

Not 'Neutrality' but Opposition to Both Imperialist Powers — From Israel: A Socialist Voice on the War

The Israeli socialist journal Ha'Iton Ha' Democrati, published in Tel Aviv by M. Stein, recently presented its views on the war in a long editorial statement, of which important sections are translated below. In its essential lines, it is a genuinely socialist approach to the international crisis, and we welcome it.

Comrade Stein's paper is independent of any of the major parties, including the Mapai, and is especially outstanding (as far as the Israeli press goes) for its consistent championing of the rights of the Arab minority in the state and of a policy looking toward an alliance of both Jewish and Arab toilers against the ruling classes of the Near East. In the same issue from which the article below is translated, the editor also announces that the paper expects to become a daily shortly.

The translation from the Hebrew is by Al Findley.—Ed.

When the ruling class of the U. S. declares that it does not want war it is not lying. No doubt, they prefer to achieve their aims peacefully. The population of the U. S. is large, its industrial production tremendous and its financial power is great. Europe, on the other hand, has been badly battered, Britain is no longer a decisive power, Asia and Africa remain weak. Wide parts of the world are therefore open to U. S. expansion and domination that can give the U. S. the fruits of the labor of the peoples of the world in such great quantities that not only the rulers but the people of the U. S. will be able to share.

It is precisely peace that can bring the rulers of the U. S. such an era of unprecedented wealth and prosperity—that is if they could only have the time to conduct their "business as usual." BUT will they have the opportunity? . . .

The world has become too small for the social systems of Russia and the U. S. to co-exist. Talk of the co-existence of capitalism and communism may have good intentions but has no truth. It would, of course, have no truth when applied to genuine communism. But even the so-called communism that prevails in Russia cannot long live in peace with the capitalist system. Not because the two systems are different but rather because of the similarity in both systems.

It is precisely because both in the U. S. and in the USSR the masses are exploited and the minority enjoy special privileges, because both are oppressive and exploitive systems that seek to consolidate and expand, that it is "natural" that they stand in each others way and end up in conflict.

The coming war between the U. S. and Russia will be a world war. Firstly, because it will be a war for rule of the world. Whoever wins will dominate the entire globe.

Two-in-One War

At the same time it will be an ideological war between two social systems. This "twin" struggle is not a mere coincidence but has been brought about by the decline of the capitalist system and by the growth of the science of transportation.

The aspiration to unite and centralize the public activities of man in order to improve his lot is as old as mankind. Tribe, city-state, nation-state, empire are all steps and stages in the road of the unifying and centralizing tendency mentioned above. The advances were small ones and the road was a narrow one with many obstacles, and it expanded slowly.

All past attempts at world rule—the attempts of the eastern emperors, of Alexander, of Rome, of the great rulers of the Middle Ages, of Napoleon—all failed. All of course were partial tries; the "world" they aspired to rule was a very limited world. The main obstacle was their inability to rule from afar. Even in the narrow confines of their world they did not have the means to continue a central rule for any length of time.

Only with the expansion of the science of transportation was any real progress made toward the goal.

World War I was not yet a war for world domination. Each side was a coalition of equal powers. The victory of neither side would have resulted in a central world government. Of course, World War I was a step toward such a setup and was a prelude to World War II, which had implicit in it a single world power. However, even in World War II one side was an alliance of many countries of more or less equal power and it was this side that won. World War II was, however, a very great step in the direction of creating one central power. It weakened the power of many countries and left only two countries in the field. The coming world war will not be a war between alliances like World War I, nor a war between an alliance and a single power as in World War II but a war between two individual powers. The outcome inevitably means that the winner will become the single world power or government.

The same developments that make possible the centralization of political power also turns "economic anarchy" into a liability and a destructive force. They are two sides of the same coin. Man needs both the centralization of political and economic functions—a central direction of affairs.

We Are Not 'Neutral'

It is therefore natural that the problem of centralized political power and the question of the social order are posed at the same time. Indeed they have appeared side by side for a number of years. The Russo-Japanese War brought the Revolution of 1905. World War I brought the October Revolution. World War II catapulted Russia into one of the two contenders for world power. In the coming war this development will reach its height and the question of world power and the social question will be united.

Since the war between the U. S. and Russia will be both an "ideological" one and a struggle for the world, is it possible for any country to remain neutral? Of course not! Even in World War II there were no real neutrals. Even those countries that were formally neutral were so only because it suited the great powers for their own considerations. In practice the "neutrals" served one of the powers while the other closed its eyes to the situation. If the war had continued, there would have come an end even to this kind of neutrality.

There is no doubt that no country—even if it wanted to—would be able to remain neutral in a war between the two giant contenders, with different social orders, fighting it out for world mastery. It is, of course, ridiculous to assume that the Near East, a strip of the world where some of the greatest battles may be fought, will be able to remain neutral.

The slogan of neutrality for the Near East is a false and harmful one. It is harmful because it deflects attention from the real dangers that threaten, it arouses false hopes that it is possible to avoid the dangers by staying on the sidelines. The way to prevent involvement with either the United States or Russia in a war is not "neutrality" but opposition to both. He who has a choice of two alternatives—be hanged or be burned—will not choose neutrality toward both, but as long as he has sense will seek a third alternative, i.e., to remain alive.

World War II did not bring a European October Revolution. The degeneration and treachery of the mass workers' organizations, both "right" and "left," bore its fruit. The Second International became during the war partners and servants of the imperial rulers, and after the war they became, or rather they tried to become, the "popular" administrative "heirs" of

their rulers. They remained loyal to imperialism—of course, "for the benefit of the people." The adherents of the Third International were as usual tools of the rulers of Russia: deserters during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact and fighters in the underground after the Nazi attack on Russia. At present they writhe in a net of contradictions in the conflicts between "national patriotism," "Soviet patriotism," "class patriotism" and the need to preserve the faith of the workers. They are writhing without any clear perspective, can accomplish nothing worth while, and are losing the prestige they had gained in the struggle against the Nazis.

Hope in the Colonial Peoples

In the fascist countries, the workers had been so demoralized by their own parties that they filled the ranks of the Nazis, and the few that remained loyal had little or no influence. If after defeat of the fascists, one of the remaining loyal workers tried to rouse the masses to revolutionary activity, he was suppressed both by the "democratic" and "communist" armies. The inhabitants of these countries are at present little better than passive observers of the things done by the different occupying powers.

The present state of the working class does not offer real hope that in the near future it will be able with its own power to rid itself of the exploiting systems and/or that it will be able to prevent World War III.

However, World War II brought a different important development in its wake—the weakening of the colonial powers. Even though the democratic powers—the main colonial powers—won the war, they paid a great price. The three great empires—British, Dutch, French—have lost their ability to rule. Destruction of their empires is not complete, it is true, but the possibilities have been created to bring this process to its final conclusion relatively quickly. . . .

This is the essence of Churchill's proposal for the unification of Europe. His plan is directed not only against Russia but against the undeveloped countries—the majority of the human race. It is essentially a plan not for the unification of Europe, but a plan to use the industrial superiority of Europe and America against the oppressed, backward people. The struggle against colonial oppression is not only worth while, but is a great, immediate and important need.

For the Future of Mankind

The countries of Europe are as yet unable to accept Churchill's plan *in toto*. The old social concepts have not completely lost their power, the memory of Hitler makes it difficult to accept ideas and concepts advanced by the Nazis. Time may change this situation. In the great turmoil, these obstacles may be forgotten and may glorify the advantages of a prosperity for the few based on the blood of the many. The smoothing of the path to this goal may be the aim of a Third World War.

The struggle against colonial oppression will not succeed unless it is conducted by the subjected nations with mutual understanding and sympathy.

Every progressive war that is fought for the freedom of a colonial country, whether Near or Far East, is fought not only for the neutrality of that country alone, or for the region within which that country is situated, but for much more than that. It is fought for the neutrality of the entire world, for peace and for the future of mankind. Those who fight for freedom in all colonial countries must remember this well—they must understand and impress upon their memories the necessary living connection between their struggles and the struggles of others for freedom.

The enslavers of both sides [Russian and Anglo-American—Tr.] do not limit themselves to borders, neither in Korea nor in Malaya nor in any other place. The oppressed must do the same. The enemy is strong, brutal and has had much experience. We must learn from him in order to conquer him.

Not the "neutrality of the East"—Near or Far—but a progressive and united war against the united and common enemy!

An Index to LABOR ACTION for 1951

will appear in our December 31 issue, providing a key to the entire contents of the year. It makes your file (or bound volume) of LA doubly useful. Don't miss it!