

POLITICAL LINE-UP IN THE YISHUV

By Esther Valenski

IN order to be able to estimate properly the results of the 22nd Zionist Congress, it is necessary to have a clear picture of the various Zionist parties functioning in Palestine. Our country is the battleground, and the activities of the parties on the battlefield reveal much. They explain the sharp struggle that appears to rage among the groups, each representing different and conflicting principles. We must, however, first make clear a number of basic points about the situation of the Yishuv which has resulted from the strengthening of imperialism in the Middle East, and which confronts the Yishuv with difficult tasks.

British imperialism is strengthening its military forces in our country and in surrounding areas. All the higher British officials in the Middle East, as well as in Greece, recently met in London to plan the establishment of the greatest base in this part of the world. The correspondent of the London *Daily Graphic* reveals that the object of the meeting was "to strengthen British military forces in Palestine in this critical period up to 100,000 troops, beside technical forces." (*Davar*, Oct. 1, 1946.) About 200,000 British soldiers are already concentrated at the Suez Canal, which the British have converted into a fortress. This force is the Democlean sword which hangs over our heads.

The economic subjugation of our country to imperialist interests is not easing up. One example of the continued robbery of the resources of our land is the current prospecting by the British for sources of oil in the Dead Sea. American money-bags also cannot resist the urge to exploitation. They, too, have an insatiable appetite for the wealth of others. They also speculate on making our country serve them in the future as a source for the precious fluid, aside from its important function as a military base.

This military and economic pressure is accompanied with increased efforts on the part of imperialist circles to disturb the peace between Jews and Arabs. British General Spears, who recently arrived in the Middle East, found it necessary to report that he "wondered greatly how the Arabs have remained peaceful so long in spite of the immigration of Jews in such large numbers." (*Haaretz*, Oct. 16, 1946.) The purpose of his speech is clear. The general is merely carrying out his mission.

The unceasing pressure on the Jewish Yishuv, the colonial oppression and the cynical treatment of the refugees, fall very heavily on the people of the Yishuv. Palestine's economic, political and national development is endangered by the war situation in which the Yishuv finds itself, by the absolutist rule of the mandatory power. Thus the anti-im-

perialist struggle becomes a Jewish national task of first importance, and Jewish-Arab understanding a major factor in achieving the main goal.

In the light of both these basic principles, which alone can guarantee the full and free development of the Yishuv, what does an analysis of the parties representing the Yishuv at the Zionist Congress show?

Position of the Mapai

The Mapai (a sort of right-wing Poale Zion—Labor Zionist) primps itself in the peacock-colored feathers of "political independence." How much "independence" this party can claim in fact is exposed by the theoretician of the Party, Levenstein, a pillar of official Zionist policy. He has written in *Davar*, "Certainly the evacuation of Palestine by the British military would be a blessing." But ". . . the Zionist movement does not put forward this demand." In his letter to the Mapai right before the elections of delegates, David Ben Gurion informed the party that he was against a United Nations trusteeship. He meant, of course, that he was opposed to any limitations on the exclusive domination of Britain in Palestine.

The great noise made by the Mapai about a "Jewish state" and "independence" cannot offset its official and open approval of the British domination of our country.

About the Jewish-Arab problem, Sprintzak announced to the conference of the Mapai that "From the platform of the (Zionist) Congress there must be heard once again the authoritative declaration to the Arab nations that Palestine must be a Jewish land." And Goldie Meierson supplemented him with the statement that "Only when we will have established an independent Jewish state will it be possible to speak about cooperation and brotherhood of nations." (*Hapoel Hatzair*, Feb. 1, 1946.) Until then, her program is obviously the reverse of cooperation, the opposite of brotherhood.

Cooperation with Britain, approval of the presence of foreign troops and open provocation against neighboring peoples are the elements that combine to make up the official Zionist line. The open acceptance of the British program for partitioning Palestine and its sharp struggle for this program on the eve of the Zionist Congress indicate that in practice Mapai has no other definition for "independence" than illusory independence under British realistic domination.

Right-Wing "Patriots"

The whole camp on the right of the Mapai does not differentiate itself from the basic political program of the Mapai. The Jewish bourgeoisie, the citrus fruit growers,

ESTHER VALENSKI is the secretary of the Communist Party of Palestine.

the manufacturers, the wealthy and the speculators, are concentrated in the organizations of the General Zionists of different tendencies, in the Revisionist Party and in the Mizrahi (Orthodox religious party).

The Industrialists Association is not satisfied with the political pro-British program of the Parties. It fights for the following program: 1) to establish the principle of compulsory arbitration in labor disputes; 2) to bind all sides to carry this out; 3) to set up the necessary agencies to implement the decision. It seems, therefore, that the nationalists of the employers' organizations want to perpetuate their best "patriotic" interests (compulsory arbitration!) through firm government decisions not directed against British establishments or foreign concessionaires, but against the Jewish workers.

The pro-British character of the citrus fruit growers was already expressed in the sarcastic statement of Achad Ha'am,¹ "The plantation owners, the citrus-fruit growers, are more dependent on Liverpool than on Tel Aviv." This group among the employers is ready to serve the colonial power in order to win concessions on questions of export and duties. Its political position is clear and unambiguous. It is a position of subjection to the manipulators of the British citrus-fruit market.

The Aliyah Chadasha (New Immigration) Party has crossed every "t" and dotted every "i" in its pro-British credo. Its organ, *Emudim*, states, "For the achievement of the minimum demands it is necessary to bring about full united action between the British government and the Zionist movement." (Oct. 18, 1946.) Of course, this party is also composed of "nationalists" and is also striving for independence. *Emudim* declares, "The latest proposals of the British government" (the so-called federation plan) can "serve as a basis for negotiations," and "show the way to national independence." The oppressive character of the Morrison plan, which gives dictatorial and unrestrained power to the High Commissioner and which achieves the complete subjugation of Jewish and Arab officials, is the basis for the bond between the organizers of the New Immigration and the imperialists. This is the "national" program of the open quislings.

Revisionist Demagogy

The extreme expression of the bourgeois camp is the Revisionist Party. The demagogic anti-imperialist speeches emanating from this group cannot hide the pro-British content of its theory and its actions. In the newspaper *Hamashkif* of October 4, 1946, Dr. Von Weisel writes that the Revisionists want one thing, "Ties with the British Empire and not with the countries of Asia or with the Soviet Union." The election program of the Revisionists declared openly that "The recognition of the British interests in Palestine will be the fruit only of free negotiations between Britain and the provisional Jewish government."

¹ Achad Ha'am, Jewish philosopher, who opposed political Zionism with cultural Zionism, calling for making Palestine solely a cultural Jewish center.

This follows the pattern laid down by Emir Abdullah of Transjordan who had "recognized the British interests" not, heaven forbid, as a result of struggle, but through "free negotiations."

The Revisionists are not cutting themselves off from the American rulers either. On the eve of the elections for the Congress, *Hamashkif* wrote, "Truman's letter has filled our hearts with new strength and a new hope." Thus do the Revisionists kowtow to and flatter the British and American imperialist robbers, and of course in the name of "national pride."

It is obvious from this that "the Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan," the Alpha and Omega of the Revisionist program, will concentrate its state power not against British domination, but against the Arab people. This is revealed not only by the Revisionist program for the future, but also by the rowdiness and chauvinist hooliganism which have characterized the Revisionists in the past and at present. The "Exodus from Europe" program which is being carried out in accordance with their proposal, is a revival of the bestial Hitlerite program of a *Judenrein Europa*, and is a political service to Anders' gangs and to other anti-Semitic pogromists. Through this very political assistance to international reaction they reveal only a small part of their fascistic, anti-labor, anti-Jewish character.

The camp of the opposition to the Mapai does not show any consistency in its struggle against the official Zionist program. In inner circles, the Hashomer Hatzair (left-wing labor party) and Achduth Avodah (left Labor Zionists) warn against the accepted Zionist program and oppose the partition plan of the Mapai. But this opposition loses a great deal of its force because of the direct relations of these parties with the imperialist rulers.

Achduth Avodah and "Struggle"

The Achduth Avodah, which is one of the principle proponents of "activism," went to the Zionist Congress under the banner of "struggle." The political goal of the "struggle," as enunciated in the campaign program, is the transformation of the country into a Jewish state. The Mapai is ready to come to a compromise with the government, in order to achieve independence in a part of the country under British tutelage. But the gentlemen of the Achduth Avodah have remained true to the decision which was adopted by the Executive Committee of the Histadruth (Jewish Federation of Labor) on Feb. 16, 1944: "Establish Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth." By devoting itself to this goal, Achduth Avodah directly or indirectly aids the British rulers. Who else but the British is so interested in spreading such separate self-government programs among the Jews and Arabs? And who else will enjoy so much as the British rulers the bitter fruit it will produce?

The shrill cries about "anti-imperialism" and the vague talk about "anti-British" will not help. Deeds and the concrete political program will decide the issue. The clear announcements of the Achduth Avodah people confirm their political direction which is based on the continuation of

colonial domination. In the issue of Tishri 5707 (Sept. and Oct. 1946) they wrote: "When the concentration (of British troops in Palestine) ends and the setting up of bases begins, and when the bases will have been established, unrest will become a constant feature. Ways will have to be found to eliminate it, either through brutal military or police action, or through a political compromise with the Jewish Yishuv."

Thus does Achduth Avodah conceive the role to be played by the "Jewish socialist state" when the "concentration of British troops will have ended" and "the bases will have been established" and Britain will find it necessary to achieve peace through "a political compromise" with the Jewish Yishuv."

The fact that this party turns its back on a democratic Jewish-Arab political understanding, which alone can smash the foundations of colonial rule, misleads the masses and drives them into a dead-end position of urging imperialism to "understand," "to come to a compromise" and big-heartedly establish Palestine as a Jewish state under its influence.

Whither Hashomer Hatzair?

In the decisions of the second conference of Hashomer Hatzair, there is the declaration that "We do not plan to declare war against the British army." This position is particularly shocking in view of the demand of all colonial peoples for the withdrawal of foreign troops from their countries, a demand that is supported by all the forces of peace and progress. The Hashomer Hatzair points to the "positive" proposals of the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission which based itself on the continuation of British domination and turns over the fate of the Yishuv and of the country to the High Commissioner. The Hashomer Hatzair expressed quite clearly its position toward the political regime in the country. "The mandate—the international guarantee—is still our legal basis for our right to immigrate to Palestine and to settle in the country, a basis which cannot be exchanged under present conditions for any other document." (*Mishmar*, Sept. 16, 1946.)

We must ask this question. Is not the orientation of the Hashomer Hatzair toward the forces of freedom and progress in the world and toward support of the demand for international trusteeship weakened in the light of its open recognition of British imperialist rule?

The Hashomer Hatzair is different from other Zionist parties in the fact that it recognizes the necessity for Jewish-Arab understanding and for friendship among peoples. But its position is inconsistent with its approach in its election program: "The national independence of the Jews in Palestine cannot be guaranteed so long as they remain a minority." If this proposition is true, then such a declaration gives ammunition to the Arab nationalists, who see in the arrival of every Jew a "danger to their independence." And how can a constructive, democratic relationship between Jews and Arabs be conceived on the basis of such a competition for numbers? Furthermore, does not the position that "a majority is a guarantee for independence" brush

aside the basic principle that liberation from the yoke of colonial enslavement is the guarantee for independence?

An all-out struggle against the partition of Palestine is not possible on the basis of a chauvinist approach to the struggle and of respect for the mandatory power. From this it is clear that even if the Hashomer Hatzair is the strongest force in the opposition to the official Zionist line, it has not yet freed itself from the burden of support for the imperialist power—a support that is characteristic of the whole Zionist camp and that is against the interests of the Yishuv and its free national development.

To try to differentiate between the "camp of submission" and the "camp of struggle" is to indulge in self-deception and in deceiving the masses. It is comical to demand of a party that considers the British mandate inviolate (Hashomer Hatzair), and of a party that seeks to transform the country into a Jewish state (Achduth Avodah) that they be the leaders of the progressive struggle for the national liberation of the Yishuv and for the liberation of the country from colonial slavery.

A consistent and progressive struggle against partition is impossible without a political struggle against the imperialist proponents of this program. The repeated proposals of the Communist Party of Palestine about the absolute necessity of establishing a progressive front against partition are based on the sound principle that it is impossible to conduct a campaign against partition while preparing a program to reaffirm the bonds with imperialism.

Today, when the demand for the national liberation of Jews and Arabs from colonial slavery rises sharply in our country, the Zionist leadership places itself in the camp of the colonial enslavers, and exposes its character, which is in opposition to the interests of the Yishuv and the people. In the entire history of mankind there is no instance of an enslaved people liberating itself either through establishing bonds or making compromises with the enslaver.

There can exist no independent Jewish power that relies for support on foreign bayonets! There can be no national freedom for the Yishuv so long as the economic, political and military enslavement of our country continues! No forward step can be taken in the direction of independence of the country and the freedom of both its peoples without democratic Jewish-Arab anti-fascist unity. A pro-imperialist policy in the country is not against the interests of the Yishuv alone, but of the whole Jewish people, which yearns for peace and freedom.

A serious investigation of the contending parties, both in their theories and in their tactics, shows that they have a common political base. The broadness of this base permits internal struggle. But this struggle does not penetrate, and has not yet even once penetrated, the borders that Zionist principles have established for it. The debates among the parties lead but in one direction—alliance with the colonial power. Not even one of them offers an anti-imperialist base for Jewish-Arab understanding. They are therefore condemned to actions that are against the historic interests of the Jewish Yishuv and of the entire country.