

An Analysis of the Political Groups in Palestine Zionism

By AL FINDLEY

The sharpened political situation in Palestine remains unchanged. The reported secret deal in which the British gave the leaders of the Jewish Agency freedom in exchange for their help in pacifying the country, is doomed by the developing clash of political forces.

For months the British have been trying to create a clash between Jews and Arabs so that they could continue their imperialist domination over the country. For the first time in almost ten years they have succeeded in provoking an armed struggle, which occurred at Neot Mordecai on the northern frontier of Palestine, where a small group of Arabs attacked some Jewish settlers.

Denouncing the British for their part in causing this outrage is not

enough. What is needed is serious consideration of the problem of Arab-Jewish relations and how to achieve unity. The policy of reliance on British imperialism is now rejected, at least verbally, by all except a handful of Zionist leaders. The conclusion that the alternative is a policy of alliance with the Arab peasants in a struggle against imperialism has as yet not been consciously accepted by the Jewish workers. However, this problem is now beginning to agitate the more conscious elements of the Palestinian labor movement.

FACTS AND FIGURES

The Palestinian elections to the Zionist Congress this year were of the greatest significance because the elections revealed the political trends of an embattled population fighting a

war of resistance against British imperialism. The total vote was 200,000, divided as follows:

Labor (121,000 total votes):	
Mapai	74,000
Hashomer Hatzair	24,000
Achduth Avodah	23,000
Liberal and Conservative (46,000 total votes):	
Hapoel Hamizrachi	24,000
Mizrachi	5,000
General Zionist	5,000
Aliyah Chadasha	12,000
Reactionary:	
Revisionists	24,500

A mere glance at the figures shows how ridiculous is the claim of the many front organizations of the American Revisionists that they represent the second largest force in Palestine. The New York Post (which supports the Revisionists) gloated over the fact that the Revisionists received the second largest party vote and drew fantastic conclusions therefrom. But the Post carefully omitted to give any figures or to mention the absolute majority received by the working class parties.

WHO ARE THE PARTIES?

The General Zionists (liberal bourgeois) are rapidly disintegrating as a force in Palestine. The Mizrachi and its labor organization, the Hapoel Hamizrachi, represent the so-called moderate clerical groups. They hold a generally conservative point of view and can be considered to be analogous to the Christian Democratic parties of Europe. The extreme clericalists, Agudas Israel, do not participate in Zionism, refusing to recognize any form of secular organizations.

The Mapai is a federated Labor Party based on the Histadruth (the trade union organization) and has a completely reformist leadership. They generally follow the lead of the pro-British liberals in the General Zionist Party.

This year, the Hashomer Hatzair and the Achduth Avodah split from the Mapai to form independent organizations. The Hashomer is a centrist political group, formerly in close political agreement with the Independent Labor Party of England and the Amsterdam Bureau of Centrist Socialist Organizations. During the war the Hashomer was considerably influenced by Stalinism. One of the main points of its program is advocacy of bi-nationalism, based on the political parity of both Jews and Arabs, regardless of who constitute the actual majority of the population,

This bi-national state is to come into being after a 25-year trusteeship by the UN to "prepare" the population.

The Achduth Avodah Party (Labor Unity Party) is newly formed by a merger of the left Paole Zion and the Tenua L'Achduth Avodah. The left Paole Zion is a formerly revolutionary group, following Borochoy. It was a fraternal member of the Third International and was a legal party in Russia until the consolidation of the Stalinist dictatorship. They had a revolutionary position on most important political questions, including that of Arab-Jewish relations, calling for a united trade union organization and stressing the importance of land reform as a basis for winning Arab support. The Tenua L'Achduth Avodah (Movement for Labor Unity) arose as a confused left wing of the Mapai. The party, resulting from the merger of these organizations, has not declared itself on most issues of the day and of all Palestinian parties this one is most sympathetic to Stalinism.

The Ichud group, although numerically small and not participating in the elections, has great intellectual weight and is an indication of the trend of political thought. It is led by Dr. Magnes, famed in World War I as a pacifist leader in the United States, and Moses Smilanski, veteran Zionist leader. This upper class liberal group advocates population parity between Jews and Arabs, to be accomplished by controlled immigration so that the two groups would balance. They still have faith in the good intentions of the English and their program calls for a three-stage plan of trusteeship to achieve their bi-national state.

LIBERALS AND REACTIONARIES

The Haganah, the main armed body of Palestinian resistance, has a membership of 60,000, recruited mainly from the labor organizations and having the support of the liberals. It was founded as a defense organization by early Jewish settlers and expanded during the pogroms of 1936. The war gave it an opportunity to expand further and to arm itself. It also assumed the function of smuggling immigrants into Palestine and thereby came into armed conflict with the police and army.

Politically, Haganah is neutral, but in practice follows the orders of the Jewish Agency. For example, Haganah voted a civil disobedience campaign for Palestine, but backed down at the insistence of the pro-British

Weitzman. Dr. Sneh, accepted spokesman for Haganah, has declared for a change in policy toward making the struggle for an independent Jewish state the main focus of its activity. Whether he means a partitioned state or complete independence is not as yet clear.

The Irgun Zvai Leumi, although receiving most of its support from the Revisionists, does not directly participate in Zionist politics and attempts an independent role as a national movement. Their estimated membership is 5,000. The Irgun's declared goal is an immediate independent Jewish state.

Irgun has no clearly defined attitude toward the Arabs. Sometimes they say they are for a Palestinian state with "liberty, equality and social justice for all citizens, regard-

less of race, creed or color." How the establishment of a Jewish government, presently constituting a minority, squares with equality, is not explained.

The Revisionists talk of repatriation, of minority rights for Arabs. Jabotinsky, their founder, once declared that if necessary, "the Jewish settlers will have to deal with the Arabs the way the American settlers dealt with the Indians." The Revisionists are most correctly described as semi-fascists. They are violently opposed to trade unions, denounce Marxism in the same language as the Nazis, declare strikes and the class struggle to be treachery. Jabotinsky wrote much about the luxurious life of the Palestinian pioneers and the small rate of profit left for "capital." He praised Mussolini and said "Italy

is building a society without workers' influence. There is no reason we cannot do likewise in Palestine." Certain extreme revisionist factions have a full-blown fascist program, up to and including the "fuehrer" principle.

The semi-fascist, reactionary nature of the Irgun policies should not blind one to the source of their strength, which comes from their correct demand for a complete break with British imperialism and immediate independence. Their militancy in carrying out their program presents them as the irreconcilable foe of British imperialism.

In this situation the task of the labor and revolutionary movement is to build a really effective anti-imperialist front of Jews and Arabs and take the initiative out of the hands of the Irgun and the Revisionists.

Jake Vardaman - Missouri Boy

Jake Vardaman is one of Truman's boys. Yes, a Missouri boy, but only partly a Missouri boy. He really goes back to Mississippi, this son of old Senator Vardaman, who was perhaps the vilest of all the anti-Negro representatives to sit in Washington.

Little son Jake, however, is making his own mark in Washington. His big break came when Truman became president. He started out as the President's naval aide and thus became a commander. Then he was given a job on the Federal Reserve Board at \$15,000 a year for 14 years, seemingly as a reward for his failures as a private banker.

Now Little Jake has been put back on active Navy duty (still holding his post with the Federal Reserve Board and drawing his salary) and is trying for disability retirement which would give him a life pension, three-quarters of his base pay. He is presently being examined by a medical board. If he is retired from the Navy he will continue to draw \$15,000 for 14 years plus a \$3,000 pension which is tax free.

Drew Pearson, who publicized these facts about one of the members of the "Missouri gang," described how Vardaman got his disability in the following way:

"He was called to Washington for the hazardous duty of swimming in the White House pool and playing poker with other Missourians. Someone tipped him that an officer attached to a yacht, even one anchored in the Potomac, could draw seagoing pay—10 per cent more. Vardaman got himself attached to the Presidential yacht (this must have been a taxing effort—ed.), Williamsburgh. He never slept on it except when cruising with Truman weekends, but he got seagoing pay.

"Vardaman ordered enlisted men to paint and repair his house in Georgetown—at taxpayers' expense, plus beer and sandwiches. This fiscal expert now helps fix the nation's financial policy on the highest economic board in the U. S. A.

"Note to Senator Donnell, of Missouri: The Navy doesn't particularly like Vardaman, but foxed you on his personal fitness record during your fight against his confirmation. The file on Vardaman was taken out and never replaced. He had it in his desk."

Little Jake Vardaman need not be ashamed of his record. He has joined a long list of illustrious predecessors from both political parties who operate on the theory and practice that milking the government treasury is one of the "divine rights" of capitalist politicians, i.e., part of the pay-off for helping to operate the political system of American capitalism.

The Labor Action Sunday Forum:

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