

# LETTER FROM ABROAD

## ARAB PEOPLE SAY "NO" TO BEVIN

*The British attempt to nullify the UN decision on Palestine by facilitating Arab violence against the Jews and in some cases participating in it, has by now clearly emerged as part of British grand strategy to bring the reactionary Arab leadership into their imperialist anti-Soviet plan for the Near and Middle East. The Jewish and Arab peoples of Palestine are the victims of this strategy. Bevin's scheme to negotiate a series of treaties with these Arab puppets to give the British decisive military influence in this part of the world was to begin with the Anglo-Iraq Treaty, which was signed on January 15, 1948. Subsequent events are described in the following dispatch from London.—Eds.*

THE statement of the regent of Iraq that the recently signed Anglo-Iraq Treaty "does not realize the national aims of Iraq" and could not be ratified by the Iraq Parliament, is one of the biggest blows struck by the popular movement in that country at Anglo-American imperialist aims in the Middle East. It followed within a week his earlier message to the king after the signing of the Treaty at Portsmouth, England, in which he said that the new treaty "will be in the interests of our two countries and their common benefit."

No wonder the regent's latest statement came as a bombshell, causing, according to the *London Times*, "bewilderment and surprise" in the foreign office and to its Iraqi flunkies, Sayed Saleh Jabr, Iraq Premier, and his colleagues, who signed the rejected treaty. It was made after a five-hour conference of the regent, the elder statesmen and leaders of the legal political parties who expressed opposition to the treaty.

Outside the palace in Baghdad, students demonstrated with shouts of: "Down with Saleh Jabr." They burned the office of the English paper, *Iraq Times*. A Reuter dispatch reports that seven people were killed in a demonstration at a funeral of three students killed in a demonstration on January 20, 1948.

Not only is such a moderate "center" party like the National Democratic Party opposed to the new treaty: even the right wing journal *Istakl*, which has in it so many pro-fascist elements, and the Liberal Party, which represents the big landlords and Iraqi "big business," were opposed. The regent was forced to bow to the popular wish.

[Events subsequent to January 22, when

this article was written, have brought this crisis to a head. After a week of the "worst rioting in (Iraq's) history," (*New York Times*, January 29) the cabinet of Premier Saleh Jabr was forced to resign. On January 28 the ex-premier fled for his life to Transjordan. On January 29 the *New York Times* reported that British government officials "said the bloody riots Tuesday in Baghdad showed the British had seriously miscalculated popular Arab opinion."—Eds.]

The democratic movement in Iraq has written a new chapter in its history by making its rulers repudiate a pro-imperialist treaty before the ink had dried on it and before the reactionary negotiators had even had a chance to return and report. The repudiation will have profound consequences in all the Middle East countries among the popular movements whose main cry is evacuation of British troops.

The Portsmouth Treaty coincides with the reports of the military treaty about to be signed between Britain and the leading dignitaries in Cyrenaica whereby the latter will be declared "independent" in return for British bases. Benghazi, says

the report, will become a "new Gibraltar" receiving troops from Palestine. Tripoli, the other port of Libya, will become an American base.

This, together with the treaty which the Iraq people have rejected, was to fit into the strategic regrouping in the Middle East by Britain now that Palestine will cease to be an important forward base after the mandate is surrendered. In the new set-up new bases are being built in North Africa. The Portsmouth Treaty, hailed by Bevin as "removing everything objectionable in the old treaty," would have clamped Britain's hold more firmly on Iraq which, together with Transjordan, now a British garrison after two years of "independence," were to be Britain's two principal bases in the Middle East.

Bevin's aim for a closer alliance with the most reactionary pro-imperialist section of the Arab upper class against the people's movements in the Middle East and the USSR which were to be consecrated in "a new series of treaties," "regulating friendship" with the Arab world of which the Portsmouth Treaty was to be the first, has, for the time being, received a setback.

The Iraqi people were not fooled by their puppet rulers, who said that this treaty would realize the people's aspirations for independence. The people's struggles for complete independence will gain strength from their recent victory.

London

I. RENNAP

## BOOK REVIEW

### MEMOIRS OF A SOUTHERN JEW

By Morris U. Schappes

IT is not news that conservatives in the South are still fighting, and still winning, the Civil War. Their methods are varied, but strong emphasis is placed upon the lavish veneration of their Confederate leaders, and upon the almost belligerently nostalgic recollection of life in the pre-Civil War South. Some conservative Southern Jews take solemn part in this peculiar institution, in an effort to prove that they too can be as regressive as their neighbors.

I remember an incident at the Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society in December, 1946. Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, the President, had just reported on the plans for the Freedom Train, with which Dr. Rosenbach had much to do. Then a Southern gentleman took the floor to urge upon Dr. Rosenbach the need of making the Freedom Train exhibition truly national by including among the

documents "one of the great utterances about freedom" of—General Robert E. Lee! (Apparently no such utterance could be found, for Lee was represented on the Freedom Train—by what right, Freedom only knows!—by an unimportant letter accepting the Presidency of Washington College.) There was a hush after the gentleman made his strange request, for the audience had suddenly been reminded that the South was, as Roosevelt used to repeat it, the nation's No. 1 problem.

The republication of Samuel Mordecai's book<sup>1</sup> is another reminder. First issued in 1856, and then in a much expanded form in 1860, the latter edition is now reprinted not primarily for historians or antiquarians—for whom it has its usefulness—but for those feeble spirits who today prefer the life of the pre-Civil War South

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Mordecai, *Richmond in By-Gone Days*, The Dietz Press, Richmond. \$3.00.