

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Supports End of Reparations to Israel

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I refer to the column of Joe Clark on the statement of the East German Government calling for cessation of reparations to Israel.

Clark objects in the name of "all that is decent and good" to this demand. I would say that he does not convince me that this demand is indecent or bad.

True it is that the Soviet Union and other peace-loving states helped establish and secure the state of Israel and would prefer to continue doing so. But the warlike actions of Israel are indecent and bad and endanger world peace. Shall they be rewarded for their aggression, or shall sanctions be imposed for their failure to listen to the world outcry for peace?

This, it seems to me, is the crux of the question. The East German statement is made as part of the effort to impose a peaceful solution to this question. As one of Jewish descent, I humbly beg forgiveness of the Egyptian people, particularly those made orphans by the joint aggression of Britain, France and Israel. This is the act of indecency we must speak out against. That a state like Israel should attempt to follow the philosophy of imperialist aggressors is the height of indecency.

D. R.

Calls Clark View Of Reparations Inadequate

Editor, Daily Worker:

March 1, 1957

Joe Clark's column of Feb. 27 on West German reparations to Israel takes the view that the reparation agreement concluded between West Germany and Israel (and—as he neglects to say—a committee of Jewish leaders from several parts of the world but dominated by the U. S. leaders) was "just and necessary." Unfortunately, the situation was not so simple. It was not merely a case of obtaining monetary reparations as partial compensation for the Hitler genocide of the Jews to aid in the economic developments of Israel.

The facts are these: in 1951 an understanding was reached by Jewish leaders in the U. S. and Israel with the State Department and West Germany to conclude this agreement. But this was no altruistic act on the part of the Adenauer government and the State Department. In reality this reparations deal was intended as a means of reducing resistance by Jews and democratic-minded non-Jews all over the world to the intense campaign to rearm West

Germany.

The "Reconstructionist" a liberal Jewish semi-monthly of Oct. 19, 1951 wrote that the Adenauer statement "was elicited from the German government by our own State Department as one of the conditions to full acceptance of Western Germany in the concert of powers allied against encroachment by the Communist axis."

It was quite well understood that the deal would insure that the Jewish leaders would not mobilize their organized strength against (West German rearmament. And this proved to be so in the following years. The major Jewish organizations in the U.S. maintained virtually total silence on this issue. While the American Jewish Congress convention in 1951 passed a resolution urging that West German rearmament be withheld until the country was denazified and democratized, the 1953 convention said not one word on the issue. The silence by the major U. S. Jewish organizations has been maintained virtually unbroken to this day.

In his column Joe Clark mentions that the extreme right wing in West Germany opposed the reparations agreement. True. But they were not the only ones. For quite different reasons, masses of Jews all over the world were also opposed. On Sept. 11, 1952, the day after the reparations agreement was signed, the N.Y. Times reported from Tel Aviv that "Most observers agreed that a referendum [in Israel] on the question six months ago, before the talks were initiated, would

have resulted in an overwhelming negative note."

As to the East German government's protest against the West German decision to continue sending reparations to Israel, which Joe Clark mentions, I have not seen the text of the statement, so I cannot comment on it. But the whole reparations picture is different today from what it was in 1951-55. The German people themselves have slowed down West German rearmament to a crawl and may prevent it on a grand scale together. This is not to say that the danger to peace from West German rearmament has passed. This issue remains one of the primary obstacles to German reunification, which cannot occur unless Germany is neutralized or an all-Europe security pact is concluded with the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw military pact.

In the meantime, the reparations going to Israel from West Germany to a certain extent help Israel's economic development. Some who are still opposed maintain that the reparations goods cause unemployment. Much can be said as to the unwisdom of Israel's foreign and economic policies. The sooner Israel adopts a neutralist policy, with unimpeded trade with both East and West, the better it will be for Israel's people and her relations with the Arab world.

But Joe Clark's truncated view of the whole history of the reparations agreement gives a totally inadequate picture of this agreement.

LOUIS HARAP

Labor Paper Hails O'Connor Victory

Excerpts from an editorial in the Racine (Wis.) Labor deals with the recent court ruling on the case of Harvey O'Connor, the noted author and labor editor who now lives in Winnetka, Ill.).

It's too bad that the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals decided the Harvey O'Connor case on the narrow basis that it did. O'Connor cited the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech and religion.

O'Connor, former editor of the Oil Workers union paper and author of several books on America's richest families (Mellon's Millions, Steel-Dictator, The Guggenheims), was hauled before Senator McCarthy's committee in 1953 and asked if he was a "member of the Communist conspiracy" when he wrote the books.

O'Connor said:

"Under the First Amendment to

the Constitution, my writings, my books, and my political beliefs are of no legitimate concern to this committee.

He was cited for contempt and convicted later by a district judge. Last week the three-judge appeals court unanimously overturned the verdict and upheld O'Connor, but only on the ground that the question was too vague and susceptible to many different interpretations.

We agree with the Christian Science Monitor, which called the verdict "more ground recaptured for the cause of individual liberties.

But, we, to are disappointed that the court did not consider the First Amendment plea. Surely a citizen's rights before a committee must come to a hard and fast decision some time, and the sooner the better.