

CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*Which
Way
Israel?*

By A. B. MAGIL

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Exploding headlines tell of border fighting between Israel and Egypt, between Israel and Syria. Headlines snarl charges and counter-charges between Jerusalem, Cairo, Damascus. Headlines shriek about Czechoslovak arms shipments to Egypt, about a Soviet "threat" to the Middle East.

What's it all about?

The news out of the Middle East in recent months has filled with alarm millions of Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish, who are deeply concerned about the dangers that beset the young state of Israel. They see in Israel a tiny beleaguered country which only a few years ago won its independence in a stubborn heroic struggle. It seems as if the land in which so many survivors of the Nazi gas-ovens found refuge is constantly being pushed to the brink of new annihilation.

Democratic Americans have a big stake in Israel's welfare. Our support helped forge victory in the liberation struggle of 1948-49 when powerful forces in Wall Street and Washington sought to betray it. Many of us have contributed dollars and pennies in the hope of advancing the development and national independence of Israel. The American people also have a vital stake in the well-being and peace of all the nations in the Middle East.

When I was in Israel in 1948, people used to say, speaking of the difficulties of life in that country and the barrenness of the soil: "When Moses was leading the children of Israel out of the wilderness, why did he have to stop here? Why couldn't he have gone a little farther—say, to California?"

Israel's misfortune lies, however, not in the fact that Moses—who was fated to gaze at the Promised Land only from afar—stopped there, but that many centuries later the oil trusts—including those from California—did. The poverty-stricken lands of the Middle East, the area in which Israel is located, are rich in oil. In fact, the Middle East is the world's greatest oil gusher. Three-quarters of the known oil reserves of the capitalist world are there, or more than

twice as much as in the United States, Canada, Britain, France and Italy combined.

And all of it is controlled by American, British, Dutch and French corporations, with the lion's share in the hands of the Americans—Standard Oil of New Jersey, Standard Oil of California, Socony Vacuum, Texas Company, Gulf Oil, and the American Independent Oil Co.

Until recently it had been thought that Israel's soil was indeed barren as far as oil was concerned. But on September 22, 1955, oil in substantial amounts and of excellent quality was struck at Heletz in the Negev region, nine miles from the Egyptian-controlled Gaza strip. This produced quite a boom on the New York Stock Exchange in the stocks of the oil companies operating in Israel—U.S.-dominated companies of course.

The oil of the Middle East could be a blessing for the peoples of that area were it used to promote their well-being instead of the profits of Wall Street and London investors. Under present conditions the politics of oil, joined with the politics of cold war and preparations for hot war, is the curse of Israel, as of the Arab states and non-Arab Iran, Turkey and Pakistan.

Oil was chiefly responsible for net profits of \$413,000,000 in 1954 for American corporations from their Middle East investments. But in addition to these economic attractions, the Middle East has great strategic importance. It is the land bridge between Europe, Asia and Africa. It controls communications by land, sea and air that bind the world together. It embraces the Suez Canal and the Eastern Mediterranean. And it borders directly on the southern flank of the Soviet Union.

Clearly, whatever happens in the Middle East, there's more than meets the eye. To understand the Israel-Arab conflict or the meaning of the Czechoslovak arms shipment or the demonstrations in Jordan against the Baghdad Pact, we have to look behind the headlines.

And we also have to make a distinction between peoples and governments. Especially must we make a distinction between the American people and the Cadillac Cabinet that is our government.

The problems involved in the Israel-Arab conflict are complex and there aren't any easy answers. But if we take as our starting-point what's really good for Israel, even though our government may be against it and Israel's government may be against it, we will begin to find an approach to the constructive solution of these

problems. To do this, the specific Arab-Israel developments must be seen in relation to the larger struggles that are shaping the Middle East and the world.

Today the Middle East is an arena of fierce conflict between the American and British oil trusts and their governments for domination of this fabulously profitable and strategically vital region. Since World War II the U.S. has been steadily pushing the British back, replacing Britain as the dominant power in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel, and even invading such formerly exclusive London domains as Iraq and Jordan.

However, Washington and London are not only rivals but partners in the Middle East, as elsewhere—partners in keeping the Middle East safe for exploitation by the oil trusts, partners in suppressing the peoples of the Middle East and their movements for democracy and freedom. Above all, partners in pursuing aggressive cold-war and hot-war objectives. Ever since the end of the Palestine fighting in 1949, the American and British governments have been straining all efforts to convert the Middle East into a gigantic military base and to dragoon the Arab states and Israel, as well as Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, into a "little NATO."

We are told that all this is for "defense" against "Soviet aggression." One of the best answers to that is contained in a remarkable map of the Middle East and Northern Africa published in the *New York Times* of October 16, 1955. Also shown on the map are the southern part of the Soviet Union as far east as the Afghanistan border, and Europe south of a line that passes through Germany and Poland. What is remarkable about the map are the U.S., British and Soviet bases marked on it.

From the map we learn that there are in the countries of the Middle East eight U.S. and British bases. Of these, five are in Turkey and Iraq, members of the Washington-sponsored "northern tier" alliance—nucleus of a Middle East "little NATO"; one is in Cyprus, colony of another "northern tier" member, Britain. In addition, nearby are the British bases in Malta and Crete and seven other U.S. and British bases in North Africa. Three of the latter are in Libya, next door to Egypt, and all are within easy striking distance of Russia. This is not to mention the numerous U.S. bases in Spain, Britain, France, West Germany, etc., all of which are far closer to the Soviet Union and its allies than they are to the United States.

What about the Soviet bases? The map shows *not a single one outside the territory of the Soviet Union*. Not one in the Middle

East, not one in the countries of people's democracy which our big business press calls "satellites." In fact, in the whole vast stretch of Soviet territory shown on the map (not the whole of the U.S.S.R. by any means, but a sizeable chunk of it), there are only two bases. These are on the northern shore of the Black Sea, where the Soviet ports of Odessa and Sevastopol are located. In other words, not a single Russian base is located on territory that borders any of the Middle Eastern countries.

For that matter, a map of foreign investments in the Middle East would show pretty much the same thing. Dollars and pounds by the ton are being pumped out of the Middle Eastern countries, but there isn't a single Russian ruble invested in or extracted from any of them.

WHO THREATENS WHOM?

Who then threatens whom in the Middle East? And who is stirring up war and who is seeking peace?

The answers are basic for understanding the Israel-Arab conflict. They are no less basic for determining where Israel's true interests lie and how its security may be safeguarded.

The fact is that it is not the exchange of Egyptian cotton and rice for Czechoslovak arms that has sharpened tensions in the Middle East, but Washington's and London's cold-war policy and their action—in the midst of the Geneva four-power negotiations—in pointing a gun at the Soviet Union by means of the "northern tier" military alliance of Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan and Iran, the so-called Baghdad Pact.

Suppose Russia sponsored a military alliance of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. And suppose Czechoslovakia also joined this military alliance. And suppose that Soviet and Czech bases were established in several of these countries. Then what? Would the United States be expected to pretend that this was simply a game of charades and do nothing? Clearly the Soviet Union and its allies do not intend sitting on their hands while Dulles builds a time-bomb at the Soviet border.

But it is not only against the Soviet Union that the reactionary U.S.-British policy is directed. It is also directed against Israel. It is designed to suppress the efforts of all the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa to throw the foreign profiteers off their backs, to achieve full national independence, to cease being used in impe-

rialist-generated cold-war alarms and hot-war tempests. And the old imperialist tactic of divide and rule has been employed time after time, with disastrous effects on the national liberation struggles of the Middle Eastern peoples.

The Israel-Arab conflict does not stem from any "natural" hatred of Jews and Arabs for each other. It is in fact a product of foreign imperialism. Before the British took over Palestine after World War I, Jews had lived there as well as in other Middle Eastern countries for centuries without serious friction with their Arab neighbors.

It was the British imperialists who "invented" the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine during the twenties and thirties. It was the British imperialists who instigated, armed and financed the war of the Arab states against Israel in 1948-49. And today it is the American and British imperialists who keep the pot of hatred boiling, inciting both sides against each other in order to weaken and impose their will on both.

Who is responsible for the arms race in the Middle East? It was Washington which, in August, 1949, pressured the United Nations Security Council into lifting its embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East. This touched off the arms race between Israel and the Arab states.

In 1950 the U.S., Britain and France issued a joint declaration under which they began to control and limit the flow of arms to both sides. What this meant was that arms were converted into a lever for *exacting economic and political concessions from both Arabs and Israelis*. Washington, London and Paris sold arms to both sides and withheld arms from both sides in pursuance of their reactionary war-inciting objectives. And the controls imposed by the western powers, instead of ending the arms race, had the opposite effect, with Israel and the Arab states "straining their economies to buy arms wherever they could." (Dana Adams Schmidt, *New York Times*, October 2, 1955.)

One thing is clear: neither Czechoslovakia nor Russia nor any other socialist country had anything to do with starting or stimulating this arms race.

And who decided that the time had come for Egypt to get a large supply of arms? Dana Adams Schmidt reported in the *Times* of October 15:

"Going back to the origins of the current Middle Eastern crisis, the diplomats disclosed that the arms the United States had agreed in principle to sell Egypt last June [1955] were valued at \$27,000,-

000. Since the U.S. had sold only about \$1,000,000 worth of arms each to Israel and to Egypt since 1952, the size of the order astonished some United States officials."

But there were strings attached to this "agreement in principle." The Eisenhower Administration demanded cash. This was, however, merely a mask for something else. As far back as August 11, 1953, a Cairo dispatch to the *New York Times* reported:

"But with no domestic armaments industry, with British deliveries halted and with United States aid unavailable *so long as the Egyptian government is unwilling to enter into formal defense arrangements with the West*, this country [Egypt] is on the verge of equipping its growing forces with arms from the other side of the Iron Curtain." (My emphasis—A.B.M.)

Egypt actually waited two years before turning to Czechoslovakia. There it obtained not only arms (minus strings), but a market for its most important export, cotton. Washington had tried to bribe Egypt into abandoning its neutralist course and joining an aggressive war bloc. The bribe turned into a boomerang.

Suppose Egypt had turned, instead, to Switzerland or Sweden. Would this have rated more than a few lines in the press? Would Dulles and Eden have stormed and fumed? Would the leaders of Israel's government have denounced Switzerland or Sweden, as they have Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union? Would American Zionist leaders have hired even a two-by-four hall for a protest meeting, let alone Madison Square Garden where on November 16 they organized a cold-war vendetta in the name of "defense" of Israel?

The fact is that both the United States and Britain have been supplying arms, respectively, to Iraq and Egypt, while denying them to Israel, and no hullabaloo has been raised here or in Israel. And remember, Iraq is the most anti-Israel of all the Arab states—the only one that has refused to sign an armistice with Israel.

Wrote Robert S. Allen in his syndicated Washington column (*N. Y. Post*, Jan. 23, 1956): "The Arabs have gotten more British tanks and other fighting equipment in the last few months than from Communist Czechoslovakia."

To top this off, came the revelation, on February 16, that while the State Department was banning arms to Israel on the hypocritical pretext that it wished to avoid intensifying the arms race, it was secretly about to ship 18 tanks to Saudi Arabia.

After a temporary halt because of protest a green light was given for the tank shipment.

Clearly, arms to Egypt is not the issue. It is the *source* of the arms that has caused certain people in Washington, New York, London, Paris and Jerusalem to cry havoc. What bothers them is that the Western imperialist arms monopoly in the Middle East has been broken, that the U. S.-British political stranglehold is being loosened, that the socialist policy of peace and support of all peoples fighting for national liberation is in danger of converting "little NATO" into a "paper tiger."

And what also bothers the imperialists and their satellites is that certain Arab states, especially Egypt, are refusing to be vassals of the cold warriors, refusing to sell their sovereignty for a mess of U. S. planes and tanks. As Dana Adams Schmidt reported in the *New York Times* of October 2, 1955, Washington officials "consider the arms contracts with the Communists annoying and potentially dangerous *affirmations of Egyptian independence and neutralist inclination.*" (My emphasis—A.B.M.)

ROLE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT

Israel's birth was made possible by a small respite in the cold war. On November 29, 1947, both the United States and the Soviet Union voted in favor of the United Nations resolution which provided for the creation in Palestine of two independent democratic states, one Jewish and the other Arab. The weight of the agreement of the two principal world powers produced the necessary two-thirds majority.

However, Washington's favorable vote had come after much backing and filling. It was followed by strenuous efforts to sabotage the UN resolution and prevent Palestine Jewry from implementing their part of it. Testimony to Washington's true role has come from an authoritative source: Jorge García-Granados, Guatemalan representative to the UN and member of the UN Special Committee on Palestine. In his book, *The Birth of Israel*, García-Granados described the frantic but unsuccessful efforts of Washington officials to nullify the UN resolution and place Palestine under a UN trusteeship.

According to García-Granados: "In a number of private talks at Lake Success, New York, and Washington, representatives of the United States State Department exerted the strongest possible pressure on Jewish leaders in an effort to persuade them not to proclaim a state."

In other words, the Truman Administration was bowing to the wishes of the U.S. oil trusts and the Pentagon, which had their own fish to fry in Middle Eastern fires.

While Britain was actively aiding the aggressors and Washington sought to hamstring their victim, who was it that came to Israel's aid?

It was socialist Russia, whose initiative had made possible the passage of the original UN resolution, together with its allies. They stood firmly by Israel's side and insisted that the UN back up its decision.

And it was Czechoslovakia—the same Czechoslovakia which today is being vilified by the big money press and radio—that came to Israel's rescue by providing the weapons of victory.

Arms from Czechoslovakia were a major factor in Israel's triumph. I was there at the time and know what a difference those arms made. The conflict of imperialist interests between the United States and Britain was another factor. But what proved decisive was the great political, moral and military aid of the socialist countries to Israel's gallant struggle, plus the force of American public opinion, particularly effective in an election year.

Though Israel won its liberation war against British imperialism and its Arab mercenaries, today Wall Street and Washington are the real rulers of that country.

Direct private United States investments in Israel leaped from \$2,000,000 in 1948 to \$63,000,000 in 1954—a 31-fold increase in six years! *Israel Digest*, published by the Israel Office of Information in New York, boasts (January 7, 1955) that "except for a number of highly industrialized countries and areas rich in natural resources, Israel is among the world's leading centers of attraction for new United States private investment capital."

Israel's new-born oil industry is Israeli in name only. Of eight oil companies that hold concessions covering one-half of Israel's territory, seven are U.S.-controlled and the eighth is Canadian.

The Israel government has gone out of its way to offer special inducements to foreign investors and has accorded them tax exemption and other privileges that give them advantages over Israeli capitalists. All this is being justified on the ground that it is necessary for Israel's development. However, what is chiefly being developed are fat profits that are funneled out of the country, low living standards for the people of Israel and a lopsided economy dominated by American big business.

Besides direct investments, hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. government credits and grants have been given under conditions which make Washington the real boss of the Israel economy. Additional hundreds of millions, raised through the sale of Israel bonds and through voluntary contributions, could be of great help in developing the country's economic life were it not for the fact that these funds are controlled by the same U.S. big business interests that have investments in Israel and use this "aid" to impose submission to Washington.

Israel has thus become a province in Wall Street's Middle East economic empire. And the dollars from America, instead of putting Israel on its feet, have put it on its knees. This is true politically as well as economically.

What Wall Street and Washington want of Israel—besides fat profits—is no mystery. Said Rep. Joseph Martin, Jr., House GOP leader, in a statement in 1951 on a bill to grant Israel \$150,000,000:

"The young army of Israel, with more than 200,000 men and women, is one of the strongest forces for the survival of freedom in the Near East. By word and deed the young state of Israel has demonstrated its willingness to stand firmly and resolutely against the forces of tyranny and despotism. It can be an outpost of American strength and influence in the Middle East."

Unfortunately, the government of Israel, instead of striving for real independence, has become largely an instrument of our State Department. It was only with the greatest reluctance and under massive pressure from their own people and the peoples of the world that the Palestine Zionist leaders took up the independence struggle in 1947-1948. But for them this merely meant switching masters, and they lost no time in transferring their allegiance from London to Washington.

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union and its allies had been Israel's staunchest friends in the liberation war, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and Foreign Minister Sharett adopted Washington's cold-war line.

At the moment when new winds of neutralism and independence were beginning to blow in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Sharett in a speech to the Knesset (parliament) on November 4, 1951, dropped the last shreds of pretended neutrality in the East-West conflict and openly made a bid for inclusion in a Middle East war alliance, a "little NATO."

As part of its subservience to Washington the Israel delegation to the United Nations has repeatedly backed the colonial powers

against their rebellious peoples. Whereas even such reactionary U.S. puppet regimes as that of Guatemala voted in the Fall, 1955, session of the UN General Assembly to place on the agenda the issues of Cyprus, Algeria and West New Guinea, the people of Israel had to endure the shame of seeing their own delegation—taking its cue from Washington—support the British, French and Dutch imperialists.

This policy has widened the gulf between Israel and the increasingly neutralist Arab states, all of whom, except Iraq, have refused to join the military alliance sponsored by Washington. This misguided policy has also had the effect of undermining Israel's security by isolating it from most of the nations of Asia, Africa and the Middle East—more than half the world's population. It was the very opposite policy, temporarily imposed on the leaders by popular pressure, that made possible Israel's birth and victorious independence struggle.

THE ARAB STATES

In launching their armed assault on Israel, the governments of the Arab states served, not Arab interests but British imperialist interests. Indirectly they also served American imperialist aims. Washington was quite ready to help boot Britain out of all or part of Palestine provided the door was left open for it to walk in and take over. This is exactly what happened.

What is often overlooked is that the war against Israel was directed not only at the independence struggle of the Jewish people of Palestine, but *at the national liberation movements of the Arab countries as well*. And while the Arab rulers failed in their effort to crush Israel, they succeeded in strangling in the womb the independent democratic Arab state that was to have been established in the rest of Palestine and economically joined to Israel. Instead, the Arab nation in that sector of Palestine, without being consulted, was annexed by Jordan. Which meant annexed by Britain, since the government of Jordan was created and financed and its Arab Legion subsidized by London.

What's more: by their war against Israel the Arab ruling classes shortcircuited the anti-imperialist national liberation movement in the other Arab countries. A case in point is Iraq. In January, 1948, tremendous protest demonstrations against a new military pact with Britain, which the Iraq Prime Minister had just signed, com-

pelled the Regent of that British semi-colony to repudiate the agreement and forced the Prime Minister to resign and flee for his life.

But the Palestine conflict was already brewing. Through chauvinist propaganda and incitement against Israel, London's stooges in Baghdad succeeded in pulling the teeth of the anti-British protest movement.

After the armistice agreements ended the war against Israel in 1949, the policy of the Arab governments toward the Western powers developed in two stages. In the first stage, the Arab regimes eagerly sought military and economic "aid" from foreign imperialism and supported the Washington-London cold-war objectives in the Middle East and throughout the world. Most of the Arab governments indicated their readiness to join, together with Turkey and Iran, a so-called Middle East defense pact or "little NATO," directed at the Soviet Union and at the anti-imperialist strivings of the masses of the Middle Eastern countries.

The Arab regimes placed one major condition on their joining a "little NATO"—that Israel be excluded.

Strange as it may seem, the government of Israel, newly liberated with the help of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, pursued a policy parallel to that of its deadliest enemies. In fact, Israel and the Arab states vied with each other for Washington's favors, each side insisting that it could provide better guarantees for the "free world" against "Communist subversion" and "Soviet aggression."

However, on the rock of the implacable enmity of the Arab governments toward Israel the plan for an all-inclusive Middle East "defense" pact foundered.

When the Eisenhower Administration took office, Secretary of State Dulles began an ardent courtship of the Arab governments, dangling before them such glamorous hardware as planes, tanks and guns. He proposed moving toward a "little NATO" in piecemeal fashion by means of a series of bilateral treaties.

In this way he linked up at the Soviet border Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Britain and Iran. The idea was that the other Arab countries would soon find this armed-to-the-teeth fraternal order irresistible and would join up.

But Dulles made a slight miscalculation: he failed to take into account the great social tides that were sweeping Asia and Africa. The policy of the Arab governments had in various ways and to varying degrees entered a second stage. The Arab countries had become part of that great movement of colonial, semi-colonial and

ex-colonial peoples toward freedom and the determination of their own destiny. Both inside and outside the UN, this is a movement away from subservience to imperialism and toward greater independence in relations with the Western powers; away from identification with war policies and war blocs and toward neutralism and peace.

Among the Arab governments this trend is most pronounced in Egypt and Syria, especially the former. In Egypt, which has compelled the British to end in 1956 their 74-year military occupation of the Suez Canal zone, the trend is intimately linked with internal developments: the mass anti-British demonstrations in January 1952; the guerrilla warfare against the British occupation forces in the Suez Canal zone; and the officers' revolt in July 1952, which ousted King Farouk, abolished the monarchy, initiated limited agrarian reform, undertook a program of economic development and began to further trade relations with the socialist countries.

A recent outstanding expression of this anti-imperialist and neutralist trend in the Arab countries were the great protest demonstrations in Jordan, beginning in December 1955, against the British effort to force that country into the Baghdad Pact. These demonstrations, which were also directed at the United States and Turkey, were all the more significant in view of the fact that they occurred in one of the most backward of the Arab countries and the one that previously had been most completely controlled by Western imperialism.

The historic Bandung conference of 29 Asian and African nations in April 1955 marked a new high expression of unity in this vast movement of more than half the world's population toward national freedom and peace. And Bandung helped cement new close ties between the Arab states and such great Asian powers as the Chinese People's Republic, India, Indonesia and Burma.

These positive developments in the external relations of most of the Arab states are organically linked with the internal democratic struggle against a semi-feudal economic setup, a struggle which reflects the growth of capitalism and an industrial working class. However, at this stage the political leadership of the struggle is of a contradictory type, with capitalist elements interwoven with reactionary semi-feudal influences. Nevertheless, under pressure of the mass movement and of international developments, the positive trends more and more hold sway.

The decisive test of a colonial liberation movement or a govern-

ment of a semi-colonial country is: what course is it pursuing in relation to foreign imperialism and its oppressive, war-instigating policies? With this as the touchstone we find that history chooses varied and at times "illogical" instruments to achieve progressive social change. In Iran the nationalization of the British-owned oil industry was carried through under the leadership of a wealthy landowner, Mossadegh. In Morocco the symbol of the struggle against French colonial rule is a sultan. In Egypt the liberation of the country from British occupation and the turn toward a policy of growing neutralism and independence from *all* imperialist domination is being carried through by a group of professional army officers headed by Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser. But in all three cases it is the masses and the rising class of industrial capitalists that provide the spur.

On the other hand, the reactionary war against Israel in 1948 was directed by a British government headed by men who called themselves "Socialists." And the Israeli government that today leans so heavily on U.S. imperialism is also led by men who call themselves "Socialists."

Since the Egyptian government is capitalist—as is the government of Israel—its policies are not consistent, and it is also subjected to pressure from pro-imperialist elements. There is no doubt, for example, that in the increasingly neutralist policy of most of the Arab governments there is a serious contradiction: their attitude toward Israel. Their refusal to make peace or enter into direct negotiations is a reactionary vestige of the past that is in conflict with the growing tendency toward neutralism and anti-imperialism. In the case of Egypt and Syria, this positive trend is undoubtedly now the main emphasis in international affairs.

Expanding economic and political relations with the socialist countries and the active presence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East can help resolve this contradiction and further peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT POLICY

One would think that the government of Israel would welcome the growing neutralism of the Arab states—that is, their resistance to imperialist pressures which caused them to make war against Israel in 1948 and to continue maintaining a posture of hostility. In this connection it is worth recalling that shortly after the present Egyptian regime took power, Ben-Gurion, speaking in the Knesset

on August 18, 1952, praised the new rulers and greeted their statement that they had opposed the invasion of Israel in 1948.

However, it seems that it was all a case of mistaken political identity. The Israeli premier thought that the new Egyptian government, which was anti-British, would play ball with Washington. Ben-Gurion and Washington were speedily disillusioned. Wrote Dana Adams Schmidt in a dispatch from Tel Aviv (*New York Times*, February 23, 1953): "Israeli officials are convinced that Egypt and the other Arab states still are wedded to neutralism between East and West and can be brought into the Western camp—if at all—only by a 'dynamic policy' on the part of the United States and the West in general."

It is as part of such a "dynamic policy"—a policy to *combat Egypt's and Syria's neutralism*—that Washington has secretly incited Israel against its neighbors, while seeking to prevent Israel from going beyond the point where the State Department could control the situation. It is this Eisenhower-Dulles "dynamic policy" that has intensified the danger to the peace of Israel and the whole Middle East.

Unfortunately, instruments of that policy have not been lacking within Israel itself. In fact, subservience to Washington has given free rein to advocacy of "preventive war" against that Arab state—Egypt—which has shown the greatest resistance to U.S. imperialism. This is all the more ominous in view of the fact that it is precisely the Egyptian government which in recent months softened its attitude toward Israel.

Wrote Kennett Love in a Cairo dispatch to the *New York Times* of October 9, 1955:

"Colonel Nasser [Egyptian premier] went so far this week as to make the statement . . . that the Arabs no longer want to destroy Israel. Earlier he showed an unorthodox lack of hostility by lifting boycott restrictions to permit a two-way exchange of assignments for the *New York Times* correspondents in Israel and Egypt. . . .

"Five weeks ago Colonel Nasser forbade the Army to strike back into Israel after the humiliating defeat at Khan Yunis."

The *Times* correspondent concludes: "These straws blown against the prevailing wind are indications that Colonel Nasser himself is unwilling to see a realization of the West's and Israel's fears."

The "preventive war" advocates in Israel are not limited to the fascist party, Herut, now Israel's second largest political party. These advocates may also be found among the leadership of the dominant Mapai (Right-wing labor Zionist party), the General

Zionists (party of big capitalists), Achdut Avoda ("Left" labor Zionist party) and other groups.

Ben-Gurion himself is, as C. L. Sulzberger put it (*Times*, Nov. 2, 1955), "an old extremist." On November 2, 1955, only a few hours after Ben-Gurion as premier-designate proposed peace talks with the Arab states, the Israel army launched in the El Auja demilitarized zone the bloodiest fighting since the liberation war—a strange way to further peace.

Soon Ben-Gurion struck again, this time against Syria on December 11. In that operation—ordered by the premier without consulting his cabinet—56 Syrians and six Israelis were killed. The attack on Syria evoked much criticism within Israel itself and caused the influential Tel Aviv daily, *Haaretz*, to ask whether it was not out of all proportion to the hostile Syrian action for which it was supposed to retaliate.

Americans who want Israel to live and grow and stand on its own feet cannot but look with alarm at tactics that have nothing to do with Israel's security and invite disaster. Such acts and "preventive war" talk are no less grist to the imperialist mill than similar acts and talk in some of the Arab states.

And the tragic consequences of the Israeli government's made-in-Washington foreign policy became evident when the attack on Syria came up for discussion in the UN Security Council. Israel proved to be completely isolated. For the third time in two years the Security Council unanimously condemned Israel for acts of aggression.

From all this, it becomes clear that, as the pro-Zionist, bitterly anti-Communist Philadelphia *Jewish Exponent* put it (October 7, 1955): "Nothing could more nauseatingly point up the hypocrisy of the Western nations than their caterwauling plea to the Soviets 'not to encourage an armament race between the Arab countries and Israel.' This, despite both England and America's obstinate refusal . . . to alter their policies of supplying munitions to the Arab states! Both Washington and London have been maddeningly guilty of fanning the fires of the cruel and punishing conflict that burns in the Middle East."

On the other hand, paradoxical as it may seem, Czechoslovak arms are in this case bearers of peace. The arms transaction with Egypt represents a move by the socialist countries to strengthen neutralism and counter the U.S.-British effort to build a military bloc that threatens peace—Israel's peace as well as Russia's.

A significant admission on this point has come from an unex-

pected source. The Tel Aviv Hebrew daily, *Haboker*, organ of the Right-wing General Zionist party, declared on September 30, 1955:

"Soviet diplomacy cannot ignore the fact that the Turkey-Iraq-Britain-Pakistan pact, which the U.S. will soon join, presents a serious danger to the peoples of the Soviet Union. The states adhering to the Baghdad pact and those which will join it at a later stage will receive arms from America. Why, then, is it wrong for the Soviet Union to send arms to Egypt, which is opposed to any military pact in whatever form? . . .

"As for Israel, Moscow intends no harm to it. The Soviet Union sends arms not to Israel's enemy but to the state which carries forward a struggle against the Baghdad pact, which is directed against the Soviet Union. If the present situation indirectly brings bad effects for Israel, Israel itself is responsible.

"Didn't Sharett declare in the Knesset on June 1 that he is trying to conclude a military pact with the United States? And he is doing this in spite of his clear commitments in his letter to Molotov." (This refers to the letter of July 6, 1953, in which Sharett pledged that "Israel will not be a member of any kind of union or agreement which pursues aggressive aims against the Soviet Union.")

For Egypt, the exchange of cotton and rice for Czechoslovak arms is part of its effort to expand trade relations with the socialist countries in order to buttress both national independence and a neutralist course in international affairs. Whose fault is it if Israel's government follows the opposite policy? Did not a spokesman for the Israel Embassy in Washington hasten to reject the idea of purchasing arms from the socialist bloc and insist that his government would continue to be completely dependent on the Western powers in this respect? And has not Israel's government, in its eagerness to please Washington, from the outset seriously restricted trade with the socialist countries to the detriment of the Israel economy?

A case in point is oil. Cut off from Middle Eastern oil, Israel's government has imported U.S.-controlled oil from Venezuela at a high price. Not till 1954 did it begin to purchase limited amounts from the Soviet Union in exchange for citrus fruit and bananas. The May 10, 1955, issue of *Davar*, influential Tel Aviv daily, estimated that Israel could have saved \$10,000,000 a year by purchasing Soviet oil from the outset. Whose fault is it if Israel's government—in deference to Washington—chose to squander this money? And why has a Soviet offer of technical assistance been gathering dust in the Israel Foreign Ministry for many months?

In Israel itself there is considerable support for a different for-

eign policy. In the elections to the Knesset in July, 1955, three left-wing parties—Achdut Avoda, Mapam and the Communist—whose platforms urged a change in the direction of neutralism and peace, received 20 percent of the vote. In national campaigns conducted by the Israeli peace movement a much higher proportion—nearly one-half the adult population—has signed petitions supporting peace and foreign policy proposals at variance with the government's course.

The internationally known Israeli Zionist leader, Yitzchak Greenbaum, Minister of the Interior in the first Israel government, in an article in the October 7, 1955 issue of *Letste Naies*, Tel Aviv Yiddish paper, criticized the Israel government's "abandonment of the path of neutrality toward East and West and its identification with the West." "Can anyone doubt," he asked, "that our loyalty to the United States brings us nothing but trouble?"

The editor of *Letste Naies*, M. Tsanin (who is also the Israel correspondent of one of the most rabidly anti-Communist and anti-Soviet papers in the United States, the *Jewish Daily Forward*), in a biting editorial in the November 21 issue, pointed out that Israel began life with the friendship of 33 countries and the Ben Gurion-Sharett leadership had succeeded in losing them all.

It is time for a new look at the Israel-Arab conflict. The old methods, the old approaches have been tried and found badly wanting. Both the Eisenhower-Dulles and the Eden policies, which are primarily responsible for the present situation, have proved bankrupt. It is time for all peace-minded Americans, whatever differences they may have on other questions, to get together on the common meeting ground of what's good for America and Israel.

Is more arms for Israel the answer? Is more arms for the Arab states the answer?

Israel, like every non-aggressor country, is entitled to arms for self-defense and to get them wherever it wishes. Secretary Dulles' carrot-and-club tactic of withholding arms from Israel is designed to put the squeeze on that country—just as earlier, the same tactic sought to put the squeeze on Egypt—in order to compel the Ben-Gurion regime to come across. This is confirmed by the well-informed Alsop brothers, who reported (*New York Herald-Tribune*, December 30) that when Sharett came to this country and pleaded with Dulles for \$50,000,000 of arms for Israel, the U.S. Secretary of State demanded territorial concessions of such a nature that Sharett, according to the Alsops, "furiously replied that apparently Dulles wanted to destroy Israel."

The British government has been even franker in its efforts to dismember Israel. In an interview in the N. Y. *Times* of November 26, 1955, Premier Ben-Gurion, commenting on proposals made earlier that month by Prime Minister Eden, charged that Britain wants the Negev area—more than half Israel's territory—to be given to Jordan. "He felt," wrote the *Times*, "that the motive was to find a large secure base for the British Middle East forces."

In the face of these imperialist proposals and pressures from both Washington and London, can Israel's security be safeguarded, as both the Israel government and American Zionist leaders insist, by a "security" pact with the United States? Would not such a pact deliver Israel even more completely into Washington's hands and involve it in a military alliance against the only great power that has no designs on its territory or anything else—the Soviet Union?

Even worse for Israel is the counsel of those in our country who urge for the Middle East a policy similar to what Senators McCarthy and Knowland advocate for the Far East: the stepping up of aggressive military alliances, a Big Stick against national liberation movements and the conversion of Israel into a second Formosa under U.S. military occupation. Rarely has this view been expressed more brazenly than in a letter in the *Times* of November 5, 1955, by Harry Torczyner, chairman of the Commission on Israel and the Middle East of the Zionist Organization of America.

The fact that this flagrantly anti-American, anti-Israel letter was not repudiated by Zionist leaders ought to arouse the concern of all who have the welfare of America and Israel at heart.

Torczyner admits that the Czechoslovak arms deliveries to Egypt "are not directed against Israel but, in the final analysis, against the Western grand alliance." This is precisely what infuriates him. He writes:

"This is the time for the direct presence of the United States in the area surrounding the Suez Canal. The harbors, the airfields, the roads, the factories, the wherewithal of an arsenal for democracy in the Middle East are available in Israel."

And Torczyner urges a U.S.-Israel military pact, not in the name of Israel's defense against the Arab states but of "defense" against "Soviet penetration" of the Middle East and Africa. What is actually meant is a pact against the capitalist-led national liberation movements.

Such a policy would make a shambles of the promise of Geneva and would lead our country as well as Israel to disaster.

Fortunately, there are more sober voices being raised even among those who have supported the cold war. Dr. Israel Goldstein, president of the American Jewish Congress, has urged a Big Four guarantee to Israel and the Arab states against "aggression from any source." (*Times*, November 3). The October 31, 1955, issue of *Congress Weekly*, organ of the American Jewish Congress, made a similar proposal.

Clearly, what is required is a *new approach* to the Israel-Arab conflict and the problems of the Middle East. The great need is for joint efforts by the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France to end the arms race in the Middle East and bring about direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, possibly under the sponsorship of the UN. This means action in the spirit of the Geneva heads of government conference.

Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the British Labor Party, has publicly demanded that the Soviet Union be asked to "join in discussions to safeguard peace between Israel and the Arab states." (N. Y. *Times*, Jan. 25, 1956.) Earlier, during the Geneva foreign ministers' conference, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov indicated his government's readiness to participate in four-power efforts at a settlement. The average American must be wondering: if the great powers can get together to condemn Israel for an act of aggression, as they did at the UN on January 19, why can't they get together to help end a situation which breeds aggression and threatens peace?

Yes, why do Dulles and Eden persist in refusing to join with the Soviet Union in such discussions? Is it because the oil trusts are against it? Is it because the cold-war generals are against it?

The failure of Israel's government to speak up for such discussions shows what a heavy price it pays for its one-sided, ruinous foreign policy. Here too a change would contribute greatly to Israel's security and peace. The greatest Jew of our time, that great American and world citizen, Albert Einstein, shortly before his death wrote words of wisdom that point the way out of Israel's dilemma. In a letter in January 1955 to Zvi Lurie, a leader of the Mapam party, he summed up his views on Israel's policy as follows:

"First: Neutrality regarding the East-West conflict. Through such a position we (Israel) will be able to contribute our modest portion to softening the antagonisms in the great world, and also to make easier the achievement of good neighborly relations with the Arab people and their governments."

He went on to urge as his second point "equal rights in every respect" for the Arab citizens of Israel.

This is a two-point program which every peace-minded, democratic American can endorse. But besides endorsing it we ought to insist that American big business and its Cadillac Cabinet end the pressure which has converted Israel into a U.S. satellite and a pawn in the cold war.

Along what lines can a settlement between Israel and the Arab states be achieved? The two most important issues in dispute are territorial boundaries and the Arab refugees. The Israel government has properly refused to make the drastic territorial concessions demanded of her by Washington and London. Whatever boundary revisions are finally worked out, they must not lead to the dismemberment of Israel.

In regard to the refugees, the Israel government is on less solid ground. Those refugees who formerly lived in the territory now constituting the state of Israel have a legal and moral right to return if they wish. The Israel government's discriminatory treatment of its Arab minority, its seizure of the property of refugees and its refusal to admit more than a token number jeopardizes Israel's security much more than any threat from an alleged "fifth column" among the refugees. However, not all the 900,000 refugees—assuming this figure to be accurate—formerly lived in the territory of Israel or are children of former residents. The actual number entitled to return if they wish is probably no more than half that figure.

Whether it would be practicable for all bona-fide refugees who wish to return to do so is not certain. Admittedly the refugee problem is a knotty one and there is no simple solution for the tragic plight of hundreds of thousands of homeless Arabs. The Ihud Association, founded by the late Dr. Judah L. Magnes, first president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has recently made constructive proposals for sending a UN commission to Israel and the refugee camps to draw up a plan for the return of those for whom this would be feasible. Any solution would also have to include resettlement of those who do not return and payment by Israel, with international aid, for property losses suffered by the refugees. Meanwhile, relief for the refugees, who are supported by UN funds, should be increased.

The precise details of the settlement of this and other questions would have to be worked out by both parties in the course of negotiations—negotiations, as a spokesman of the Israeli Embassy

in London put it (*N. Y. Times*, Jan. 21, 1956), "in a spirit of give and take, on the basis of compromise and mutually agreed concessions."

After the passage of so many years of bitter conflict it is clear that such negotiations—whether with or without UN sponsorship, with or without the direct participation of the great powers—cannot be achieved without the cooperation of those powers. And a settlement, to be lasting, requires measures to end the cold war in the Middle East, which has fed the Israel-Arab conflict. As the *New York Herald Tribune* pointed out (Jan. 31, 1956): "The Arab-Israeli conflict is simply the most critical of a number of clashes involving the position of the United States and Britain in the Middle East." The paper cited "riots in Jordan against pro-Western policies and in Cyprus against the British, smoldering discontent between Turkey and Greece, Saudi Arabia's dispute with Britain over the Buraimi Oasis."

The *Herald Tribune* failed to mention the greatest source of mischief: the U.S.-British cold war with its attendant armaments, military pacts and intrigues. The building of peaceful coexistence between Israel and the Arab states requires concrete measures toward abating the cold war and advancing peaceful coexistence between the capitalist and socialist systems.

Secretary Dulles has intimated that the Israel-Arab conflict ought to be kept out of domestic politics. But the American people have no interest in sweeping under the rug issues that vitally affect their peace and welfare. The Israel-Arab conflict is such an issue.

In the 1956 campaign, regardless of differences on other points, tens of millions should unite to demand an end of the Dulles-Eden squeeze on Israel. Let us insist that the Cadillac Cabinet release its grip on the economy and government of Israel. Let us join with Senator Herbert Lehman in urging a large-scale program of economic aid for both Israel and the Arab states—adding that this program must be without economic, political, military or territorial strings attached.

Above all, it is time to make it plain to the Eisenhower Administration that our own national interests urgently require an approach to the Middle East, not along the lines of a "little NATO," but of a "little Geneva."

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