

MIDDLE EAST: THE PATH TO PEACE

Tawfiq Toubi
Member of Knesset
(Israeli Parliament)

(The first part of this article, dealing with the aggressive expansionist policies of the Israeli Government, appeared in the February issue of Labour Monthly.)

THE annexationist plans of the Israeli ruling circles, as well as the calculations of the grand imperialist circles, do not accord with the realities of life itself.

One important factor has undermined these calculations—the basic relations of forces in the world are not to the advantage of imperialism and its allies, but to the advantage of the forces of socialism and national liberation. True, the June war has caused serious harm and damage to the interests of peace in the region, has inflicted great sacrifices upon the people of Israel and created serious difficulties for the Arab peoples and for the anti-imperialist forces in the region, against whom the blow was aimed.

However, the main aim of the blow (to undermine the anti-imperialist regimes in the region and place pro-imperialist protégés in the UAR and Syria) was not achieved, thanks to the role played by the Soviet Union and other socialist states in giving support to the victims of imperialist scheming, and thanks to the strength of the anti-imperialist popular mass movement in the Arab countries. Things then started to take a different direction of development not to the liking of the US imperialists nor the militarists of Israel, nor internal Arab reaction, who did not abandon their schemes to institute collaborating and obedient regimes in the Arab countries.

On June 7, 1968, the official *Davar* wrote:

Every day that passes while Israel sits on the Suez, on the Jordan and over Damascus, shortens by two days the length of life of these regimes. . . . At least concerning Nasser and the 'Ba'ath', it is better for Israel if they go.

Internal reaction in all the Arab countries is exploiting, together with imperialism, the pressure and difficulties created by the Israeli occupation of territories in Egypt, Jordan and Syria; the military actions undertaken now and then are calculated also to undermine their prestige and positions, particularly of the present UAR Government. Nevertheless, the results of the bitter internal struggle within

the Arab countries themselves and on the Arab front as a whole show that the developments have been, notwithstanding serious difficulties and shortcomings, to the detriment of the positions of US imperialism and its Middle East allies.

Indications coming from various sources show that the US rulers are re-examining their tactics and policy in the region, not out of a change of heart or change of aims in the region, but as a result of the losses suffered and the danger of further losses to US interests if the present line of bullying the Arab countries through open Israeli aggression is continued. The continuing of the present situation, while weakening in the last resort the friends of the US imperialists in the Arab region, is at the same time strengthening the ties of the Arab countries with the Soviet Union, to the benefit of the cause of peace, the peoples' independence and social progress in the area. This is common knowledge now.

The recent study-visit of Nixon's special envoy, W. Scranton, to the Middle East countries was marked by his call for a 'more balanced' US policy in the region; and the announcement by the new US Ambassador to the UN, Charles Yost, that it is time the big powers worked for an agreed settlement of the Middle East crisis, caused serious concern in Israeli official circles.

News about contacts between the USSR and the USA and other big powers (Britain and France) in an effort to work for an agreed settlement of the Middle East crisis, based on the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution, have drawn angry and nervous comments from Israeli official circles.

Calling such settlements 'enforced settlements' . . . 'enforced from outside', Israeli leaders have declared their determination to oppose them.

Warning against such international efforts, *Davar* (December 24, 1968), the semi-official Israeli paper, wrote:

In Jerusalem it is pointed out that since the end of the war three efforts were made for a Soviet-American agreement and the three efforts created dangerous situations for the future of Israel's policy. . . .

While US policy in the Middle East is under strong pressure, due to various factors including the experience of failure, to steer away from the course of fully backing the official Israeli policy of force and occupation and thus allow a peaceful settlement of the present crisis, it is still manoeuvring to exploit to the maximum continued Israeli occupation of Arab territory. Moreover, American imperialist scheming in the Middle East continues to give support to the Israeli militarists, and the 'Phantom' deal indicates this. Never-

theless, the very thought by the Israeli militarists that they may face a situation which will force them to retreat from the occupied territories and accept a settlement by peaceful means in accordance with the Security Council resolution, as a result of joint international efforts, drives them to over-strained positions and even to actions very dangerous to the peace of the region and the world.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aba Eban, when receiving envoy Scranton, tried, as reported in the Israeli press, to pin US attention to the dangers of 'Soviet intervention' in the affairs of the region, explaining 'the necessity of continued US assistance to Israel in order to maintain military balance, and the importance of deterring the USSR from interfering in the Arab-Israeli conflict, all this of course being in the vital interests of the USA.'

M. Dayan repeated such 'advice' to the US during his visit there last month. He declared in a public speech that:

The key for the renewal of war is in the hands of the USSR, while in the hands of the USA is the key for preventing the renewal of war. This the USA can do in two ways: by supplying us with weapons which we cannot produce, and by influencing the Soviets not to interfere in the region. If these two elements are given, it would be possible to prevent war and lay the foundations of peace. (*Ha'aretz*, December 15, 1968.)

So M. Dayan sees two elements for 'maintaining peace' in the area: continued American support to the Israeli policy of strength, and the USA raising its club in the face of the USSR to enable the Israeli ruling circles to advance their own expansionist designs and thus best serve the interests of US imperialism. M. Dayan does not hesitate to say openly on the same occasion, whetting the appetite of the US imperialists:

It is to be regretted that the USA has no good relations with the Arab countries at a time when the Soviets are increasing their influence in some of these countries. . . . I hope that a way will be found to increase US influence in the region. . . . The USA has good relations with Saudi Arabia and I would like to see American influence increase in Egypt, Iraq and Syria. . . . (*Ha'aretz*, December 15, 1968.)

The ruling circles of Israel leave no doubt as to the preference they give to renewal of war and their reluctance to renounce their new conquests.

Many in Israel and abroad interpreted the recent increasing 'punitive' military actions against Lebanon, Jordan and the UAR as closely connected with the Israeli militarists' attempts to undermine efforts for a settlement by peaceful means. It is a fact that the Israeli militarists bring down blows on military and civilian targets, particularly in those Arab states (UAR, Jordan and Lebanon)

which expressed their acceptance of the Security Council resolution of November 1967 and show readiness for a settlement to the present crisis by peaceful means.

Such adventurous actions, while sabotaging sane efforts for a peaceful settlement, pave the way for a new conflagration.

Thus, while possibilities for a peaceful settlement do exist and widen with the growing feeling of world public opinion that it is necessary to put out the focus of world war conflagration in our region, the continuation of the present occupation, coupled with the US-backed adventurous policy of the ruling circles of our country, increases the danger of a new war to the detriment of the people of Israel and the Arab countries, and of world peace.

More and more people in our country are becoming aware of the correct warning of the Communist Party of Israel concerning the dangers emanating from the pro-imperialist and expansionist policy of the ruling circles of Israel. More people are becoming conscious of the dangers involved in the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories and of the necessity of accepting and implementing the UN Security Council resolution as the only way out.

P. Lavon, the ex-Security Minister, a previous Mapai leader and General Secretary of the Histadrut (purged by Ben-Gurion), called recently for a one-sided Israeli withdrawal from most of the occupied territories 'before it is too late'. In an interview with *Davar* (December 20, 1968), P. Lavon made a mockery of the official formula that a peace settlement should be achieved only by 'direct negotiations and a signed peace contract' and said:

Now it is possible to say that this formula has become a curtain behind which all kinds of annexationists take cover and with the help of which they try to shut the mouths of everyone who does not accept their will.

Such voices as those of the religious Professor Leibovitz and Professor Arieli, both of the Hebrew University, warning against the continuation of the policy of occupation, are being heard more often.

Both professors addressed a students' gathering in Jerusalem, organised by the Students' Committee for Security Through Peace. Professor Leibovitz said:

Every danger emanating from evacuating the occupied territories is not equal to the total destruction that will befall Israeli society as a result of holding on to one and a half million Arabs under the rule of occupation against their will. Logical development will turn us into a secret-police state. Its slogan will be 'the best people to the secret-police in the united Eretz Israel' (Land of Israel, i.e. Palestine). Such a state would become detached from the Jewish people and would have no Jewish content and

would in the best conditions become a state like Rhodesia . . . (*Al-Hamishmar*, December 23, 1968).

Professor Arieli added:

We shall become a state like Rhodesia but with the disadvantage that we shall not have the hinterland of South Africa which Rhodesia possesses . . . (*Al-Hamishmar*, December 23, 1968).

The growing international isolation of Israel as a result of the adventurist policy, the growing absence of security as a result of the deepening crisis, the increasing losses and sacrifices in men and resources, the heavier economic burden upon the masses, and the accumulating dangers in consequence of the continued policy of occupation, are increasing the voices of realism even within the governing parties.

It is not a secret in Israel that the latest military raid against the airport of Beirut was opposed by a number of ministers, and it was with Eshkol voting in favour of the action that it was carried out.

The Communist Party of Israel, having at heart the cause of peace, Israel's real national interests which lie in co-operation and understanding with the Arab countries, and the interests of all the peoples of our region, Arabs and Jews, is tirelessly mobilising all possible forces in the country in favour of a peaceful way out of the present impasse. Notwithstanding the repressive measures, chauvinist incitement and terror against its members, the Communist Party of Israel holds up the banner of peace between Israel and the Arab countries, and fights relentlessly to free Israel from the suicidal, pro-imperialist, aggressive policy of its rulers.

In the parliamentary debate that took place in the Knesset on December 31, 1968, following upon the raid on Beirut airport, Member of the Knesset Meir Vilner, Secretary of the Politbureau of the Communist Party of Israel, while condemning the attack on the Israeli El-Al plane in Athens airport, denounced the official Israeli policy as responsible for this continued bloodshed in the region and strongly condemned the Beirut raid. He stated:

The latest development in the international arena, in spite of all difficulties, creates in our opinion new possibilities for a political solution to the crisis, for the prevention of a new war, for the turning of a new page in Israeli-Arab relations. We have to integrate ourselves into this development, to contribute our share to a peace settlement, to the prevention of a new conflagration, thereby paving the way for a stable and permanent peace in our region. Much as you wish to wriggle out of it, there is no other solution but the implementation of the Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967. There is no positive alternative to this solution. And this resolution takes into account the just and lawful interests of Israel and the Arab peoples alike.