

ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

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ON the second day after the announcement of the US State Department confirming the final arrangements for supplying Israel with 50 Phantom fighter-bomber planes, Israeli forces on December 28, 1968, raided the civilian international airport of Beirut, and destroyed 14 Lebanese passenger planes and other airport installations.

This Israeli military raid on the Lebanon is a stepping-up of what the Israeli authorities call 'punitive actions' against the Arab countries, with the officially declared pretext of 'putting an end to Palestinian Arab armed attacks against Israeli forces and objectives'.

The continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories, following upon the last June 1967 war, intensifies and strengthens growing resistance of the people of the occupied territories supported by the Arab countries. Extremist and terrorist actions similar to attacking a civilian Israeli plane in the Athens airport or placing explosives in a public market street in the Israeli part of Jerusalem have been justly condemned by Israeli peace forces and cause harm to the just resistance against occupation.

These Israeli raids and military expeditions against neighbouring Arab countries are actually a continuation of the long chain of high-handed policy and show of force practised by the Israeli ruling circles which culminated in the 1956 tripartite attack against Egypt and in the June 1967 war against Egypt, Jordan and Syria. This outburst of force characterising the Israeli ruling circles' policy towards the Arab countries, while calculated to serve the expansionist schemes of the Zionist leaders and to impose newly-created facts of expulsion and occupation, have always intermingled and constituted part and parcel of imperialist scheming against the Arab national liberation movement.

Israeli air-raids on Jordanian (East Bank) villages and towns have become nowadays nearly a daily occurrence. The consecutive raids at the beginning of December against the towns of Irbid, El-Mafraq, against encampments of Iraqi troops stationed in Jordan, the raid on the village of Kufr-Asad with the resulting killing of dozens of civilians, are now repeated more often. Following upon an Israeli air-raid and artillery shelling of Jordanian villages

in the East Bank of Jordan in the middle of February 1968, the Israeli Chief-of-Staff Bar-Lev stated to the military reporter of the afternoon daily *Ma'ariv* (February 19, 1968):

We shall be able to impose a settlement on Jordan, if we know how to use our military power in such a way as to force Hussein to the table of negotiations. We succeeded in enforcing the cessation of fire by the strength of fire last week, and he did it because of lack of alternative. We shall be able to enforce a political solution on him, if we compel him to ask for it because of lack of alternative. This will be possible only if we shall be on the other side of the border line.

In accordance with this line the militarists in our country do not miss any opportunity, do not let any pretext pass away without exploiting it for bringing down a blow on this Arab country or that, utilising their military superiority, and every blow is politically calculated. One blow to add to the chaos and instability and enforce Hussein, in the absence of any alternative, to accept a separate peace of surrender. Another blow to demonstrate the weakness and military incapacity of Arab solidarity and raise doubts and suspicion amongst the Arab countries themselves. Another blow calculated to serve imperialist pressure or manoeuvring against this or that Arab country. Another blow to create an intolerable situation where Arab countries, particularly the United Arab Republic would be drawn to an unequal battle which may bring about the desired aims. And so on and so forth.

All this critical situation becomes still more explosive because of the obstinate refusal of the Israeli ruling circles to accept and agree with the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967. Despite their unsuccessful efforts to subdue growing Arab resistance, they still seek to impose upon the Arab countries their own capitulatory 'peace', which would turn the present occupation into lasting annexation.

Although the lightning military victory of June 1967 did not make the 'telephone of Dayan's office ring with the voice of Arab leaders at the other end of the line asking him for his terms for a capitulatory settlement', according to Dayan's declared expectation, and in spite of the failure of the imperialist aims of the June war—the toppling of the anti-imperialist regimes in Egypt and Syria—neither the Israeli leaders nor the USA strategists have given up these aims.

The Israeli ruling circles, with the political military backing of the USA administration, continue their intransigence, refusing to comply with the UN Security Council Resolution. This Resolution

does not only reject annexations as a result of the use of force and demand the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories, but also calls for the ending of the state of war between states of the region, for recognising the right of all states (including Israel) to sovereign existence within recognised and secure borders, for the settlement of the refugee problem and for the ensuring of free navigation for all states in international water passages of the region. The fact that the UAR, Jordan and the Lebanon officially expressed their readiness for a settlement of the crisis on the basis of implementing this UN Security Council Resolution presents a golden opportunity for the people of Israel to change the explosive course of events now threatening and to pass over to a new course which would lead to peace and security.

The fact that there are still certain nationalist extremist circles within the Arab countries whose declared policy is the elimination of Israel and others like the Syrian Government who refuse to carry out the Security Council Resolution which Dr. Gunnar Jarring is trying to implement not only harms the just cause of the Palestine Arab people but also gives Israeli official propaganda a pretext for its aggressive, expansionist policy. Such positions amongst certain Arab nationalist circles are also detrimental to the struggle of the anti-imperialist and democratic forces within Israel against the policy of the Israeli Government.

However, while these extreme and ultra-nationalist positions are bred by the aggression of the Israeli ruling circles they are not the dominating factor, either in the Arab countries or within the Arab national movement. The anti-imperialist UAR Government, which holds a dominant position within the Arab world, showed that it was for a just peaceful settlement without annexations by accepting the UN Security Council Resolution and calling for its full implementation. The Jordanian Government adopted a similar position. Anti-imperialist and democratic popular forces in the Arab countries stand for a just and peaceful settlement. Even Israeli leaders cannot now hide the fact that it is possible to reach a settlement if they agreed to a withdrawal of troops.

M. Dayan, the Minister of Security, as far back as January 19, 1968, declared in an interview with the daily paper *Ha'aretz*:

'May be that Abdel Nasser will be prepared, with or without Hussein, to come to an agreement with us under the condition that we withdraw to the old borders. If we withdraw to the borders of June 4, Abdel Nasser may agree to end the state of war, to free navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and may be even, to a certain extent, in the Suez Canal. If we withdraw to the former

armistice-lines this would solve the problems with Egypt to a great extent.' The interviewer from *Ha'aretz* asked further: 'And you, are you not for such a solution?' Dayan's answer was categorical: 'I am absolutely against it.'

Also the Prime Minister, Mr. L. Eshkol, declared in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), while replying to a political debate on November 12, 1968:

Of course, if we speak with the Arabs about returning to the situation as it was prior to May 1967, it would be very easy to arrive at a settlement.

The policy of the Israeli ruling circles, dominated by Zionist ideology and practice, has always obstructed a peaceful settlement between Israel and the Arab countries.

Addressing a gathering of youth of the Mapai Kibbutz movement in El-Hamma (near the Golan Syrian heights occupied after the June 1967 war) on July 5, 1968, M. Dayan said (according to the evening daily *Yediot Ahronot*, July 12, 1968, and reported in *Lamerchav* daily on July 7, 1968):

Ever since the return to Zion 100 years ago, two processes continue: colonisation and extension of the borders. In such a way, the people in Israel grew from 600,000 in 1948 to nearly three million in our days. But this is not the end of the road and not the full-stop. This is a process which must continue: it is the people of Israel who will determine the borders of the state.

Consolidating and integrating the new occupied territories as part of Israel this is what is occupying the minds of the rulers of Israel and not how to reach peace with their neighbours.

New schemes of settlement and building-up new colonies are continuously occupying the attention of the Government. Defending the policy of the Government in the face of ultra-right criticism urging wider settlement in the newly occupied territories, the Prime Minister, L. Eshkol, said in the Knesset on December 11, 1968:

The question of settlement is being dealt with by the Government, and not only being dealt with but it is being done. . . . And there are actions where silence about them serves the purpose better. . . .

The daily newspaper *Hayom* (of the Herut and Liberal parliamentary block now taking part in the coalition Government) reported on December 3, 1968:

From the course of the debate and from the speeches of the Ministers in yesterday's meeting it becomes clear that most of the members of Government support extensive colonisation in the liberated territories. Part of them believes that Israel has to implement its historical and national right in Palestine because of reasons of security; another part feels that, as at

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any event there is no advance in Jarring's mission, one has to proceed to colonise the territories; yet another part thinks that in the situation of political stagnation now prevailing, Israel must create *faits accomplis* which in future will prevent any violation of its security interests. . . .

Conducting such a policy means in fact consciously rejecting a peaceful settlement and choosing continuous enmity and bloodshed. Many people, hitherto drunk with chauvinism and military victory, are now showing restlessness at the lack of perspective for peace and the continuous bloodshed. The militarists in Israel try to cover up their responsibility for this desperate state of affairs by trying to convince the people that there is no other way out. Addressing a cadet-officers' graduation ceremony, M. Dayan said:

We have been condemned to live in a state of continuous war with the Arabs, and there is no escape from bloody sacrifices. This is the reality, and if we are anxious to continue with our work against the will of the Arabs, we are compelled to take into consideration these sacrifices. . . . (*Ha'aretz*, August 2, 1968.)

The Israeli rulers, having brought the Gunnar Jarring mission to a standstill, plan to keep what they have seized. They hope that with the help of imperialist backing, using their own military superiority and exploiting the various weaknesses of the Arab countries, they will succeed through a high-handed policy of oppression in changing even the demographic character of the occupied territories. They are bent on carrying out their annexationist plans even if this would mean another catastrophic war.

(In the concluding section of this article which will be published next month, the writer shows the counter-forces, which can make possible a peaceful solution.)