

# The Arab Revolution And The Zionist Labor Movement

(Ed. Note: This is the third in a series of articles on The Palestine Question.)

By H. Vallin

Neither the Jewish terrorists, nor the leaders of the Jewish Agency nor the heads of the Arab parties are capable of leading a consistent anti-imperialist struggle. Yet, in Palestine an extremely powerful and advanced Jewish workers' movement lives and grows. Shouldn't it lead the struggle for the national and social emancipation of the masses?

The Jewish labor movement in Palestine was constructed on a base of racial and national exclusiveness. This racial exclusiveness is based, in its turn, on the "closed Jewish economy" which the Zionists have attempted to build in Palestine and which completely separates the Jewish community from the Arab community.

Owing to a constant inflow of foreign capital and to the support of the Jewish bourgeois and petty-bourgeois masses abroad, Jewish industry in Palestine has been able to pay Jewish workers wages far higher than the wages of Arab workers. Owing to uninterrupted subsidies from abroad, the Jewish agricultural cooperatives could be organized on the basis of modern technology and could assure their members a standard of living far superior to the Arab fellaheen (peasants).

The Jewish labor movement since its beginning has had as its essential function the defense of this high standard of living not only against Jewish capitalist exploitation but also and especially against Arab "penetration" into Jewish industry. In this sense this movement is typical of a labor aristocracy which seeks above all to safeguard its own privileges against

the down-trodden and poverty-stricken mass of Arab workers and peasants.

For this reason the Zionist labor movement has collaborated with might and main in the campaigns to boycott Arab products in order to assure the prosperity of the "national" industries — the prosperity on which rests the privileged position of the Jewish masses.

For this reason the Zionist labor movement has been in the forefront of the struggle for unlimited Jewish immigration, inasmuch as the cessation of the flow of foreign Jewish immigrants and capital threatens to lower the standard of living of the Jewish masses to the level of the Arab masses.

For this reason the Jewish labor movement has gone so far as to force Jewish employers to hire Jewish labor exclusively and to prohibit the hiring of Arab workers in Jewish industries.

And for this reason all the Zionist workers parties, until very recently, made no efforts to organize jointly with the Arab workers. This is why the powerful Zionist trade union Histadrut organizes only Jewish workers.

The objectives of the Arab revolution not only can find no common ground with the Zionists, even the workers, but are diametrically opposed to Zionist ob-

jectives and interests.

**The immediate withdrawal of British troops** — this rallying slogan of the Arab revolution in the whole Middle East — is regarded with fear by Zionists, even by Zionist workers. With the departure of the British troops, the Zionists fear the loss of their most effective "protection" against the Arab world.

**The immediate convocation of a Palestinian Constituent Assembly and immediate democratic elections** — this slogan meets with open hostility among all the Zionists, including their extreme left wing, the centrist organization of Hashomer Hatzair. This organization struggles for a "bi-national," Jewish-Arab State, but it is likewise opposed to the immediate holding of democratic elections which would inevitably give the parliamentary majority to the Arabs who are the majority of the country's population.

**The expropriation of the lands of the effendis** (wealthy landowners) and their division by committees of poor peasants — this battle-cry of the agrarian revolution which would be able to arouse the mass of wretched fellaheen is cautiously avoided by the Zionist labor organizations for it would end forever the sales of land to the Zionists by the effendis.

**The expropriation of all enterprises owned by foreign capital**, and the closing of the country to the import of capital — this slogan runs up against the savage opposition of the Zionist organizations, because it would put an end to their dream of colonization and also to their privileged standard of living.

Consequently, it is therefore

natural that the Zionist labor organizations have taken no steps up till now to organize, assist or unleash the revolution of the Arab masses and that they still remain terrified by this perspective. The joint Jewish-Arab strikes which took place last year were organized by the Arab unions, and the Jewish workers who participated in them were forced to do so because they were a minority and the action was confined exclusively to that tiny group of Jewish workers employed and exploited by British imperialism. (The great majority of the Jewish proletariat employed by Jewish companies remained passive and even hostile to these strikes.)

The expulsion of imperialism from the Middle East is the primary objective that the revolutionary movement must pursue in that part of the world. It should be clear to every advanced worker who analyzes the situation without prejudice that this objective can be realized only through the Arab revolution and under the leadership of the Arab workers' movement. Under these circumstances the Jewish labor movement of Palestine confronts the following dilemma:

Whether to abandon its Zionist illusions and integrate itself fraternally in the Arab revolution;

Or to cling desperately to its Zionist positions and risk being wiped out between imperialist resistance and the mounting Arab revolution.

The first road, which is the only road of salvation for the Jewish world in Palestine, means abandoning all political and economic racism. It requires organizing a Jewish-Arab workers

party and Jewish-Arab trade unions; rooting out all prejudice and all "paternalism" toward the Arab masses; opening up Jewish industry to Arab workers; and forging a genuine fighting unity on the basis of common interests.

This first road demands enormous immediate sacrifices of the Jewish workers in Palestine, but it protects their existence in the future and lays the foundation for harmony between Arabs and Jews.

The second road, which has already arrived in a blind alley in the negotiations with imperialism, will lead the Zionist labor movement further and further into terrorism, as ineffective as it is reactionary. While such desperate actions are carried on by the most active minority, the majority will tend more and more to accept miserable compromises offering only shreds of the Zionist dreams.

This second road could very well lead to the complete extermination of the Jewish community in Palestine during the explosion of the coming Arab revolution.

(To be concluded next week.)

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