

Class Forces in Israel's Fight for Independence

by A. B. Magil

THE AREA OF ISRAEL is only slightly larger than that of Connecticut, and its population is smaller than that of the Bronx. Yet its struggle for freedom has an epic meaning which has affected world relationships and has stirred and heartened freedom-loving peoples everywhere.

PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Basically, the problem of Israel as of all of Palestine is part of the problem of the Middle East. It is the problem of freeing this vast area from the grip of foreign imperialism, of releasing the forces of national and social revolution that can break through the feudal relationships which landlock the Middle East. The birth of the state of Israel and the struggle for independence it is waging is an integral part of this massive transformation.

The Middle East is the world's greatest oil gusher. It contains nearly 42 percent of the proven reserves of oil. American oil companies today own about 40 percent of the Middle Eastern reserves, and their stake is growing.

These oil buccaneers have intimate connections with the government, notably with the State Department

and with Secretary of Defense Forrestal. That they exert powerful influence on American policy toward Palestine and the Middle East has been abundantly proved in testimony before Congressional committees. However, the prevalent tendency to paint the portrait of this policy exclusively in oil is an oversimplification. It obscures the connection between the Palestine policy and American foreign policy as a whole and the underlying forces that shape both.

The Middle East was a major arena of power struggle for centuries before oil was first commercially produced there some forty years ago. This great area, which forms the land bridge between Europe, Asia and Africa, has been called "the strategic epicenter of the world." It commands the sea-lanes to India and the western Mediterranean channel to Europe. It is the bastion of the Suez Canal. And today it constitutes, apart from Norway, imperialism's only direct land and air approach to the Soviet Union. Ernest Bevin once aptly termed the Middle East "the throat of the British Empire." In 1919, this throat spewed bullets and bombs when the British used Iran as a base for military operations against the young socialist state. Today British

72

and American bases in the Middle East are preparing for a much larger edition of the anti-Soviet crusade.

THE JEWISH NATION

It is against this turbulent background, as an inseparable part of a gigantic oil empire and war base, that Israel and its problems must be considered. At the same time, the Jewish state and its problems have their own distinct character that sets them apart in important respects from the rest of the Middle East.

The Jews of Israel belong to one of the oldest peoples in the world, and constitute the youngest among nations. Though Zionism proclaimed the thesis that the Jews of all countries have throughout the nearly two thousand years since their dispersion constituted a single nation, with Palestine as their homeland, it was not the mystical bonds of the past but the brutalities of the present which brought into being the Jewish nation in that country.

Hitler made the difference. The spread of the Nazi terror profoundly changed the actual social, economic and cultural environment of the Jews of Europe west of the Soviet border. It changed this environment in a way that was common to millions, *forcibly uprooting* large numbers of them from Germany and the nations which fell under the fascist shadow. With the doors of most other lands virtually closed, hundreds of thousands sought salvation in Palestine. In the eight years from 1932

to 1939 inclusive, more than 200,000 Jews entered the country. The number would have been even greater, had it not been for the Arab-Jewish disturbances of 1936-1939 which the British used as a pretext for limiting immigration. After 1939 only the White Paper, backed by naked force, prevented new hundreds of thousands of refugees from entering.

Thus it was only in the 'thirties that the factors of nationhood began to mature—the beginnings of a stable community with a national market and a common economy within a territorial framework. Industry required workers in sufficient numbers, capital, and the technical skill to combine both in production. The 'thirties provided all three, the German immigrants especially bringing capital, technical knowledge and in some cases modern industrial equipment. This marked the first period of industrial expansion in the Jewish economy of Palestine. An even more rapid expansion took place during World War II, when capital investment and the number of workers doubled and industrial production increased more than twofold. This growth of the forces of industrial capitalism effected a decisive qualitative change within the Jewish community, transforming it from a colonization project into a modern nation with a common territory, economic life, language and culture. The maturation of this nationhood, colliding with the British efforts to short-circuit its further development,

generated the national struggle for statehood and independence.

THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION

The confluence of three factors made possible the birth of the Jewish state: the mass struggle within Palestine and the support it received from the peoples of other countries; the firm and energetic stand of the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies in the United Nations; and the Anglo-American conflict, which provided an opportunity for public opinion in the United States to press our government into voting, after much vacillation, for the partition resolution of November 29, 1947.

Bevin brought the Palestine problem to the U.N. in the hope of further entangling it in international conflict and endlessly delaying a solution. There is no doubt that the United States would have played along with Britain had not the Soviet Union boldly championed the national aspirations of both the Jewish and Arab peoples. There are those who believe that in Gromyko's historic speech the Soviet Union reversed its previous position and abandoned its position on Zionism. This is shallow thinking. The U.S.S.R., adhering to Leninist-Stalinist principles, *always* opposed imperialism in the Middle East, as elsewhere, and *always* sympathized with the anti-imperialist struggles of all peoples. Socialism is in principle opposed to all forms of bourgeois nationalism,

including Zionism. But the Socialist State was and is sympathetic to the efforts of oppressed nations to free themselves, even when those efforts are led by bourgeois nationalists who are never consistent fighters against imperialism.

When, as a result of developments in Palestine and internationally, the relations between the Jewish community and the mandatory power changed and that community moved toward resistance to Britain and toward independence, the Soviet Union necessarily lent its support to the national aspirations of *both* Palestinian peoples.

Soviet policy toward Israel is not based on ephemeral tactical considerations. The U.S.S.R. alone among the great powers has shown genuine friendship for Israel and fidelity to the U.N. partition decision because only its policy is based on that consistent anti-imperialism and defense of the right of national self-determination which characterize the whole of Soviet foreign policy.

THE JEWISH WORKING CLASS

The Jewish working class of Palestine came into existence, not through the draconic dispossession of free peasants from the land, as in England or most of Europe; not through the concentration of land ownership, as in Virginia; nor through the expropriation of debt-ridden small producers, as in other parts of the American colonies. In Palestine the Jewish working class was created as an agricultural prole-

tariat through the deliberate acts of middle-class immigrants who chose to work on the land rather than continue in trade or the professions. At first they worked for private capitalist farmers; later many were employed by public capital on co-operative farms. With the inevitable rise of industry and growth of building construction and transport the higher wages paid in these branches attracted some of the agricultural workers as well as new immigrants.

The labor movement in Jewish Palestine has also had a unique development. It originated among the agricultural rather than the industrial workers. The Histadrut (General Federation of Jewish Labor) includes not only workers, but individual co-operative farmers, self-employed persons in the cities who do not hire labor, and the wives of workers. Thus, perhaps 40 percent of its membership is non-proletarian. And if we exclude the collective farmers (members of *kibbutzim* who receive no wages), only about half of the nearly 200,000 members of the Histadrut are wage-earners. Another characteristic of the Histadrut is that colonization and settlement and the business enterprises related to them have occupied its energies at least as much as trade-union activity.

The Jewish labor movement was from the outset deeply imbued with a nationalist rather than internationalist ideology. One of the ways in which this expressed itself was in the chauvinist slogan of *kibbush avodah* (conquest of labor), which was used

to exclude Arab workers from Jewish enterprises. Moreover, this is a labor movement suckled on reformism from birth; whereas in other countries reformism arose after the establishment of the trade unions and the considerable growth of industry, in Palestine it preceded both.

These five factors—the petty-bourgeois social origin, the agrarian genesis of the labor movement, the large petty-bourgeois element in its membership, the Histadrut's deep-rooted chauvinism, and its reformist character—have shaped the development of the Jewish working class and its organizations. This working class has evolved so recently that even today, despite the considerable advance of industry, it has not yet outlived its petty-bourgeois origins, which the influx of predominantly non-proletarian immigrants tends to renew and perpetuate. And the collective and co-operative farmers continue to wield a large, and in some respects preponderant, influence in the labor movement and the Zionist workers' parties.

However, contrary forces have also molded the Jewish working class. With growing industrial development came strikes that increasingly shattered the harmony which the trade-union leadership sought to establish with the employers. An exceptionally sharp rise in the strike curve took place during World War II as a result of the rapid expansion of industry and the inflationary ascent of living costs.

The rising class struggle has also

been reflected in the Histadrut, where a Left opposition now commands the support of a substantial part of the membership.

One of the most significant wartime phenomena was the first joint strikes of Jewish and Arab workers. At the same time, chauvinist walk-outs against the employment of Arabs virtually disappeared. In the postwar period these joint strikes reached an even higher level, the largest of them being directed at British government enterprises and merging with the general struggle against British rule. The climax of this joint movement came in May 1947, when 40,000 Arab and Jewish workers in government camps and shops took part in the largest strike ever held in Palestine.

These struggles marked a momentous break with the ingrown nationalism and mutual distrust in which the workers of both nations had been reared. The sharpening class struggle and the closer inter-linking of the Arab and Jewish economies as a result of the growth of capitalist relations within both communities have also produced a trend in the Zionist movement toward Jewish-Arab cooperation. This is a minority trend and it has been represented chiefly by Hashomer Hatzair, a Left Zionist party with its base in the collective farms (it is now part of the United Workers Party).

THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

The national struggle unleashed by the White Paper of 1939 has also

been an arena of class struggle. The issues of resistance or capitulation to foreign imperialism have tended to reflect class alignments. It is from the workers and collective farmers that the main impetus in the fight for freedom has come. A limited and inconsistent impulse in this direction also developed among the industrialists—often in the extreme chauvinist and near-fascist form represented by the Right-wing Revisionist Party and the Irgun, its offspring. However, the industrialists are not a factor independent from the commercial and financial bourgeoisie—or from the British and American investors in Palestine industry. In general the capitalist interests, bound by a thousand threads to their counterparts in the “mother” country, have resisted any move that might weaken this profitable relationship. On the other hand, the Revisionists reflected to some extent American capitalist influence, which was not averse to loosening the British grip on Palestine in favor of the American.

Not far behind the bourgeoisie in subservience to British authority was the reformist leadership of the Labor Party (Mapai), which controlled the trade-union movement. Through this Social-Democratic party and the Histadrut the workers were for years tied to the policy of the bourgeoisie—to collaboration with British imperialism. The symbol of this was the alliance formed in the world Zionist movement between the Labor Party chieftains and the Right-wing General Zionist, Dr. Chaim Weizmann,

the arch-champion of pro-British appeasement.

The White Paper of 1939 whipped the Jewish community into mass resistance and forced a rift in the marriage of the bourgeoisie and Mapai. From that time until today the Labor Party leadership has vacillated between the claims of the Right and the pressure of the Left. Within the party itself a Left wing crystallized as a result of differences over both class and national issues. In 1944 this Left wing broke with the Labor Party and formed one of its own, Achdut Avodah (Unity of Labor). It was this group that became a dynamic force in the Haganah and was largely responsible for the creation of the Palmach, the commando formation which was the best-trained sector of the Haganah.

But the path from resistance to the fight for independence was one which the Zionist leaders traversed most reluctantly and only after their best efforts to conciliate Britain and to dam the tide of popular struggle proved unavailing.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

The national liberation war which Israel has waged against the mercenaries of British and American imperialism has given the world new magnificent examples of the courage, initiative and skill that flood out of a people fighting for its freedom. The men and women of the formerly illegal Haganah, predominantly workers and farmers, joined with

the militant survivors of the Nazi concentration camps in forging and defending Jewish statehood. The popular character of the Haganah (even though in an earlier period it had been guided by a pro-imperialist policy); the major role that Left Zionist elements played in the Haganah's leadership; the absence of a military caste; and the relative weakness of the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus combined to give the army of Israel a predominantly democratic people's character.

The same cannot be said for the government in either its provisional or elected form. A coalition of the bourgeoisie and Social-Democracy, under the sharp prodding of the people, hesitantly picked up the pieces of state power scattered to the wind by the departing Britons. However, once the state was an accomplished fact, the capitalists sought to consolidate their positions within it and to compromise the war of independence through concessions to Washington and London operating behind the façade of the United Nations. One faction of the ruling class, fearing the strength of the democratic masses, tried to seize exclusive power through the insurrection of the Irgun Zvai Leumi a little over a month after the creation of the state. In that test of strength Prime Minister Ben Gurion found it necessary to call on the Left, on the Palmach, to extinguish the putsch. The Irgun did not lack apologists in the Right wing of the General Zionists and among the clerical leadership of the Mizrachi, the

religious Zionist party. However, the major capitalist elements preferred to achieve their ends in other ways.

Paced by the Laborites, who held the key government positions, the bourgeoisie was able to impose its policy of placing the economic burden of the war on the backs of the people. The tax system was modeled largely after the one in force under the British: 70 percent of the revenue is derived from indirect taxes, corporation taxes are considerably lower than those in the United States and Britain, and no levies have been placed on excess profits, gifts and inheritances. Price control is more shadowy than in World War II under the mandate; as a result, the black market and profiteering have flourished, and living costs mounted another 35-40 percent during 1948.

The course of Israel's independence struggle has been chiefly reflected in conflicts over two issues: foreign policy and the social character of the army. The latter conflict centered around the leadership of the army and the role of the Palmach. The Israeli bourgeoisie had the bad luck to achieve state power without a "reliable" military force at its command. Even before the proclamation of the state Ben Gurion set about remedying this situation. After various maneuvers he eventually succeeded in ousting the commander in chief of the Haganah, Israel Galili of the United Workers Party, and in dissolving in fact, if not in name, the Palmach. These were important steps toward remolding the army in the

image of the government. However, the struggle is not yet over, and the progressive elements still retain significant influence in the armed forces.

The most important test for Israel's government, decisive for the country's future, is foreign policy. Government leaders have repeatedly stated that in the conflict between East and West they want to pursue a path of strict "neutrality." There is no doubt that for the present they do not wish to align the country openly and completely with one side.

However, the world conflict is not geographical; it is between the forces of imperialism and anti-imperialism everywhere, between democracy and reaction, between the millions who strive for national self-determination and the exploiting few who seek world domination and oppression. In this context the very birth of Israel was an "unneutral" act, a taking sides with the anti-imperialist and democratic camp. And it was no accident that the creation of the Jewish state was opposed and sabotaged in different ways by the leaders of the world imperialist forces, the United States and Britain. The prosecution of the war and the resistance to the territorial amputation of Israel have further brought the Jewish state into repeated conflict with Britain and the United States.

Similarly, it is no accident that the establishment of the Jewish state and the defense of Israel's independence have been firmly supported by the leaders of the anti-imperialist side, the Soviet Union and the Peo-

ple's Democracies. Thus, strict neutrality is a mirage; what strengthens or weakens Jewish independence tends to align Israel with one or the other side in the world conflict. And it can be said that to the extent that the government has attempted to achieve a spurious neutrality—as, for example, its silence on the question of whether the Soviet Union should be included among the United Nations truce observers—it has taken sides against Israel.

Second, even if the government of Israel takes no active measures to strengthen its bonds with the ruling circles of the United States and Britain, economic gravitation pulls it into the imperialist orbit. It can be pulled out only by determined counter-measures — measures which include struggle against the domination of foreign capital, against attempts to Marshallize Israel, and for closer economic, political and cultural ties with the world anti-imperialist forces headed by the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies.

The pro-imperialist orientation is masked by frequent insistence that Israel's foreign policy is based on the United Nations. Since the United Nations is itself based largely on American and British control, this statement is a pious figleaf for subordination to the dictates of foreign imperialism. The truce, with its apparatus controlled largely by Washington, has been one aspect of this subordination. Significantly, it was chiefly pressure from the Israeli army that on several occasions forced re-

sumption of the war to drive the invaders out of the country.

With the Soviet Union, relations have been formally friendly and correct. The attitude may be gleaned from an official press release issued by the Foreign Ministry on a press conference held in Tel Aviv December 26, 1948, by Aubrey Eban, Israeli representative to the United Nations. The release states: "Of the attitude of the U.S.S.R. during the Assembly Mr. Eban said that it had been based unswervingly on the actual text of the November 29 resolution. Such fidelity to a decision of the United Nations by a member state must be treated with respect." Respect! This is the only positive conclusion which the molders of Israel's foreign policy draw from the powerful and consistent support their country has received from the U.S.S.R. and its allies.

Toward Britain a policy of double bookkeeping has been in force. Britain is vehemently denounced as the arch-enemy of Israel. At the same time, no move is made against British capital even when it sabotages the war effort, as in the case of the Haifa refineries, which refused to resume production of oil. On the contrary, reciprocal delegations of British and Israeli businessmen are strengthening economic relations and opening new channels for the investment of what is called "Anglo-Jewish capital." This is part of the general drift toward the imperialist West.

In regard to the United States, the government's public attitude is to

pretend that a fundamental cleavage exists between American and British policy and to depict the United States, like the Soviet Union, as Israel's friend. Washington's frequent betrayals are attributed to a few diabolical pro-British State Department officials who are seeking to scuttle the "real" American policy of friendship for Israel. This has the effect of facilitating the American aim to replace Britain as the dominant power in Palestine, thereby strengthening the whole U.S. position in the Middle East. Politically, this aim has already been largely achieved. The economic invasion is to follow. And Israeli government spokesmen are issuing appeals to U.S. capitalists to "come and get it."

The situation is similar in regard to contributions from abroad. Four-fifths of these come from the United States, largely from American Jews. This fact has been converted into a Damoclean sword by the government of Israel and all the Zionist political parties. Concessions to American imperialism are defended on the ground that Israel cannot break its ties with the largest Jewish community in the world. This is patent sophistry. The Jewish people of the United States have more than once demonstrated their affection and support for Israel and their opposition to the bipartisan duplicity of their government. It is the Right-wing leadership of the Zionist Organization of America, and their loyal opposition, the former leadership, who counsel and practice subservience to American imperial-

ism. This leadership is closely associated with the reactionary General Zionists in Israel, whose party received only 5.1 percent of the vote in the recent election. Nevertheless, the Israeli government, led by a party that professes to be socialist, instead of appealing to the Jewish people of America to support the struggle for complete independence from imperialism, is by its appeasement policy helping immobilize them in face of the Truman-Dulles drive to convert Israel into a semi-colony of Wall Street.

The majority of Israel's people, however, do not favor a so-called western orientation, but an orientation on Israel's interests. That is why the Soviet Union is the most popular great power in the country—so popular that in the election campaign even the Irgun found it necessary to give lip-service in its platform to friendship with the U.S.S.R.

THE ARAB QUESTION

The entanglement in the imperialist web has been facilitated by the government's Arab policy. This policy is devoid of realistic national self-interest, let alone consideration for the rights of those who were to have been Israel's friendly neighbors in Palestine and a large minority within the Jewish state.

The Palestinian Arabs have more than once demonstrated their hostility to British rule and their desire for independence. On various occasions, however, reactionary leaders succeeded in betraying the people's struggles

by turning them against the Jewish community. This tactic was facilitated by the pro-imperialist and anti-Arab policies of the Zionist leadership. Any discussion of the treatment accorded the Palestinian Arabs by the government of Israel must start with one fact of towering significance: with relatively few exceptions, the Palestinian Arabs did not participate in the fighting against the Jews. This was in contrast to the situation in 1936-39. The refusal of the mass of Palestinian Arabs to join the Mufti's bands, despite the reactionary pressure to which they were subjected, is a fact that was at one time publicly acknowledged and welcomed by Jewish leaders.

The Arab population of Palestine thus constituted a potentially great asset to the Jewish people and the Jewish state in their struggle against the foreign invaders instigated, subsidized and armed by Britain and the United States. The government of Israel, however, has done almost everything to transform this potential asset into an actual liability.

Instead of announcing that when a general armistice is established, the Arab refugees—citizens of Israel to whom full equality of rights had been pledged—would be permitted to return to their homes, the government has made it clear that few, if any, will be readmitted. To justify this callous policy—a policy which strengthens the hand of Arab reaction—it has been necessary to falsify history. The myth has been concocted

that the majority of the Palestinian Arabs attacked the Jews and that their flight expressed in the words of Foreign Minister Moshe Shertok, "a guilty conscience."

No less foolhardy from the standpoint of Jewish national interests is the Israeli government's attitude toward the fate of the Arab sector of Palestine. The U.N. partition resolution provided for the creation of two independent states, Jewish and Arab, politically separate but economically joined. It requires no profound understanding of the politics of the Middle East to recognize that a friendly democratic Arab state, apart from its importance to the Arab population of Palestine, is a necessity for the Jewish people and its state—essential for their economic health and military security. Yet the government of Israel has adopted an attitude of virtual neutrality toward the future of Arab Palestine. A government spokesman, commenting last September 23, on the Bernadotte report, which proposed annexing the Arab sector to Britain's synthetic puppet kingdom of Transjordan, made this astonishing statement: "The situation as regards the Arab part of Palestine appears to be too confused to justify any definite comment."

"Neutrality" on this issue, as on the larger question of foreign policy, means at best non-interference with the plans of Israel's enemies. For, needless to say, annexation of Arab Palestine by Abdullah, with perhaps a few crumbs of land thrown to

Egypt and Syria, would be a major disaster for Israel. It would mean British troops and bases at its doorstep. And instead of having as its neighbor a friendly Arab state, Israel would be encircled by enemies, its independence forced to cower before British military might, while American economic might straight-jacketed its future.

During the recent election campaign the Labor Party leaders sought to justify this policy and their hostility to the progressive forces among the Palestine Arabs by donning the demagogic mask of "peace." They cynically put the label of "the war party" on those who wanted to help free the whole of Palestine and implement the full U.N. partition decision.

THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES

The organized progressive political forces of Israel consist of the United Workers Party (Mapam) and the Communist Party. Growing sections of the Labor Party membership, including some lower officials, also see eye to eye with the U.W.P. and the Communists on most questions.

The United Workers Party is not only the second largest in the country, but it holds important positions in the armed forces, the trade-union movement, the collective farms, and various other institutions.

The U.W.P. is a mass party with many militants in its ranks. It was formed in January 1948 through the merger of two Left Zionist parties,

Hashomer Hatzair (The Young Guard) and Achdut Haavodah-Poale Zion (Unity of Labor-Zionist Workers). The latter had been established in 1946 through the fusion of Achdut Haavodah and Left Poale Zion. Achdut Haavodah arose as a Left wing within the Labor Party, breaking with it in 1944; its strength lay among both city workers and collective farmers. Left Poale Zion, a much smaller group formed in an earlier split among the Zionist Social Democrats, was almost exclusively urban. Hashomer Hatzair, somewhat larger than Achdut Haavodah, had its membership mainly in the collective farms; in fact, the Hashomer Hatzair political party was created by the collective farm movement of the same name. In the united party all three groups continue to retain to a considerable extent their original identity together with certain differences in outlook. Not only for this reason, but also because neither of the three constituent groups is monolithic in structure and ideology the U.W.P. is a party of conflicting tendencies.

The platform adopted at the congress that created the U.W.P. declares that the party stands for the "revolutionary class struggle," has as its ultimate aim "the creation of a classless socialist society," and "will base its educational activity on the theory, the world-view and strategy of Marxism." But first place in its basic principles is given to the statement that "The party is united upon the recognition of Zionism as the

solution of the Jewish problem. . . ."

This attempt to reconcile Marxism and Zionism is of course not new. However, the science of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin has nothing in common with bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalism in any form. A study of the program, history, structure, ideology and practical work of the United Workers Party leads to the conclusion that it is basically a Zionist, that is, a nationalist party, which has been strongly influenced by the advanced working class in Palestine and internationally. If, for example, we examine the ideology of the U.W.P. we encounter the non-Marxist theory that in the movement for socialism in Jewish Palestine hegemony belongs not to the industrial proletariat, but to that section of the agricultural proletariat which lives on collective farms, receives no wages, and is on the whole isolated both from the class enemy and the class brothers and allies. Thus the ideological leader of Hashomer Hatzair, Meier Yaari, has stated that "the collective farm movement is the core of the workers' movement in the country. . . ." (*Tsvantzig Yor Kibbutz Artzi—Twenty Years of Kibbutz Artzi*, p. 11. Prague, 1947.)

The U.W.P. is not a party of struggle. Its excellent statements against appeasement of Anglo-American imperialism, for co-operation with the Soviet Union and its allies, for the creation of an independent, democratic Arab state, in defense of the democratic character of the army,

against various reactionary measures on the home front—are too often a glittering shell of words lacking the fertile content of deeds. This absence of genuine combativeness is part of the petty-bourgeois Zionist heritage of the U.W.P. Undoubtedly it was the effort to evade sharp conflict with American imperialism and its labor lieutenants in Israel that caused the majority of the party's leaders to reject a united front with the Communists in the recent election. The proportionate decline in the U.W.P.'s vote was largely attributable to this vacillating and opportunist policy.

Within the United Workers Party, however, there are forces that are pressing toward militant policies and joint action with the Communists. With the passage of the center of gravity in the national liberation fight from the military to the political and economic spheres, and with the sharpening of the class struggle, it remains to be seen whether these forces will be sufficiently strong and resolute to bring the U.W.P. into a common front with the Communists against official trends that threaten Israel's independence.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party is the only party which includes Arabs as well as Jews, and is based on the joint organization and struggle of the two peoples. In this respect it is the only truly national party in Israel, since all others exclude that group which today constitutes 10 percent of the

population and would become an even higher proportion if the refugees were permitted to return. The Communist Party is the only party which, throughout the nearly thirty years of its existence has unwaveringly raised the banner of independence and anti-imperialism.

Throughout almost its entire history up until 1943 the party was illegal and savagely persecuted by the British authorities. Until recent years it also had to face the active hostility of all the Zionist parties because of its opposition to collaborating with British imperialism and its defense of Arab national and democratic rights. Working under these difficult conditions, in a colonial country with an Arab majority and with a Jewish community whose nationhood was still in the seed, the party made certain errors during the period before World War II, which were also shared by Communist parties of other countries. These consisted of underestimating Jewish national development and failing to perceive clearly enough certain reactionary manifestations within the Arab anti-imperialist national movement.

Once emerged from illegality, the Party began to make rapid progress. However, almost at the outset of its legal existence, it was confronted by serious internal problems and had to wage struggles against deviations toward both Jewish and Arab nationalism. These struggles resulted in the separation of the Arab

and Jewish Communists into two distinct organizations (the Communist Party of Palestine and the League for National Liberation). However, under the impact of the national liberation war and the new responsibilities that came with statehood, and as a result of the untiring and unceasing efforts of the Communist Party, the original differences were resolved and the two groups were reunited within the Communist Party of Israel. This is a major achievement which strengthens the working class and the people, both Jewish and Arab, in their fight for national independence, peace, and social progress.

In 1944 the Party expelled a Jewish Right-wing group, which later organized its own party. In December 1948 this group, professing agreement with the principles and program of the Communist Party of Israel, was readmitted. However, in February the leaders of this group had to be expelled again when they were caught in an anti-Communist conspiracy with the terrorist Stern group.

In the past year the Communists have won an important place for themselves by their militant patriotism and clear-cut opposition to all appeasement of British and American imperialism. They have fought for a policy of friendship and cooperation with Israel's friends, the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, and have opposed mortgaging the country's independence and fu-

ture to Wall Street. They alone have consistently combated all chauvinist actions in regard to the Arab citizens of Israel and have demanded a policy that would help create a democratic independent Arab state as Israel's neighbor. They have opposed reactionary domestic measures and have defended the interests of the soldiers and their families. They have helped mobilize all the country's energies for the war effort and have also organized aid from abroad. And more than 80 percent of the Jewish members of the Party and the Young Communist League have been either in the armed forces or in other forms of war service.

The Arab Communists, organized in the League of National Liberation, have covered themselves with glory as the only political force that opposed the Mufti's mob and the foreign invaders and led the struggle against them. It was the League of National Liberation which initiated in the Arab sector of Palestine, in the teeth of terror, anti-war demonstrations that won wide support among the Arab masses and stirred the admiration of the Jewish community.

The Communist Party was virtually the only party that registered a percentage gain in the recent election, increasing its vote from 2 percent in 1944 to 3.4 percent. Among the Arab voters it was the first party—testimony to the high political level attained by the Arab citizens of Israel as a result of their experiences in recent months.

PERSPECTIVES

Israel's national independence struggle is under the political leadership of the bourgeoisie, which utilizes reactionary Social-Democracy to obtain mass support for its policies. However, the Left forces in the trade unions and in the army have considerable strength, even though today, as a result of U.W.P. policies, only part of this strength is being thrown into the fight. It is inevitable that with the establishment of peace or a prolonged armistice, sharp struggles will develop around the major issues of foreign and domestic policy.

At the same time the fact that the working class of Israel is still strongly influenced by reformist and nationalist ideologies and has not yet achieved sufficient maturity to assume political leadership of the nation means that the danger is very great that Israel will be sucked into the American imperialist whirlpool. The military phase of the struggle has served to obscure the extent to which the United States has already established a dominant position within the Jewish state. Through the U.N. truce, mediation and conciliation machinery, through loans granted or deferred and the conditions attached to loans, through the American Zionist leadership and the funds they control, through American private investment, and through pressure exerted by means of various Arab states, the United States is extending its control over Israel.

Thus American imperialism has

supplanted Britain as the number one enemy of Israel and of all the people of the Middle East. We must evaluate the government chiefly by the extent to which it resists or capitulates to this number one enemy. While it would be a mistake to regard the strong official tendency toward national surrender as a completed process and to overlook the counter-pressures, it would also be a serious error to view the Israeli government as anti-imperialist. It is the people that constitutes the anti-imperialist force.

Israel cannot escape its geography and the politics of its geography. Israel can, however, escape imperialist vassalage, but only if it mobilizes to the full, not only its own internal energies, economic, political and moral, but also its allies and potential allies in the Middle East, in the countries of socialism and People's Democracy, among the American people and the democratic forces everywhere.

For the American people and for

our Communist Party the Palestine issue is an inseparable part of the struggle against the entire bipartisan war policy for world domination which betrays our national interests and makes America an object of distrust and hatred throughout the world. It is precisely on the Palestine issue that we have witnessed at various times the widest and most militant protests against our government's policy. Today the American Zionist leaders have succeeded in choking off most of these protests and covering the real visage of U.S. policy with silken hosannas.

Our Party, the entire labor movement, and all progressives face the task of renewing the fight, now on a different level, and organizing the broadest efforts among Jews and non-Jews to keep Israel from becoming Marshallized and Forrestalized. In the movement for aid to Israel, we also must devote special attention to assisting the working-class and progressive forces on whom Israel's future so largely rests.

Toward a Dem

by Lem Harris

THE LONG-STANDING THEORY inherent in the plantation system of slavery today a more than at any time since. The unholy alliance Street finance-capital tation Bourbons consanership for maintained moded land system giving support to even and fascist developments.

This alliance of Southern with Northern capitalists being one between equals, both are completely Northern capital for on their crops and for on their land. Every Southern economy relies on Wall Street lack of basic industries of Southern workers exploitation of the Negro vival of primitive conditions—all these conditions of the semi-colonial South.

As in every colonial area, the bulk of work on the land is sharecropping system both the people and the