

Zionism's Global Role

In our last issue we printed the first part of a study written by Steve Goldfield and entitled «The Israeli Role in United States Global Strategy». This is a continuation of the study. (The study also includes a section on Israeli arms sales in Africa; the part dealing with South Africa was printed in «Democratic Palestine» no. 3 and we are omitting the section on Israeli relations with other African countries as it coincided roughly with an article we wrote in no. 2. For this reason you will see a jump in the footnote numbers.)

As domestic demand for military supplies increased (i.e. Israel was fighting more wars), the attraction of selling to foreign markets to pay the huge costs of the Israeli military

grew apace. Because the major industrial powers produce their own arms, the primary Israeli market has been in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Israel's Arms Customers

When he was first appointed defense minister in mid-1981, Ariel Sharon moved to take «control of all aspects of Israeli arms sales and purchases apparently because he wants to gain political benefit for Israel from its sales policy», according to the *Financial Times*.⁷⁶

Asia

The Israelis shipped 20,000 Galil rifles and an unknown number of Uzis to Thailand just after the army reimposed a bloody dictatorship in 1976.⁷⁷ Since that time Israelis have also been training the Thai army. One Israeli involved in the arms industry reported, «When I went past the Thai King's palace recently, I was pleased to see that his majesty's body guards were carrying them [Uzis]». Thailand has also bought small transport aircraft and 155 mm artillery along with training. Since at least 1970, Israeli trainers have operated in Singapore, especially with the armored corps.⁷⁸ Singapore was the first Asian purchaser of the Gabriel missile.⁷⁹ In 1979, the U.S. reportedly arranged the Israeli sale of fourteen Skyhawk attack planes to Indonesia.⁸⁰ Similar arrangements with South Korea and the Philippines have been reported.⁸¹ *The Christian Science Monitor* quoted a source estimating at least 100 million dollars in Israeli arms sales to Southeast Asia in 1981.⁸²

The oldest and closest Israeli ally in eastern Asia is Taiwan. Not only has Taiwan bought millions of dollars of Israeli weapons, such as Gabriel naval rockets, Shafrir missiles, and light weapons,⁸³ but Israel and Taiwan have cooperated in developing new weapons, not least nuclear weapons with South Africa.

Israeli arms, including Sherman tanks, have been flowing to the Lebanese Phalangists for many years. Unlike most worldwide sales, aid to the Phalangists has been a gift. The Phalangists, in turn, held training camps for a German neo-Nazi group responsible for the September 1980 Oktoberfest

massacre in Munich, where 53 were killed and 215 wounded by a bomb.⁸⁴ A former Red Brigades leader in Italy, Petrizio Peci, charges his group was offered but refused arms by Israeli intelligence in return for information on PLO activities in Italy.⁸⁵

In Iran, Israeli advisers counseled the Shah to use «tanks and machine guns against the people» in 1978.⁸⁶ Later *Ha'aretz* reported that the loss of the Iranian military purchases cost the Israelis \$225 million in 1978 and a similar amount in 1979.⁸⁷ Two thousand workers were dismissed from the artillery manufacturer Sultam in Yaken'am «because of the Iranian revolution».⁸⁸

The Israeli arms manufacturers managed to recoup this loss, however. Israeli hostility to Iraq has stimulated a resumption of sales to Iran.⁸⁹ Teheran requested \$200 million worth of equipment after the war with Iraq began.⁹⁰ The Iranians stuck with U.S. weapons and no spare parts, apparently had nowhere else to go. The Carter administration asked the Israelis «to please hold off» until the hostages were released, but the Israelis had already provided 250 spare tires for Iran's U.S.-made F-4 Phantom jets in October 1980.⁹¹ Pierre Salinger, Paris bureau chief for ABC News, showed documentation for the \$330,000 deal, «including copies of the Iranian bank transfers to the Israeli defense ministry's buying mission at the Bank Hapoalim [«Workers' Bank»] in Zurich», according to the *Village Voice*.⁹² ABC News also reported Israeli sales of 106mm recoilless rifles to Iran.⁹³ On July 18, 1981, a CL 44 turbo-prop, hired from a small Argentine air firm named Transporte Aereo Rioplatense to carry 360 tons of U.S. arms from Tel Aviv to Teheran, strayed off course over the Turkish border and crashed in Soviet Armenia.⁹⁴ The cargo plane, using the code name «Tango November», was returning from the third of twelve scheduled missions when it was intercepted by two MIG-25's. The *Sunday Times* of London reported this was a part of a \$27.9 million Israeli deal with Iran to supply spare parts for American-made tanks.⁹⁵