the more 'visceral' he makes his appeal to the voters, the better it gets across."

## SWITCHEROO

Eisenhower has rung and re-rung the few changes that are possible in his "visceral" appeal with the talk of "farmers, quack doctors, and barefaced looters." He went so far in Chamberlain Illinois as to say that if

speech, depending on what part of the country you're in.

In the entire field of foreign policy, it was anticipated that little debate would occur, since Eisenhower was nominated by that segment which by and large agreed with the Administration on foreign policy. The Taftites, who did have a recognizable difference in this field, were defeated. But that defeat has turned into victory.

Despite the identification of Eisenhower with administration foreign policy and his active participation in much of it, he has essayed the Taft line here, too. He has blamed Secretary of State Acheson for setting limits to the U. S. defense perimeter in the East. He has tried to answer the Democrat's cry that he, too, was for the withdrawal of U. S. troops from Korea by asserting that this position was only "military."

The Times and the liberals who support Eisenhower piously hope