

Full Scale Warfare Looms in Palestine

By AL FINDLEY

Fighting in Palestine is developing into full-scale warfare. From what was primarily an attempt to control supply lines, it has now become a struggle for control of strategic positions.

The Arab plan of war is to annihilate the isolated Jewish settlements in the north (Galilee) and in the Negev, cut off Jerusalem and squeeze the remaining Jews into a small strip on the coast and then force them to capitulate or drive them into the sea.

Jewish plans are to occupy and hold all land in Jewish possession and in the boundaries of the UN-allocated Jewish state, to bring in settlers and arms through control of the ports, to hold out for two-three years, in the meantime building up the settlements. Building and immigration will now serve a military as well as a political and economic function.

For the time being the Jews have attained military superiority, as the capture of Haifa demonstrates. They have held every settlement and have all but smashed the volunteer army of Kawukzi. This superiority can easily be reversed should an effective blockade or other reason prevent the Jews from importing arms. The military position of the contending forces will be greatly affected when the Arab countries send in their regular armies. Abdullah, King of Transjordan by the grace of His Majesty's government, will play the key role. He has the largest and best equipped army in the Near East. His army is British-led and is paid by the British. 10,000 of his 20,000 troops are now "keeping the peace" in Palestine. This army can and will do nothing without at least the tacit approval of London. The British face a "delicate problem" of how to justify the use of British officers and advisers in the invasion of British-held territory. The answer will probably be found in some arrangement like that reported for General Glubb, who has asked for permission to become a Transjordan citizen. His citizenship will probably be more temporary than the U. S. trusteeship.

The outbreak of open warfare has also encouraged the Jewish extremists, who demand Jewish rule over all of Palestine. For months now, the revisionists have been making the

question of Jaffa their main point in propaganda against partition. They claim that there are only two good roads leading from Tel Aviv, one of which passes through territory in the Jaffa municipality. The other road, they claim, is easily flooded and any rain can cut off Tel Aviv. The capture of Haifa by the Haganah impelled the Irgun, for prestige reasons, to attack Jaffa. The Haganah does not seem too anxious to stop them, probably in the hope of using the occupation of Jaffa as a basis for future compromise on the UN boundaries.

UN DEVELOPMENTS

Political developments in the UN are moving very slowly. Military events in Palestine have given an air of complete unreality to UN deliberations on a truce. The truce resolution and the Truce Committee of Belgian, American and French consular officials is not taken seriously, even by its sponsors. The most that UN observers now hope for before May 15 is some sort of truce for Jerusalem alone.

United States suggestions for trusteeship have been coolly received. In a test vote, a pro-partition bloc received 20 votes, more than enough to block any trusteeship proposal. The United States has made some progress in convincing England and France to join in policing the trusteeship. Negotiations are still in a critical state and may turn one way or the other. However, the United States will probably be able to carry any proposal through the UN. Russian action in joining the Trusteeship Council shows that the Stalinists are convinced that the US plan will be passed by the Assembly, and they are determined to have a full voice in the trusteeship.

The Arab politicians have indicated that they will accept a limited trusteeship, on their own conditions. Among the Jews, Dr. Magnes and his Ichud group are in favor of accepting the trusteeship. In addition, the Agudath Israel, the extreme clericalist group, has also indicated that it will accept trusteeship and will not participate in any "revolutionary" government, unauthorized by the UN.

Palestine now faces the possibility of a new foreign ruler. That can only prolong the strife between the

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two peoples. It ought to be clear to all those sincerely interested in Palestinian independence — especially Arab labor unions and progressive nationalists—that Palestine will not and cannot achieve its independence by Arab attempt to forcefully prevent the Jews from exercising their elementary rights to self-determination and by the military subjugation of the Jews. Such a course will lead not only to the strengthening of the reactionary elements of the Arab community but, as events indicate, will result in a new form of foreign rule, trusteeship or protectorate.

ARAB-JEWISH UNITY

The road to independence and unity in Palestine requires recognition of the Jews' right to self-determination in an independent state and working for the reunification of Palestine on a basis that guarantees the national rights of both peoples.

Whatever one may think of the advisability of proclaiming a Jewish state, one thing is clear: the Jews

are exercising their basic rights, and any attempt to coerce them is an infringement on their democratic rights. Labor in general and socialists in particular cannot help but support the rights of any people to self-determination. A special responsibility rests upon the American labor movement since it can directly influence the United States, the government most directly involved in the fate of Palestine. The American labor movement should demand (1) immediate independence for Palestine, (2) recognition of the Jewish state if it is formed, (3) lifting of the embargo on arms to the Haganah, (4) Arab-Jewish cooperation and the reunification of Palestine.

The AFL and CIO can most directly aid in achieving Arab-Jewish cooperation by influencing the Arab labor movement. This can be done in the form of appeals, delegations, etc. This may not achieve immediate results, but will definitely lay the groundwork for Arab-Jewish cooperation and the cessation of fratricidal warfare.