

Letters from Abroad

WHO ENDANGERS ISRAEL'S SECURITY?

By Esther Vilenska

At the beginning of June the Israeli press carried a United Press story which stated: "While the organizers of America's defense plans view the South American countries and other parts of the world as providers of raw materials and as areas for military bases, they consider that so far as the Near East is concerned, it will be impossible to prevent certain parts of it from becoming a battlefield, if war should break out."

The able writers for the men of Washington thereby confess that the Near East is important not only as a road through which the imperialists' aggressive armies must travel, but also as the area in which the main oil supply of the world is located. The UP correspondent declares that the United States must therefore be concerned not only to line up these countries in the "western defense" plan, but also to assure that these countries will be politically aligned with its plans.

Statements like that of the UP correspondent reveal the strategic plans of the ruling North American clique. First, this group wants to launch its aggression from the territory of the state of Israel and other Eastern countries and thereby to convert our land into a battlefield. Second, Israel's oil production must be used for the Anglo-American war machine. Third, this group wants to intervene in the inner political and economic affairs of Israel so as to make Israel completely dependent on the strategy of the imperialist aggressors.

The leadership of the ruling Mapai party in Israel made no comment, official or unofficial, upon the UP correspondent's report on Washington's plans to convert Israel into a slaughterhouse. Silence is also a form of comment.

But when the peace movement gathered momentum in Israel, the Mapai leaders did feel moved to comment. The central body of Mapai issued a statement which declared that the struggle against the use of the atom bomb serves actually only one side in the cold war—the interests of the "international communist movement." The general impression in the *Yishuv*—including the non-partisan masses of Israel—is that the Mapai leadership had never before issued a declaration which so shamed its authors.

What credence can be given to the excuse that the struggle for peace serves the interest of the communist movement, when the Stockholm petition calls clearly for a ban on atomic weapons by *all* governments *without exception*? The opposition of Mapai leaders to this humanitarian and patriotic struggle amounts to their actual alignment with the warmongers and places them in opposition to the interests and desires of all the people. He who honestly wants no war must struggle against war. He who does not actively participate in the struggle against the war danger exposes only his subservience to those forces which are busily preparing a new world slaughter.

Each day the rulers of Israel hitch themselves more tightly to the wagon of direct war preparations. They have reached an agreement to provide the imperialists with raw materials which are of the greatest importance to the war machine. The negotiations between David Horowitz, economic adviser of the Ben Gurion government, and William Fraser, the representative of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, aim at renewal of the British concession to the oil refineries in Haifa. The unpaid exploitation of oil is thereby being converted to military uses. The Israel government is literally giving British and American capital the right to control the natural resources of the country. Is *this* a contribution to peace? Is *this* neutrality? Can *this* be called love of fatherland?

Did the Ben Gurion government dare to demand of the Anglo-American concessionaires that these important raw materials not be used in time of war?

War preparations are also resulting in the steady reduction of living standards in Israel and in the systematic limitation of industry, as well as in the artificial increase in unemployment, thus providing a reserve pool for the "volunteer" aggressive army.

Government statistics for 1949 show that "average production for 1949—according to the index—was 10 per cent lower than 1946." The "free" investment brokers and the official planners of Israel's economic future work directly and indirectly to limit the independent industrial development of Israel, to strengthen foreign domination and to increase unemployment. We have lately witnessed characteristic developments in this direction. Factories have

closed down in Acco, Sofat and Nazareth, as well as in the northern parts of the country (the base of the oil companies). Israel's development budget of 40 million pounds assigns only one per cent to industrial needs, as opposed to 18 million pounds for maintaining tens of thousands of immigrants in the camps. The large bankers of Israel have complete freedom to limit industrial credit, which has been cut 17 per cent. Raw materials are distributed by the government mainly by the large industrialists. This facilitates the concentration of capital among the big bourgeoisie and hurts small business, causing loss of jobs to thousands of workers.

In addition, the government sets the tone for unofficial cuts in wages and living standards. The government itself is forcing wages below the official Histadrut scale. The attack of the government labor department on the wages of the workers and the freedom given to employers to exploit the workers are characteristic developments toward the general goal—the impoverishment of the working masses. This is the demonstrable policy of those who prepare for war and seek a temporary solution for the economic crisis within the framework of capitalist anarchy.

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