

On the First Arab-Israel War

by Y. RAD

The editors of Workers Vanguard are pleased to print this valuable study taken from the Israeli Marxist publication, Vanguard. The article differs at certain points from our own previous understanding of events in the key 1947-49 period. This consideration only increases the document's worth for us since critical assimilation of the author's view by American Marxists should add depth to our understanding.

I. General Background

The Second World War was presented and has been presented up to now, both by the American, French and British imperialists as well as by the Soviet bureaucrats and their parties, as "a war of the democratic powers against Fascism." In light of this "precise" class definition, the Stalinist Parties everywhere naturally supported the "democratic forces."

In reality, this war was no different in essence from World War I, despite the involvement of the USSR. That is to say, it was an imperialist war on the part of all the bourgeoisies that took part in the war, those who ruled the working class under the form of fascism and those who ruled in the form of "democracy." The aim of all elements of the imperialist bourgeoisie was a new division of power in the world.

The principal victor in the war was the American bourgeoisie, which began to make permanent the new imperialist order. On the one hand, it supplanted decaying British and French imperialism and those tied to their favors; on the other hand, it surrounded the USSR with military bases in all those countries which were established as its domain by the Yalta and Potsdam agreements—agreements which the Soviet bureaucrats also signed.

The decay of British and French imperialism in the Near East confronted the American bourgeoisie with the

question of how to rule this region without the necessity of direct military control.

A part of the American bourgeoisie, expressing itself through military circles and the State Department, called for using the system of British imperialism: supporting the Arab bourgeoisie and feudal elements while strengthening the British army in the area. Another part of the bourgeoisie, expressing itself through Truman, maintained that the existing Arab governments were collapsing and that it would not be possible to support them. The solution proposed by Truman was to strengthen Zionism, which was likely to play the key role in maintaining the imperialist order against all popular struggles in the area. It should be remembered that right after the war there was a sharp struggle by the masses in the entire area against British and French imperialism and the local bourgeoisies tied to them.

It is clear that British imperialism, looking for a way to postpone the end of its rule in the area, supported the American military circles and the State Department. Bevin maintained hysterically that the creation of a Zionist state as an expression of Zionism would necessarily cause a sharper popular struggle and would force American imperialism to send its army to the area. In that situation, the Arab bourgeoisie would not be able to stop the masses opposed to the creation of a Zionist state at the expense of the Palestinian people.

"The Zionists wanted more than just easier immigration practices. They wanted the American government to support their aim of a Jewish state in Palestine.... The State Department continued to be more concerned about the Arab reaction than the sufferings of the Jews...."

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff urged that no U.S. armed forces be involved in carrying out the committee's [the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission—Trans.] findings [for the creation of a Jewish state—Y.R.]... they added that control of oil in the Middle East was a

very serious consideration... they were primarily concerned about Middle East oil."

—Harry Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, pp. 140, 149

The decision of the Security Council of 29 November 1947 reflects clearly the argument that was occurring within the American bourgeoisie. The decision established the principle of partition without specifying how it would be put into practice. This decision had only one meaning: to the extent that the Zionists could emerge from the military conflict with the upper hand, it would prove Truman's theories and the conclusion would be to strengthen Zionism. But to the extent that Zionism did not succeed in proving itself as a serious political power—the theories of Marshall would prevail and the whole matter would be presented as the failure of a humanitarian plan to rehabilitate the Jewish refugees.

II. The Secret of the Zionist Victory

On the eve of the entry of the Arab bourgeois armies into Palestine on 15 May 1948, the Zionist military forces already controlled most of the area assigned to Zionism by the decision of the U.N.

Little more than a month later, by the first ceasefire of 11 June 1948, the Zionists had won militarily and had proved Truman's theories.

The question here is: what is the political explanation for the military victory?

A) The complete control by the Israeli bourgeoisie over the Jewish working class

Unlike the Arab bourgeoisie which could not mobilize the Arabs and arm them for war because it was separated from them, in 1948 as today, Zionism could mobilize the Jewish working class behind it.

This situation requires explanation. It is possible of course to blame the Jewish working class, to maintain that it was in the interests of the workers to serve Zionism. But we maintain that the Jewish working class, as with all other parts of the world working class, has but one interest: proletarian revolution.

The explanation for the Zionist control does not lie in the interests of the Jewish working class but in its organizational position—its lack of any weapons or independent struggles. And the responsibility for this situation rests with the Communist Party.

In 1936 the Arab revolt broke out. For three years the struggle of the Palestinian masses against British imperialism and Zionism continued. A revolutionary workers party would have united the popular Palestinian struggle with the struggle of the Jewish working class against British imperialism, Zionism and the Palestinian bourgeoisie. But the Communist Party gave full support to the Neshashibis and the Husseinis [the two major competing groups of the Palestinian bourgeoisie—Trans.] who betrayed the Palestinian masses. This policy not only helped the oppression of the Palestinian masses, but it also pushed the Jewish masses into the arms of Zionism. At the time of the second world imperialist war, the



Prime Minister Ben Gurion reads Israeli

Communist Party helped mobilize the Jewish working class behind British imperialism and Zionism.

The Jewish working class lacked not only a revolutionary party but also the elementary instrument for its economic defense. The Histadrut is not a trade union with reformist leadership (as the Communist Party maintains), but an arm of Zionism. Just as the Histadrut organized the Jewish workers against the Arab workers under the slogan "Hebrew labor," in 1948 with the support of the CP it organized the Jewish workers to fight the Arab masses under the slogan of "national liberation."

B) The situation of the Palestinian masses

The Palestinian masses came out of the experience of the 1936-39 insurrection (during which they were smashed and became despondent) not only not knowing how to continue the struggle but also lacking the strength to organize anew. The several thousand who found the strength to struggle lacked the leadership to bring them to victory. The "Arab High Committee," the bourgeois Palestinian organization, put the Husseinis family at the head of the guerrilla struggle. This family, at whose head stood the Mufti Haj Amin, had a central role in the betrayal by the Palestinian bourgeoisie at the time of the "Arab revolt" [in 1936-39]; today it continues in this task. On the one hand, each fighter had to supply his own weapons so that the guerrillas only had ancient light arms and many of the guerrillas lacked any guns to fight with. On the other hand, the Mufti conducted unceasing propaganda for the abandonment of villages and towns until the day of "victory and revenge." The same Palestinian bourgeoisie exposed fully its class character at the end of 1947 when King Abdullah set in motion his crafty plots which he contrived in conjunction with the Zionists.

On 1 December 1948 the King called a large assembly in Jericho to which were invited representatives of the Palestinian bourgeoisie. The mayor of Hebron, Sheikh Jabri, who today cooperates with the Israeli occupation government, was appointed by the King as head of the assembly.

The assembly made the following decisions:

1) The conference saw in the Land of Israel [the Hebrew expression connotes a vague geographic unit, approximately the area of the British mandate of Palestine in 1921—Trans.] a single unit which could not be divided.

2) Arab countries could not make war as separate forces but only with complete national unity. As a first step there should be unity with the people of Jordan.

3) The conference recognized His Majesty King Abdullah as king of the Land of Israel.



General Sir John Glubb Pasha (left), commander of the Arab legion.

UNITED NATIONS



ISRAELI OFFICE OF INFORMATION, NEW YORK
Declaration of Independence.



ZIONIST ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY, NEW YORK
King Abdullah of Jordan



UNITED NATIONS

Arab legionnaires at Mandelbaum Gate in Jerusalem.

On 13 December 1948 a Jordanian Parliament composed of 20 members was established because the National Council had decided to approve the government policies on this question.

Counterposed to the Palestinian guerrillas and their traitorous leadership, the Zionist guerrillas possessed an army of about 70,000-80,000 men, armed with new weapons which included, according to Ben Gurion's version: 10,000 rifles, 900 submachine guns, 180 heavy machine guns, 672 light mortars and 96 medium mortars (Ben Gurion, *Be-hilhemet Yisrael*).

This army had experience that had been acquired at the time of the suppression of the "Arab revolt" and at the time of the second imperialist war. Most of its commanders were simply former British army officers.

C) The Arab bourgeoisie

If it is easy to understand how the Zionists defeated the downtrodden Palestinian masses, at first sight it is much harder to understand how Zionism overpowered all the bourgeois Arab armies.

The following tables make it clear that the military victory of the Zionists in no way differed from a victory of the stronger army over a weaker force. But this fact requires a political explanation which comes after the presentation of the statistics:

It should be remarked that the statistics, taken from the book *Hasichsuch Ha-Aravi-Ha-Yisraeli [The Arab-Israeli Conflict]* by Dan Safran, reflect the situation in the last months of the war. The Zionists possessed fewer weapons than are cited in the

table; their weapons supply was completed by the Soviet bureaucrats.

ISRAELI ARMY (source: Safran)

Total Forces	70,000
Regular	30,000
Air Forces Total	67 planes
Fighter Planes	40 planes
Transport Planes	12 planes
Other	15 planes
Armored Forces	1.5 brigades
Medium and Light Tanks	40 to 50
Armored Troop Vehicles	200
Navy	
Torpedo Boats	5

EGYPTIAN ARMY (source: Safran)

Total Forces	50,000 to 60,000
Regular	50,000
(of whom were sent to Palestine)	18,000 soldiers, half from a reserve battalion and a second-rate garrison)
Armored Forces	1 brigade
Medium and Light Tanks	80
Air Forces Total	70 planes
Fighter Planes	35 planes
Transport Planes	10 planes
Other	25 planes

SYRIAN ARMY (source: Safran)

Total Forces	8,000
(of whom one armored division was sent to Palestine)	

IRAQI ARMY (source: A. El-Tal)

15,000 men sent to Palestine

ARAB LEGION (source: A. El-Tal)

Total Forces	9,050
Irregular	1,200
Artillery	
2-inch guns	29
6-pounders	38
25-pounders	24
3-inch mortars	40
Armored Troops	
With machine guns	52
With heavy guns	72

What is the explanation for the "paradoxical" relation of forces? Immediately after the end of the second imperialist war, there was a wave of revolutionary struggles in different parts of the world. In Europe the economy was destroyed, as in other areas under the rule of the decaying European imperialism. In the Middle East the masses struggled more sharply and called into question the rule of the Arab bourgeoisie and their masters, the British imperialists.

The Arab masses correctly saw the rise of the Zionist state as a measure primarily aimed against them.

In this situation, the Arab bourgeoisie was forced to declare war against Zionism, because its fear of the masses exceeded its fear of Zionism.

If the Arab bourgeoisie had really intended to prevent the founding of the Zionist state, it would have been compelled to organize a general mobilization of the masses and to arm them with guns, with the clear understanding that those guns would be turned against it and against its masters, the imperialists.

There was only one possibility for the degenerate bourgeoisie: to wage a phony war for the purpose of deceiving the masses and of staying in power longer, with the clear understanding that this phony war would lead to military defeat.

Behind these steps of the Arab bourgeoisie in 1948 lies hidden the logic of the bourgeoisie in countries in which the bourgeois-democratic revolution has not been carried out.

The French bourgeoisie was capable of carrying out the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution: national liberation, agrarian reform, national unity, attainment of rights of free speech and of free assembly. At that time capitalism was in the ascendancy and the workers were not yet an independent class. But in the era of imperialism, in the time of the decline and decay of capitalism, when the working class has (for decades now) put the proletarian revolution on the agenda—to expect the bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped world to be prepared to carry out its historic tasks is to expect the bourgeoisie to be ready to commit suicide.

There is therefore no surprise in the ridiculously small military mobilization organized by the Arab bourgeoisie nor in the behavior of their armies in battle.

The Iraqi army (in addition to the battle of the "Star of Jordan," in which they were also quickly defeated) took part in the battle for Jenin on 2 June 1948: they conquered Jenin and then stayed there without moving until the Rhodes conference. They then beat a quick retreat to Iraq in order to suppress the raging masses.

The Syrian bourgeois army, instead of entering by way of Lebanon and conquering Nazareth and Afula, as simple military strategy required, penetrated to the Zemar-Tiberias area, fortified their positions and remained there when their left flank was exposed by the Iraqi army's turn toward Jenin.

The Egyptian bourgeois army, acting in accord with the instructions of the British imperialists, entered the Negev and conquered the part that the British imperialists wanted as a substitute for their position on the Suez Canal in case they were forced to abandon Egypt.

The same class strategy that weakened the Arab bourgeoisies was revealed in all its purity by the ruler of

Jordan, King Abdullah, in signing the secret agreement with Ben Gurion.

There has been an effort up until now, and of course in 1948, to conceal the fact of the agreements which decided that the area set aside for the Palestinians in the partition plan would be transferred to Abdullah. In exchange, Abdullah agreed to Zionist rule in the area of Palestine set aside for Zionism by the pirates of the UN. Not only did the course of the fighting follow this agreement exactly, but there are abundant witnesses to the authenticity of the agreement.

Not only does Yisrael Bar (in his book *Bitahon Yisrael*) state that the agreement existed—so does (in his memoirs) Abdullah El-Tal, a senior officer in the Jordanian Legion who was known for his nationalistic outlook and for his attempt at a coup in Jordan, which was partly a result of the negotiations.

On 16 January 1949 at a meeting between King Abdullah and the head of the Zionist delegation Sasson in the king's palace in Shuneh the king turned to Sasson and said, "I am an Arab king, I don't break my agreements. You know my feelings about you. Look, Sasson, my friend, we won't make war on you or attack you."

In the introduction to the book of Abdullah El-Tal, General Haim Herzog writes: "there is no doubt that Abdullah El-Tal and on the other hand the King and Glubb Pasha did not fight the same war. Tel wanted to destroy Israel, Glubb and the King wanted to seize the territories set aside for the Arabs."

The "battle" for East Jerusalem and the stillborn plan of Yigal Allon for the conquest of the West Bank are only some of the many examples which illustrate that the war between the Zionists and the feudal-bourgeois regime in Jordan was conducted according to the agreement.

The strength of the Legion in East Jerusalem was only enough to defend the city and to conquer the Jewish quarter, for under Abdullah El-Tal (the Jerusalem commander) there were in total 15 officers and 711 men and NCOs. On the other side, it is clear that the "attempts" of the Israeli army to conquer East Jerusalem, which came to naught, were only phony attempts. Even Ben-Gurion himself was forced to confirm this in the case of Kol Ha-Am [the CP newspaper—Trans.] vs. Ben Gurion in 1951.

In his book *Le-Or Ha-Yom U-be-Mahashak [In Daylight and in Darkness]* Yerohem Cohen states that after the conquest of the Galilee, Allon presented a plan for the conquest of the West Bank that was received with enthusiasm by the brigade command—Carmel and Y. Bar. "Carmel praised the plan and so did Y. Bar, representative of Yadin (head of the Operations Branch of the General Headquarters), and promised to recommend it to the General Headquarters. We were astounded when we were ordered to immediately move down to the Shphalah [western foothills of the Judean mountains—Trans.]."

III. The Nature of the War

The discussion of the question of the agreements between Ben Gurion and Abdullah brings us to the question: what was the class nature of the 1948 war?

If we accept the claims of the Zionists and the Stalinists, it was the war of national liberation of the Jewish people. To say that, we must show that Zionism was a revolutionary bourgeois movement that captured state power after its victory over the imperialists.

One hundred years after the bourgeoisie in all those countries which have not carried out the bourgeois revolution (part of whose task is the achievement of national liberation) has ceased to be capable of carrying out that revolution... Zionism successfully dissolved the laws of history...

We can only take off our hats and

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shout with enthusiasm: Down With Marxism! Long Live Zionism!

But before we sacrifice Marxism, let us examine the hidden secrets of this claim concerning the nature of the war:

To the Stalinist "national liberation" means:

Pillage, murder and expulsion of the Palestinian people because, in spite of the Zionist myth, the Palestinian masses did not leave their towns and villages of their own free will, but under compulsion and the force of fear (the number of Palestinian refugees, by an overly conservative estimate, exceeded 3/4 million).

"National liberation" means to conclude a pact with the feudal Abdullah for the express purpose of pillaging the Palestinian people.

"National liberation" means to free oneself from decaying British imperialism in order to become the stooge of American imperialism.

Anti-imperialist war means to retreat—on the orders of American imperialism—from the one battle Zionism conducted against British imperialism, as can be seen from the terminating of the fighting in the Sinai.

Zionism and Stalinism can define this war as a war of national liberation. We have a different definition for this filthy war: Zionism fought to establish itself, by means of the pillage and expulsion of the Palestinian people, as the strong power on which the imperialists could count as one of the central pillars of the new imperialist order.

The Arab bourgeoisie fought in order to preserve the position of decaying British imperialism and to save itself from the anger of the masses.

Neither of the two sides fought against imperialism, but rather on the side of the imperialists against the masses.

There are historical situations in which it is necessary to support the bourgeoisie in countries in which the bourgeois-democratic revolution has not been carried out, when the bourgeoisie is fighting against the imperialists. For example, Egypt in 1956 or when the Palestinian organizations (bourgeois and petty-bourgeois) struggle against Zionism and against Hussein. This requires critical support, with warnings against the betrayal of the bourgeoisie, and above all the maintenance of independence by the working class: "march separately, strike together."

But in 1948 any support for Zionism or the Arab bourgeoisie had only one meaning: betrayal of the working class. Similarly there is only one name for this war: imperialist war.

IV. How Far Would Zionism Be Allowed to Expand?

If we have established that the Zionist victory was clear on 11 June 1948, with the declaration of the first ceasefire, the question which immediately arises is: "Why did the war end only in April 1949?"

The explanation for the Zionist victory in June 1948 is that the American bourgeoisie had concluded its debate over which power it would support in the Near East, the Arab bourgeoisie or the Zionists. But a question remained open: how far could Zionism expand and gather power without at the same time undermining the shaky order? As soon as American imperialism saw a force taking the place of the disintegrating Arab regimes, it sought to preserve them; that is, to preserve the rule of British imperialism over them. The American bourgeoisie decided the question of how far Zionism could expand by the same method it had determined which forces to support in the Near East in order to preserve its interests.

The Zionist decision to conquer the Negev was put into action only after they had persuaded American imperialism that the conquest of the Negev

served their common interests. Before this decision was made, there were long discussions between American imperialism, British imperialism and Zionism that continued until the end of September. Macdonald's diary testifies to this struggle:

"the following suggestions are put forth by my Government...

"1. Perhaps a solution can be worked out as a feature of any final understanding with Jordan which would exchange a large portion of the desert land of the Negev for that portion of fertile western Galilee which Israel now occupies militarily.

"September 22: Disturbing to learn that Washington and London have come out so strongly, so unreservedly for the Bernadotte proposals... that Israel will trade the Negev for portions of Galilee, particularly since most of the former was allocated to Israel by the



Arab League holds meeting in Jordan.

U.N. partition resolution of November 29th and the latter area has been occupied by Israel forces....

"A high Israeli official in a confidential conversation [said]:....

"3. United States support of Britain's proposal to give the Negev to the Arabs—that is, to Jordan—is no solution and can have only the following results:

a. It would not endear the U.S. to other Arab States.

b. It would create a miniature State of Israel which would inevitably become embittered toward the United States.... I [Macdonald] felt this analysis had much logic. Furthermore, Jordan would not be grateful to the United States for our support of what would be considered to be a British gift of the Negev to Abdullah."

—James Macdonald, *My Mission in Israel*, pp. 84, 85, 88

In his memoirs, Truman recounts how the decision that there was a place for the existence of a "strong and large" Israel was reached (as he stated in a speech at Madison Square Garden on 28 October 1948).

In the middle of October an Israeli Army force of four brigades split the Egyptian army and entrapped most of it at Faluja.

It is completely clear that the reason the surrounded Egyptian force did not ask for aid from the Iraqi or Jordanian bourgeoisie was a silent agreement for Zionist victory.

"Two Syrian battalions were sent to relieve the Iraqi troops so that they could aid those at Faluja, but as soon as the two battalions got to Drayah, they were stopped from entering the country and were told that if they tried to enter, they would be fired upon."

—A. El-Tal, *The Tragedy of Palestine*, p. 294

At the beginning of November, a session of the UN General Assembly began in Paris at which the pirate band debated whether to permit the Zionist campaign of pillage, and, if so, how to portray it. On 4 November 1948, it was formally decided to urgently call upon Israel to withdraw. But it is clear from what Macdonald's diary reveals that the Zionists received encouragement from the Security Council:

"The Israeli commanders were convinced that had they not been halted by the Security Council order they could have driven the Egyptians back into Egypt; they were eager to find a reason for resuming the offensive... [Israel] did not obey the order. This successful non-compliance perhaps encouraged Israel to prepare for further military action."

—Macdonald, *op.cit.*, p. 114

Seven days after the decision of the General Assembly, the Zionists opened a new campaign of conquest called "Operation Desolation" whose aim was the conquest of Sinai. But after Shever-Lev, commander of the 9th Brigade, had been sent to conquer El-Arish, he received a

estimate of the Zionist contribution to the making of the new imperialist order had been mistaken, so it gave Zionism the Southern Negev including Eilat, an important strategic port to the Indian Ocean.

On 5 March 1949, two brigades of the Israeli Army, "Golani" and "Ha-Negev," went down to conquer the southern Negev. The operation was carried out within strict limits, including

"... a limitation which aroused great astonishment among the commanders of the units, [which] was the order not to enter into battle during their campaign, and that in case of encounter with enemy forces they were to break off contact and to fulfill their task by indirect means."

—Y. Cohen, *Le-Or Ha-Yom U-be-Mahashak*, p. 260

The explanation for this strange order is given by El-Tal: "At the same time that the Jewish forces were approaching, and conflict was expected at any moment, Glubb Pasha sent a telegram to the commanders of the troops:

"6 March 1949 Immediate Telegram To: the commander of the Southern Region

From: Headquarters Pull your forces immediately out of the following places:

- Mt. El-Vadabi
- Wadi El-Hini
- Ras El-Nekev
- Um Rashrash (Eilat)"

The confirmation of the fact that the Southern Negev was given to Zionism as a present from the imperialist "enemy" against whom Zionism was conducting a "war of national liberation" is again to be found in the words of Macdonald, who at the time of the crisis in Jordan spoke to the British Minister Sir Knox Helm. Helm told him:

"I feel strongly that the success of Arab intransigence would be a disaster for the U.S. and the U.K.'s vital interests in this area. Such success... could only take the form of breaking Israel's political power."

—Macdonald, *op.cit.*, p. 214

V. The End of the War

The war of 1948 ended with an incident between Zionism and King Abdullah over the control of the Triangle [Negev—Trans.].

The bourgeois Iraqi army was forced to withdraw hastily from the conflict in the month of March 1949, in the words of Abdullah, "because of causes much more important than the problem of the State of Israel" (El-Tal, *op.cit.*, p. 363). In clear political language: in order forcibly to suppress the Iraqi masses.

In spite of the clear agreement between Abdullah and the Zionists that specified that the Triangle would remain under the rule of Jordan, the Zionists demanded the Triangle. Despite the pleas of the King, the Zionists made war upon him in order to make him surrender. The baron of the pirates, to whom Abdullah turned for help, answered him in a telegram dated 29 March 1949:

"Telegram from Truman To His Majesty

Mr. Truman acknowledges His Majesty's communication to him. He is forced this time to accept the demands of the Jews. Mr. Truman guarantees to His Majesty that he will prevent further claims by the Jews in the future."

The King was forced, of course, to hand over the area to the Zionists.

This incident characterizes the relations between Zionism and the Arab bourgeoisie since 1948. They cooperated in actions to oppress the masses. Zionism, however, enjoyed primacy in the imperialist order. It was not only a tool against the masses but also an instrument of pressure of the American bourgeoisie on the Arab bourgeoisie. Every time the Arab bourgeoisie demanded more than the American bourgeoisie was prepared to give—the whip of Zionism fell upon them.

VI. The Soviet Bureaucrats

Another question needs to be answered: why did the Soviet bureaucrats



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Israeli President Chaim Weizmann (right) presents Torah to U.S. President Harry Truman.

support Zionism? The answer is to be found in the class nature of the bureaucracy. In 1948 American imperialism had already surrounded the USSR with military bases. The question that faced the bureaucrats was how to break out of the encirclement without raising the danger of proletarian revolution.

It seemed to the USSR that it would be possible to exploit the temporary dispute between the British imperialists and the Zionists in order to penetrate into the Middle East and to prevent the construction of a military blockade against the USSR in the area. This was enough to result in support later on for Nasserism, Kassem in Iraq and the Ba'ath in Syria.

It is clear that in order to hide its aims from the working class, the Soviet bureaucracy was compelled to portray the 1948 war as a war of "national liberation" of the Jewish people, just as it portrays the bonapartist [Arab] re-

gimes as the "non-capitalist road to socialism."

But each step of the bureaucracy in support of the enemies of the working class not only helped to weaken the working class outside the Soviet Union, but also made more serious the danger that the USSR would go over to the imperialist camp. By supporting the Zionists the Soviet Union not only helped Zionism become an imperialist fortress against the masses of the Middle East, but also to become the strongest anti-Soviet base in the area.

There is only one way for the working class to defend itself from imperialism: proletarian revolution. There is only one way for the working class to defend the remnants of the victories of October: a political revolution of the working class in the USSR which will send the parasites who rule over the Soviet Union to the place to where all enemies of the working class will go.

Conclusions

It is now possible to summarize the significance of the 1948 war and its lessons for the working class.

- The war of 1948 was not simply a war of one bourgeoisie against another but an imperialist war on the part of all the bourgeoisies that took part in the war against the Arab and Jewish masses of the area.

- This war was part of the defeat suffered by the masses after the second imperialist war in the framework of the new imperialist order.

- This defeat, as a defeat of the working class, is the responsibility also of the Soviet bureaucracy. Each step it takes in order to defend itself by means of subverting the proletarian revolution only advances the power of the imperialists and endangers further the gains of October.

- The agreement between Abdullah and Ben Gurion makes thoroughly clear the connection of the Arab bourgeoisie with the Zionists against the masses; at the same time, the agreement between the Zionists and Abdullah makes clear the aim of Zionism. The dispute between the Arab bourgeoisie and Zionism is over the question of who can better serve the interests of imperialism in the area.

- The Arab bourgeoisie is not adapted to fulfilling the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the area. These tasks fall on the shoulders of the working class.

- Not the Arab bourgeoisie in general and not the Palestinian bourgeoisie can implement the right of the Palestinian people to national self-determination; only a proletarian revolution can do so.

- The strength of Zionism comes from the absence of independent organizations of the working class, trade unions and a workers party. ■

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