

Palestine Clashes Threaten Open War

By AL FINDLEY

The fratricidal war in Palestine continues to increase in intensity and to reap a harvest of dead and wounded, plus the disruption of the economy of both peoples. The main responsibility for the bloodshed lies in the UN plan that acts as an incentive to bloodshed. The UN recommended the establishment of two independent states and provided for a dangerous transition period under the British, to be followed by an interim period under the UN. Such an arrangement is an open invitation to violence. The Mufti and the Arab League gladly welcomed this invitation and acted upon it. They have the not unreasonable hope that the plan can be upset and the precarious imperialist balance in favor of partition won over to their point of view by "action" and by oil.

The military policy of the Mufti bands has been a non-discriminatory one. All Jews have been declared legitimate targets, whether armed or not. No distinction is made between civilians or armed groups and little attempt is made to spare women and children. This criminal policy is deliberate on the part of the Mufti. He wants to start an all-out war of ALL Arabs against ALL Jews. How better do this than by provoking retaliatory attacks on innocent Arabs. He hopes thus to consolidate the anti-war Arabs behind his war program.

The British are continuing to aggra-

vate the situation in Palestine. At best their policy is one of "benevolent neutrality to the Mufti bands." They continue their policy of not defending any attacked group, whether Jews or Arabs; the disarming of the Haganah and the official sale of limited quantities of arms to the countries of the Arab League. Black market sale of arms by English police is reaching scandalous proportions without any interference by the authorities. The only condemnatory statement issued by the British was in relation to the blowing up of a hotel by the Haganah.

Many reports tend to indicate that the British Foreign Office is more than benevolently neutral to the Mufti. The suspicious activity of Brig. Gen. Clayton in the Arab capitals underlies the British guilt. Gen. Clayton aspires to the role of "Lawrence of the Desert" and is attempting to unite the Arab rulers in a struggle against partition.

Stalinist Russia too is doing its share in stirring up trouble. We reported that the nationalized armaments industry of their Czech puppets was selling unlimited arms to the Arab League. More than ten days passed before this report was denied, but the denial denied nothing. All it said was that Skoda was not selling to Syria. No mention was made of the other countries of the

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Arab League. The reader can draw his own conclusions.

However, it would be an oversimplification to blame all of the trouble on outside forces. The British are doing their share, as are the Russians. But the main source is the nationalism of the Arabs and Jews, which is being diverted and exploited by the Mufti and the Zionists. The fate of the progressive and labor forces among the Arabs depends on minimizing the chauvinistic elements and achieving some unity with Jewish labor. Above all, both sides must realize that the best way to achieve a re-unification of the country is not by terror but by the voluntary union of the two sovereign peoples.

In the past LABOR ACTION reported that the danger of official war was remote because of the conflicting ambitions of different Arab rulers. This danger can no longer be completely ruled out. S. Itzhaki reports that the Mufti and King Abdulla have reached an agreement whereby the Mufti is to become Premier and ruler of Palestine, while Abdulla is to be declared King. This report stated that the Mufti would moderate his position and under Abdulla's pro-British influence accept the Morrison-Grady Plan to continue

British rule in Palestine and give limited rights to the Jews.

The Jewish Agency is demanding arms for defensive purposes and at the same time is demanding a UN army. The Philippine delegate has drawn up a motion requesting the Security Council of the UN to provide an army. But how? A Big Five army is opposed by the United States, because it doesn't want the Russians to obtain even a small foothold on the Eastern Mediterranean. A small power army would not have the same prestige and would therefore have to be much larger. In addition, Britain, China, Argentina and Colombia, which abstained from supporting partition, and Syria, which voted against partition, form a sizable bloc on the Security Council, which may defeat any such move, even if Britain and China do not use their veto power, or if Russia does not insist on a Big Five force.

At the closed session of the UN partition Committee, the British gave their plan for evacuating Palestine, told the Committee to stay at Lake Success, refused to say whether or not they will abide by the February 1 deadline of turning over a port for large-scale immigration. In addition, the British are reported to have requested "special economic status" in the two new states on the ground that they helped to lay the founda-

tion for the independence of the two states!

All the above schemes for international policing will not bring peace to Palestine in the near future. No plan can totally eliminate all bloodshed. The best that can be done is to reduce the toll. To do this the incentive to violence must be removed. The most effective way to minimize the casualties is for an immediate declaration of independence by Arabs and Jews. The longer the transitional period, the greater the number of casualties. The shorter the interim period, the less the casualties. Immediate independence will reduce violence to its minimum. Faced with established states, violence will taper off to zero as the states are consolidated.

In addition to demanding immediate independence, every effort must be made to arrange a "cease fire" order for both sides in Palestine. The Mufti bands must be isolated among the Arabs. The Arabs opposed to war with the Jews can and should be mobilized. All acts that play into the hands of the Mufti must be carefully avoided. This means a return by the Hagana to its original defensive policy. The policy of "terror" of the Ir-gun and Stern groups, who shoot at any Arab target, (just as the Mufti shoots at any Jewish target) is entirely wrong.