

The Mid-East -

Which Way to Peace?

by

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THE MID-EAST -- WHICH WAY TO PEACE?

On November 22, 1919 Lenin said: "We know that the popular masses of the East will rise as independent agents, as builders of a new life... The period of the awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply an object of enrichment of others."

That was November 22, 1919. On November 22, 1967 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted the Resolution for the settlement of the Mid-East question. That Resolution in its entirety reads as follows:

The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East;

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security;

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter:

1. Affirms that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:
 - (i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
 - (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for the acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. Affirms further the necessity

- (a) for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
 - (b) for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
 - (c) for guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution.
 4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

This text is clear and unambiguous. One point may need elucidation and one some comment. After "emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" the Resolution says, as we have seen, that it emphasizes further "that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter." What does Article 2 of the UN Charter provide? Its most significant substantive provisions are: "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." And: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

As to comment: it is said by some people that the November 22, 1967 Resolution does not require the withdrawal of Israeli forces for ALL territories occupied in the recent conflict; it is true that the text does not use the word "all" but this does not mean that the text is ambiguous in any way. The text reads that the first

of the principles required for peace in the Mid-East is "Withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict"--and of course this does not mean from some of the territory--it means from the territories occupied by Israeli in the 1967 war. To this emphasis is given not only by this being placed first among the principles but also by the fact that the Resolution begins by "emphasizing"--its word--"the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and then goes on to say "emphasizing further"--again its words--that all UN members have "undertaken to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter, whose main contents I have called to your attention.

A further word before leaving for the moment the action of the UN Security Council and in this case of the General Assembly also. Several times, and again after the 1967 War, the United Nations has affirmed the bi-national character of the city of Jerusalem and the interests of the world community and of the leaders of three major religions--the Jewish, the Christian and the Islamic--in the status of Jerusalem. In 1967 the UN specifically denounced the Israeli occupation of all Jerusalem. Note is to be taken of the fact that in the recent past, since the War and since the UN Resolutions on Jerusalem, Israel has appropriated all of the City, has declared it the capital of the state of Israel, has forcibly evacuated Arab inhabitants in large numbers from the city, has enlarged the territory it now declares to be Jerusalem so that the present city--according to Israel--is about twice the size of the 1967 city, and has proceeded to settle thousands of Israeli citizens in old and new Jerusalem.

* * *

We are in the United States and are--or surely most of us are--citizens of the United States. Our major responsibilities are here, then, and in any case the position of the United States is decisive in terms of Israel in particular and the Mid-East in general.

Three central realities concerning the relationship of the United States of America and the Mid-East must be borne in mind: 1) the Government of the United States is the main bastion of what remains of the systems of imperialism and colonialism and is the center

of the poison of racism; 2) U.S. imperialism has fundamental military, diplomatic and economic stakes particularly in the Mid-East--for, since World War II, it has displaced Britain and France as the major imperialist power in that region. Especially are the stakes basic in terms of the international oil cartel itself dominated by U.S. corporations; 3) half the Jews left in the world, after Hitler's slaughter, live in the United States and one-fourth of the Jews of the world live in New York City; the social, psychological and political results of this are consequential.

Having briefly affirmed these fundamental facts, let me now--again quite briefly--offer the following observations:

1) It is absolutely necessary that it be made clear--that it be understood--that the question before us is not one of Arabs versus Jews. The question before us, on the contrary, is basically one of imperialism-colonialism-racism versus national liberation, self-determination and social progress. The question before us is the effort by imperialism--and U.S. imperialism in the first place--to maintain the specially exploitative relationship with the so-called "underdeveloped" countries, many of whose inhabitants are colored peoples; the latter fact is of great importance in view of the fiercely racist nature of U.S. imperialism (and of the dominant order in Israel itself) and the further fact that inside the U.S. some thirty-five million people of Black, brown and red complexions are writhing in protest against that racism.

2) It is necessary that it be made perfectly clear that involved here is in no way anti-Semitism, this being absurd as the Arab peoples themselves are of course Semitic. But it is necessary also to affirm clearly that it is not a matter of anti-Jewishness. This should be done with vigor, clearly denouncing anti-Jewishness as the poison it is and affirming knowledge of the age-old use of that poison as the handmaiden of the worst forms of reaction. Simultaneously, denunciation must be made of all forms of chauvinism, and certainly the chauvinism directed against Arab peoples which in the main communication media of the U.S. has reached scandalous and barbaric proportions.

3) Israel's right to existence, in accordance with the UN Resolution of 1967 is not in question. The USSR has repeatedly affirmed this as its position and the former head of the UAR, Nasser, as well as the present head of the UAR, Sadat, have affirmed this as their position. Both have done this without equivocation, especially as both have affirmed their acceptance in toto and without any provisos of the UN Resolution of 1967.

4) Emphasis must be given to the colossal stake of the oil cartel in the Mid-East and the absolutely fabulous profits extracted therefrom by that predominantly U.S. cartel. In that connection, the well-known subordination of U.S. foreign policy to the desires of the oil monopolies must be borne in mind. I have elaborated on this in a previous speech, published as a pamphlet.* Hence here let me say simply that U.S. oil companies now have about \$4 billions invested in the Middle East. Profits are fabulous for the wells are highly productive, the laborers put in a 12-hour day and are paid about one-eighth what American workers are paid. Moreover, while a barrel of oil costs about 35¢ to produce in the Middle East, and some 4 times more in the U.S., the basic price for a barrel of oil--as set by the cartel--is determined by the cost of its production in the United States!

The international oil cartel is the largest in the world. In it are seven companies, of which five are U.S.--Standard Oil of New Jersey, Standard Oil of California, Socony-Vacuum, Gulf Oil, and Texas Oil Co. Most of the oil reserves, most of the refining capacity, most of the private tankers of the Free World(!) are controlled by this cartel--it controls Free World prices, production and distribution of petroleum and petroleum products. Because of special tax arrangements in the Mid-East and in the U.S., most of the oil companies realize about 80 to 85% of total sales as profits. For example, recently the Wall Street Journal (3/14/66) reported that the 1965 pre-tax profits of American-Arabian Oil Company (Aramco) came to 85% of sales, as against 10% for all U.S. manufacturing

* H. Aptheker, "For a Just and Durable Peace in the Middle East." Published by Committee for a Just Peace in the Middle East (New York), 1970.

companies. The U.S. monopolies today control about 80% of all oil production in the Mid-East; other major firms have significant investments there--especially Chrysler, Firestone, International Harvester, Du Pont and the major banks--particularly Chase Manhattan, Morgan Guaranty and Irving Trust.

The purpose of these corporations is to realize profits and therefore the purpose of U.S. foreign policy there (as elsewhere) is to thwart or distort or hold back or destroy all socially progressive and anti-colonial movements in the Mid-East; insofar as Israel plays a key role in that endeavor and serves as a wedge for U.S. imperialism it is important to those monopolies and to Washington policy-makers. Those policy-makers, let me add, care not a fig for Israel--and the State Department has a history of intense anti-Jewishness; it is not Israel that interests it but only Israel as a servant of reaction and imperialism.

5) The U.S. government has not only supported reactionary governments in Israel but also reactionary governments among Arab peoples. Thus, the U.S. has provided much more arms to Saudi Arabia than it has to Israel and King Hassan of Morocco and King Hussein of Jordan are armed by the United States. The recent slaughters in Morocco and the Sudan reflect this continuing emphasis by the United States upon undercutting all movements which threaten the stability of imperialism. (One may add here two other developments not precisely in the Mid-East but closely related to common forces: the refusal to abide by the national election results in Pakistan and the turn towards the genocidal slaughter of the people of East Pakistan--with both the United States and China supporting the Pakistan government; and the emphasis being given by the United States (and Britain) to the arming of Iran--the one real ally that Israel has, bordering the USSR and itself faced by the mounting anti-reactionary movements of its people.)

The common front of China and the U.S. in Pakistan is of great significance; the latter derives out of Washington's commitment to reaction in general, the former to the nationalistic policies of China which supports the slaughter regime of Pakistan since that regime is hostile to India. It should be added that this

is not the only example of ultra-Left (so-called) and Right unity in action (as has happened regularly throughout history). The policy of certain ultras among the Arabs calling for the extermination of Israel has also been the policy of China and such Arab ultras have had and have the support of China; again, the policy of these ultras for the extermination of Israel is exactly the demand of such an ultra-reactionary figure as King Faisal of Saudi Arabia--whose country is owned by the U.S. and whose arms come from the United States. This demand for extermination--whether from the so-called ultra-Left or the ultra-Right--makes difficult a political settlement with justice in the Mid-East, plays into the hands of the Israeli government and especially Right forces there and therefore is helpful to Washington. In Jordan, too, the King--a U.S. puppet--by his policy of slaughter against all Palestinian liberation forces adds fuel to the ultras and in this way in fact serves the interests of Israel and the U.S.--that is to say the interests of imperialism, whose servant he is. (One should add that if anyone thinks Mr. Helms, the chief of the CIA, was recently in the Mid-East--including Israel--on a vacation, he is out of his mind.)

Significant is the support the U.S. gives reactionary Arab forces insofar as this demonstrates the imperialist essence of the Mid-East question rather than its being one of Arabs versus Jews.

6) It is important to understand the organic connection between the aggression of 1956 and that of 1967; this helps expose the conspiratorial and imperialist nature of the latter.

7) It is necessary to reiterate that the Israeli government and the U.S. government in the months and days prior to the June 1967 aggression solemnly affirmed the absence of any intention, so far as the former was concerned, of territorial aggrandizement and, so far as the latter was concerned, its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the Middle East. As events have demonstrated without any ambiguity, both were lying; at any rate the first has appropriated enormous territory from several neighbors and the second has done all in its power to make possible the retention of the fruits of the ravishment. This blatant violation of solemn pledges repeatedly

given by both powers must be exposed continually. And note must be taken of the fact that the ravished territories are being occupied by Israeli citizens and that the fruit and oil and resources in them are being exploited by Israel. Further, the highest figures in the Israeli government, including its Prime Minister and its Minister of Defense repeatedly have insisted that the intention of Israel is to retain much if not all of the seized territory.*

8) It is necessary to affirm with the greatest vigor that the first requirement in the present situation is agreement by Israel to withdraw from the territory it has occupied since June 4, 1967. No aggressor may be permitted to profit from his crime.

9) The recognition of the rights of the refugees must be accorded by Israel and full restitution must be made to them in accordance with the resolution of the UN, hitherto ignored by Israel. The position of Prime Minister Meier to the effect that "there is no Palestinian people" is false and contemptible and if persisted in makes a peaceful solution of the problem in the Mid-East impossible.

10) The irony of history--what Lenin once called "the malicious irony of history"--manifests itself with peculiar force in this matter for here was Israel employing the blitzkrieg tactics of Hitler; here was Israel employing mobile crematoria--napalm bombs--upon living human beings; here were--and are--Jewish people acting out the roles of occupiers and tormentors of peoples!

11) The so-called "preventive war" argument of Israel must be fully exposed for the propaganda falsehood it is. Here two main points must be made: the Israeli action was aggressive and not preventive, as all the evidence increasingly shows and as the disposition and deployment of Israeli forces--especially her air

* Premier Meier said this on April 18, 1969 and again on March 12, 1971. Major-General Herzog of the Israel Army (formerly chief of its military intelligence), spelled this out in the N. Y. Times, June 5, 1971.

forces--clearly demonstrates. This quite apart from such recent admissions as that by David G. Ness, formerly U.S. Charge d'Affairs in Cairo, who wrote (N. Y. Times, June 5, 1971) of the "unique special relationship" between the U.S. and Israel and who added: "In the exchange of intelligence our cooperation with Israel is unprecedented. During the months prior to the June 1967 hostilities the military intelligence requirements levied by Washington upon the Cairo embassy, CIA, and military intelligence staffs were very largely based on Israeli needs. The effectiveness of the Israel air-strikes on June 5, 1967," says this former U.S. Charge d'Affairs in Cairo, "was assured in part, at least, by information on Egyptian air fields and aircraft disposition provided through U. S. sources."

Secondly, in this connection, in the age of thermonuclear weapons and the existence of the United Nations, such "justification" is absolutely impermissible. It returns us to the unimpeded power politics which produced World Wars I and II and will, if not halted, produce World War III.

Further, this idea of "preventiveness" is precisely the main rationalization for the atrocious war waged by Washington upon the Indo-Chinese peoples. Note, in this connection, that when President Nixon in November 1969 made his main policy speech on the war there and in effect explained again why that war was to continue, it was the Prime Minister of Israel--alone among heads of state--who wired congratulations and said: "The President's speech contains much that encourages and strengthens freedom-loving small nations the world over, which are striving to maintain their independent existence looking to that great democracy, the United States of America." (N. Y. Times, Nov. 17, 1969). And a week earlier, the president of the Zionist Organization of America, Mr. Jacques Torczyner, told the executive committee of that organization meeting in the Biltmore Hotel in New York City on November 8, 1969 "that the problems of Vietnam and the Middle East are connected," that Israel was convinced its "main adversary was the Soviet Union" and that the leaders of Israel "hope that President Nixon, who has always understood the Communist menace in the world, will stand by his principles and policies," (N. Y. Times, Nov. 9, 1969). One finds precious little difference between such

a pronouncement and the policies of that Jewish Horst Wessel--Meier Kahane.

Rarely has such a massive propaganda campaign been undertaken and maintained in the U.S. as in connection with the Israeli aggression of 1967. Because of this, and because of the considerations alluded to in the beginning of my remarks, the June events produced considerable confusion and disarray in the U.S. peace movement and among progressive forces in general. Still, note must be taken of the fact that there has been significant change in public opinion in the U.S. on this matter. There no longer is the near-unanimity that existed in the first days of the fighting, and the impact of that fantastic propaganda campaign has begun to wear off. The Communist Party of the United States, I am proud to be able to say, stood up well to this test, did not lose its head--either to opportunism or to nationalism--and generally conducted a principled campaign of consistent anti-imperialism. Publications other than Communist have more recently taken fairly enlightened positions.

Within the progressive Jewish population in the U.S. and in Western Europe also, sober second thoughts have begun to appear. Israel's isolation in the world community of nations is becoming clearer to them and the impossibility, in a historic sense, of holding to the present line of the Israeli government and of basing its hopes on the likes of Richard Nixon, is also having its impact. There is wide understanding of the unreliability of Israel's present "allies" and a sense that the government's tying itself to the chariot of imperialism bodes ill for its future. I feel impelled to add that the heroic resistance to the chauvinist madness in Israel by the Israeli Communist Party has been impressive and influential inside Israel and inside the U.S. Within Israel, opposition to the annexationist policies of the Government is deepening and widening--this too has important influence upon the U.S.

The peace movement in the U.S.--centering as of course it does and must upon forcing Washington to end the war upon the Indo-Chinese peoples--as it expands and broadens and deepens, produces also re-examination of the entire foreign policy of the U.S. including in the Mid-East. I do not wish here to take the time to

expatiate upon that movement, but it is now a genuinely mass movement, it has great spontaneity, splendid militancy, intensifying comprehension and growing political power. This, together with the magnificent resistance of the Indo-Chinese peoples and the solidarity of all decent governments and peoples, will force the U.S. Government to end its present policy in South East Asia--or will force a change in that government itself--or both. This process carries with it pressures for change in that policy all along the line and not least in the areas overwhelmingly inhabited by Arab peoples.

To depend upon disarray among those peoples as bailing Israel out is to put one's faith in a temporary phenomenon. The Arab revolution is new and deep. Its societies are multi-state and multi-class and multi-level--from extremely backward to significantly advanced. And the stakes in that area are enormous so that the efforts of U.S. imperialism will know no bounds. There have been and are zigs and zags in that Revolution--high points in Algeria and turns back; high points in the Sudan and turns back--but the fundamental movement of the one hundred million Arab peoples is in the direction of meeting their immutable demands--for a decent life, for self-rule, for advanced technique, for modern educational systems, for the emancipation of women, for the building of really socialist societies. These needs are permanent and whatever the setbacks the meeting of them is the course that history has and will pursue. Those who stand in the way may have temporary victories but the final victory belongs to the people for they are immortal and their needs are immutable, and their consciousness grows.

I was in Egypt in 1964 and I was there for a more extended period in the Spring of 1971. The thirty-five or forty million peoples of the UAR are on the move--in one place more slowly than elsewhere and in another place more quickly but they are on the move. There are practically no veiled women there any more; there are hundreds of thousands of students there now; they are turning out engineers and physicists and teachers and doctors by the tens of thousands. Cairo has twice the population of all Israel. And with the help of the anti-imperialist and socialist nations--especially the USSR--the base of Egypt is being revolutionized. This is what is fundamental. Go to Aswan--formerly a back-

ward steaming city in the extreme south of Egypt. Stand at the foot of the Sahara and look out now at an immense fresh-water man-made lake with a major fishing industry. Can you imagine--a sight never before seen--a fresh-water lake rising out of the midst of the immortal sands of Egypt! And there is the enormous dam that has made the lake possible--the dam has more concrete in it than the concrete in all the pyramids of Egypt. The twelve dynamos of the fantastic power station are all in operation providing the power not only for Egypt's needs now but for all of North Africa for the next generation. No more floods in Egypt! No more drought in Egypt! Millions of acres newly irrigated in Egypt. The course of the Nile, itself, has been altered. And everywhere signs in Russian and in Arabic hailing the triumph of the peoples. Everywhere modern means of defense, and new housing for thousands of workers. Remaining today at Aswan are only 42 Russian technicians--and about 17,000 Egyptian workers--and now the highest technical requirements are met by the Egyptians themselves. This process is immutable. What shall Israel do--drop nuclear weapons upon Egypt (as Nixon desired to do upon South East Asia)? And if Nixon could not bring himself to do it because of the relationship of forces in the world, shall Israel be able to do it--assuming she should do so unspeakable a thing!

Five months ago, in response to the inquiry made by the UN representative, Mr. Jarring, the head of the UAR government again affirmed his government's full and unequivocal acceptance of the UN Resolution of 1967. It reaffirmed its readiness to recognize the sovereignty of Israel--as stated in that Resolution--and the UAR government added that when Israel commits itself with equal clarity to the acceptance of the UN resolution, then "the UAR will be ready to enter into a peace agreement with Israel containing all the aforementioned obligations" as provided in the UN resolution. To date Israel's reaction has been negative and intransigent--and suicidal.

Far from the USSR being the main enemy of Israel, as the president of the Zionist Organization of America said, without the USSR there would never have been an Israel and without the USSR the effort at the military annihilation of Israel would long since have been undertaken--and would be undertaken next week.

(I might add that pressures for such a war are mounting in the Arab world and are being fed by the ultra-Right and the ultra-Left throughout the world--so that the danger is very great.)

The response to Jarring's mission, to the UN Resolution and to the initiatives of Sadat must be positive and the sooner the better; else catastrophe will befall the Mid-East and Israel in the first place.

"The most prominent manifestation of democracy," Lenin wrote in 1920, "is the fundamental question of war and peace." Exactly true today. Through mass struggle, through popular education and effort everywhere in the world and here in the first place, this fundamental question can be answered--and must be answered--in behalf of peace and against the scourge of war.

To fight against imperialism is to fight for democracy. Hence to support the Arab peoples in their struggle for social progress, for real national independence, for territorial integrity and sovereignty is to support the forces of democracy, of justice and of peace. It is fundamentally, also, to support the existence of Israel with its Jewish and Arab peoples; an Israel which will be anti-racist, not racist, an Israel which will be anti-colonial and not the client of the United States and the ally of Iran and South Africa, an Israel which will be a friend and a beacon of warm light to and for the peoples of the Middle East. It is perhaps not too late to overcome the hatred that builds up against the occupier; it is not too late for the people of the book to turn from the bomb; it is not too late for those who hear the voice of the Prophets--considered prophets by both Jew and Arab--to heed their great lesson and warning--let justice be done no matter what the cost--justice, justice, justice must be done!

The way of the lie, of the knout, of the club, of the napalm bomb, of chauvinism and of racism: is this to be the way Jews are to choose--and these things chosen in the name of Judaism? Long live Arab-Jewish unity and friendship; long live the independence and equality of peoples; long live the path of social progress; long live peace. Long live workers' power--Socialism!

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