OUTLOOK FOR MAPAM

Tel Aviv

After months of negotiation between Mapai (Israel Labor Party) and Mapam (United Workers Party) over the terms on which the latter would join the Israel government coalition, the Mapam executive council voted 157 to 95 in early March to break off discussions. The council majority, particularly those from urban centers, resolved that conditions were lacking “for the participation of Mapam in the government on the basis of a joint minimum program.” Among the specific Mapam demands on which no agreement could be reached were: opposition to a pact with Abdullah so long as the Transjordan-British alliance has any application to the Arab sector of Palestine; no participation in or encouragement of a facsimile of the Atlantic Pact in the Middle East; no Marshall Plan for Israel; support of a United Nations pact outlawing atomic weapons; support for a “Big Five” pact; immediate extension of equal rights to the Arab minority in all respects; freedom of trade union action for wage raises; and placing of the main tax burden on the rich.

Mapai had hoped to use these negotiations to guarantee the continuation of its reactionary policies by a new coalition government. But it is clear that Israel, which is at present undergoing a serious political and economic crisis and a threat to its security, needs not merely a government reshuffling, but a basic change in its political line. For many months now the Communists have warned that the policies of the social democratic-clerical government were leading to catastrophe.

Imperialism is weaving its net about us with its accustomed skill. The latest phase is the arming of the Arab countries and the threat of a “second round” of war. Now imperialism is offering us the baited promise “to send light arms” and extend a loan of the well-known Wall Street type. The Israel government appears eager to swallow the sugar-coated bait, oblivious of the hateful hook—further enslavement to aggressive American imperialism.

Certain members of the minority of the Mapam executive council urged acceptance of Mapai’s argument that inclusion of Israel in the Marshall plan is merely an
LETTER ON ANTI-SEMITISM

The following self-explanatory letter was printed in the Cincinnati Enquirer in February. Among its signers are Rabbi Jacob R. Marcus, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and a professor at Hebrew Union College, and Rabbi James G. Heller, a past president of the Central Conference and a leading member of the Labor Zionists.—Eds.

This letter is written after considerable deliberation. Readers take issue with a newspaper at their own peril, for the last word and the setting of that word rest with the paper. Nonetheless, we must take the risk and address this letter to you and to your readers.

Several times in the past committees have visited the publisher of The Enquirer and protested against the biased and apparently irresponsible manner in which matters relating to Jews have been handled in the paper. These committees have always had a very courteous reception and assurances that no prejudicial treatment was intended.

But the record continues to accumulate. The first instances occurred several years ago, when the word “Jew” was used in headlines, as though it were an adjective. This practice was discontinued. Then came the Gieseking case, and a column by William Hessler, which seemed to many to rest upon misinformation and ill-concealed prejudice. In spite of various national articles giving Gieseking’s background, no retraction or correction was ever published. Last year The Enquirer carried an editorial on a demonstration by Jewish Displaced Persons in Munich—an editorial which once again was without information as to conditions in Germany or in the DP camps. A perusal of reports by the American Army itself might have led to a different expression of opinion.

The final instance, which has prompted us to address this letter to you, is represented by a communication printed in The Enquirer of December 28 last. It is eminently desirable that freedom of expression be open to all in the columns of the press. But this letter was a crude repetition of nazi propaganda, a condonation of the incredible treatment of Jews by Hitler. Certainly there is a limit to which a newspaper should go in opening its columns. In the second place, the letter was obviously directed by a writer not frank or courageous enough to sign his own name or address. The name could be found in no authentic source in Cincinnati, and the address was fictitious. We do not know whether any effort was made to check up on these matters, but the evidence would seem to indicate that there was none.

Perhaps this letter, which we now direct to you, will come as a most unpleasant surprise. Doubtless The Enquirer is unaware of the impression it has made upon many of the Jewish citizens of this community in recent months and years. That impression is probably neither voluntary nor conscious upon its part.

We do not ask special treatment. We want no suppression of fact. Nor do we advocate muzzling columnists in the untrammeled expression of their opinions. We ask for no more than reason and fairness, for a careful examination of facts before publication, for some measure of understanding of the dangers involved in instances such as those we have cited.

We feel certain that this communication will have the same courteous reception which individuals have had in the past.

JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF CINCINNATI, by
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Jacob R. Marcus
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