

**The New** \_\_\_\_\_  
**INTERNATIONAL**

***Israel's Arab Minority:  
The Beginning of a Tragedy***

by Hal Draper

***Organization and Consciousness  
Of the American Working Class***

by H. W. Benson

***Moscow in Lenin's Days — IV***

by Alfred Rosmer

***The Working Class  
Movement in  
Tropical Africa*** by A. Giacometti

**QUARTERLY NOTES:**

- ***Revelations and Explanations***
- ***Bread and Freedom***
- ***The Deepening Struggle***

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**Summer 1956**

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Marxist Review

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## IN THE COMING ISSUE

The Fall issue of the New International will feature an analysis of the significance of the Russian Communist Party's Twentieth Congress. Included in this issue will be articles dealing with the theory of Bureaucratic Collectivism, the Role of Titoism, an evaluation of Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism, the effect of the Twentieth Congress on the socialist perspective, and its impact on the bourgeois world. Our contributors will be Max Shachtman, Hal Draper, Albert Gates and Max Martin.

In addition the Fall issue will contain part two of a series on Tropical Africa by A. Giacometti, dealing with the trade union movement.

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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## Quarterly Notes:

# Revelations and Explanations

## In World CPs: Acquiescence Above, Ferment Below

One of the means whereby Stalinists keep their various parties intact locally, and in harmony internationally, is their highly skilled manipulative use of language. The clichés employed by the Stalinists internationally and their constant repetition of favored terms assume the proportions of a separate tongue—a sort of Stalinist Esperanto. Accompanying this special language and giving it form and substance, the Kremlin has devised standardized rationalizations for its innumerable twists and turns tantamount to a special Stalinist school of "reasoning"—a sort of *mumbo jumbo* which, combining the best in jesuitism and voodooism, can prove yesterday's Deity today's Demon. Or vice versa.

Following the Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist Party the Stalinist Esperanto has received many worthy additions: Cult of the Individual and Cult of the Personality will match the catchwords Social-Fascist or United Front From Below or Disruptor in Stalinism's literary museum. But of all the new, standard terms there is one that is outstanding for its extensive use: "Revelations." In the major documents of all Stalinist parties, in their letters, discussions and speeches the word invariably appears to describe Khrushchev's uncovering

of Stalin's crimes. REVELATIONS. It is as if the ominous storm clouds above Red Square dramatically parted—much in the manner as the Red Sea opened up before Moses—a shaft of clear, penetrating sunlight, breaking through the dark cumulous formations, suddenly illuminated Stalin in his tomb and for the first time it could be seen that where a halo was thought to be were two enormous horns. The man was a devil in sub-human form. It was the most significant and magnificent Revelation in the history of world Stalinism, one that by its very nature could only be witnessed first by the leading oracles of the Russian Communist Party. But once revealed the Revelation suddenly struck the leaders of the world Communist parties with more or less equal force at more or less the same time. In London, in Paris, in Rome, in New York and, of course, in all the satellite countries and China the Revelation was attested to by the Party leadership. Here and there, such as is reported to have been the case with Maurice Thorez, the Revelation was "resisted"—but only for a moment. For what was now seen so clearly by the Russian Politburo could not be overlooked for long by its international servitors. When the Revelation took hold of Foster

he could see that Stalin was "pathological" (and where might that eventually lead Foster who was personally groomed by Stalin to take over the American party?), Togliatti acknowledges that Stalin had organized a reign of terror, Pollitt and Thorez now recognize the crimes of Djugashvili. The entire world leadership was seized with religious tremors following the miraculous Revelation on the Kremlin Mount and the devil is now being exorcized with ritualistic incantations against Stalin, "the cult of the personality," "the cult of the individual," "the reign of terror," "errors," "crimes," etc., etc. Public penance and self-criticism is on the order of the day.

But is Khrushchev's account of Stalin's crimes accurate? Perhaps this Revelation is only a delusion, the handiwork of dark, malignant, disruptive forces? Woe unto the party leader who takes this view, who doesn't recognize a Revelation when the Politburo asserts it in such gory detail and with such urgency! No one in the top leadership dares publicly and persistently to challenge the charge that Stalin murdered innocent people or dispute the thinly veiled charge that Stalin killed Kirov. For twenty-five years there was not a single critical word of Stalin or the Politburo in any Communist Party publication in any country. For twenty-five years the leaders of world Stalinism have "loved" their "genial Stalin." What are the facts which have made such a fickle thing of their love? How do they know now that their entire lives were a monstrous lie as they now stand stripped naked, bereft of any personal dignity and deprived of that private psychological sanctuary that must have been sought by even the most calloused Stalinist leaders who paid daily homage to Stalin and Rus-

sia? Where are the facts?

But who needs facts? There has been a Revelation! a miraculous event of such force that by comparison the passion evoked by the vision of Joan of Arc was but a country girl's passing fancy.

THE READINESS WITH WHICH the leadership of the world Communist Parties accepted the repudiation of Stalin the Criminal was Act I, the first phase of their reaction, i.e., acquiescence, to the Twentieth Congress. The curtain has already been raised on Act II and much of its performance concluded. The theme of this Act is: we are not wholly satisfied with Khrushchev's report, please give us a good "Marxist explanation" for the rise of Stalin the Fiend. The text for the Act was largely written by the leaders of four non-satellite Communist Parties.

Here are a few excerpts from Act II:

*Togliatti:* "What is necessary is to furnish an explanation based on Marxist criteria showing how such errors were able to slip [sic!] into the evolution of the Socialist Society."

*National Comm. of the American CP:* "A basic analysis of how such perversions of socialist democracy, justice and internationalism were permitted to develop and continue unchecked for 20 years must still be made by the leadership of the CPSU. It needs also to be made by Marxists everywhere."

*The French CP Politburo:* "A profound Marxist analysis is necessary to determine the over-all circumstances in which the personal power of Stalin could be exercised."

*The British CP* calls for "A profound Marxist analysis of the causes of

degeneration in the functioning of Soviet democracy and party democracy."

All of the above lines were read within a week or so of each other. What perfect timing! What uniformity of language and criticism! And what independence of Moscow! It would be remarkable, in the realm of the miraculous—if only this display of independence were genuine and self-determined. But the "criticisms" of Moscow, the demand for "Marxist explanations" from Moscow, are so obviously predicated on the permission of Moscow, that it is almost painful to read of the "experts" on Russia and international Communism, who believe that Dennis, Togliatti, Thorez and Pollitt are leading—not beheading—a rebellion against the Kremlin.

In the first place it should be noted that the "criticisms" and "demands" made of Moscow by Western Communist leaders are much blander than has been suggested by editorialists and headline writers. The strongest prose used was by Togliatti in a statement to the Italian CP's Central Committee and nothing in those portions reprinted in the American press (which, naturally, seeks the most lurid excerpts) bears out the false impression recently created that there are genuine and deep differences between Moscow and any Western Party heman. "Questions" are asked, "problems" are raised, "skepticism" is voiced, greater party autonomy is suggested, but all in a tone of proper respect and cordiality.

ONCE THE LEADERS of the non-satellite Communist movements have accepted the Revelations they have proven conclusively that they are to remain in the service of Russian totalitarianism. If there is to be a break between Togliatti and Moscow, for example, it will

be at the initiative of the latter only. An intimate of Stalin's, he has been the sharpest in his condemnation of the Stalin reign of terror—on the instructions of the Russian Communist Party. An enemy of Tito, a man whom he hated, Togliatti was forced to do penance before him, and made to do so—by the Russians. To believe that this man is now defying Khrushchev is to believe that a mollusk is prepared to give battle to a shark.

Even the "criticisms" by the Western Communist leaders, if one wanted to take them at face value, could be interpreted as part of their efforts to ingratiate themselves with Khrushchev's Politburo. For they are actually saying to Moscow: we are so convinced of Stalin's crimes and the merit of your exposures that they need further amplification and explanation. You have informed us that we have lived the Big Lie for at least 20 years and we agree. But please give us a plausible explanation in the best Marxist phraseology. Thus, rest assured that we will not dispute your Revelations which have their source in your unimpeachable authority and be advised that your Marxist explanation will receive the same consideration.

But the leaders of the Communist parties would hardly choose public criticism of Moscow as its way of communicating its servility if that were its sole purpose. They have less subtle ways of demonstrating their fealty. Public criticism by the leaderships, no matter how sham it may be for them, is nevertheless a sensational event in the history of Stalinism, one that nobody would have or could have predicted a year ago. Its source lies primarily in the confusion, resentment, demoralization and disaffection which quickly followed the Twentieth Congress among rank and file party

members and supporters the world over. Their god was destroyed, myths were discarded, the entire Stalinist folklore shattered before their bewildered eyes. Where the top leaderships of the Western parties feign independence of the Moscow hierarchs for not having exposed Stalin sooner, the rank-and-file of these same parties are genuinely indignant with their leaderships for not having seen through Stalin's crimes, for having been puppets, for their complicity in Stalin's monstrous acts. Thus the desanctification of Stalin and general efforts of the Russian bureaucracy to relax its control by terror found their unhappy repercussions—unhappy for the Communist parties—among the ranks of Western parties. If Khrushchev could denounce Stalin, why shouldn't an aggrieved rank and filer in the United States feel free to take Foster to task for his complicity in Stalin's rise to power and for any other special grievance which had been repressed until now? What is more, he must continue to reason, if our party was so closely tied to a country tyrannized by a maniac, then let our party be more independent in the future and avoid such hazards. Given the prevalence of such attitudes, had the leadership tried to stampede the rank-and-file and the secondary leadership into line, it would only have destroyed itself, its party or both in the process.

The criticism made of Russia by the top Stalinist bureaucrats is a forced response to pressure from below. But it was made with the understanding toleration of the Russian dictatorship. It has even been suggested by some that it was made at the Russians' behest; perhaps—that cannot be excluded; but it is not necessary to go that far. Anyone who has a serious doubt of this, be it a befuddled Dulles

or a sophisticated Deutscherite, exhibits a major gap in his understanding of Stalinism as a world movement and an inability to interpret what is made so obvious by the simultaneity of response and similarity of language used by the abject heads of the Communist parties in their temporarily assigned roles as "polycentric" (to use Togliatti's term) independent thinkers and friendly critics of Russia.

DOES A MAN LIKE TOGLIATTI enjoy his assumed role as the chieftain of a "polycentric" Communist party? Does it awaken some nostalgia for the days when he was more man and less puppet? Perhaps. Who knows? We are consoled in our ignorance of Togliatti's psychological mechanisms by the knowledge that no one else knows either. At any rate it is of tertiary importance. What is important to remember is that Togliatti—or Thorez, or Pollitt or Foster in their native lands—is the leader of an Italian movement which seeks to reorganize Italian society on Bureaucratic Collectivist beginnings and that he is the representative of a strata within Italian society which aspires to rule as a Bureaucratic Collectivist class.

There is nothing in any rule of formal logic to exclude the possibility of a party of Bureaucratic Collectivism, such as in Italy or France, breaking with the ruling monoliths in Moscow, even *before coming to power*. (Where Bureaucratic Collectivism already rules the problem of its relations to the Russian ruling class is potentially more explosive.) Politically, however, it makes no sense at all. Togliatti, for example, as a representative type, cannot initiate a break with the Russians. There are many reasons for this.

In the first place, for reasons of mass psychology Togliatti cannot repudiate the Russian system or disavow

the ruling Russian Communist Party. It is *partially* on the prestige and power of the Russians that the Italian Communist Party is able to maintain its grip over the Italian working class. With "socialist" Russia as its benefactor and ally, and added to it the enormous realm of the satellite "people's democracies" and with the inspiring example of the Chinese "republic," the Italian Communist Party is able to impart to the working class a feeling of confidence and a sense of involvement in the vast irresistible rush of historical "progress." "Socialism has conquered capitalism in half the world," the Togliattis say, in effect. "Our world movement and our national Communist party is invincible," they conclude. To break with Russia, now, or in the foreseeable future, would eliminate from the arsenal of Italian totalitarianism one of its most effective political weapons.

Second, to foster or to permit a split, or, even to insist upon actual independence from Moscow, in any way determined by Khrushchev's Revelations, would immediately endanger the position of the present leadership of the Italian—or any other—Communist Party which could hardly be certain of escaping retribution for its own complicity in Stalin's crimes.

Third, to seek independence from the Moscow orbit now, as a reaction to the Revelations of monstrous violations of democratic rights in Russia, could only encourage and activate the democratic instincts of many rank and file party workers and supporters. They might begin to question, to dispute, not only today, but tomorrow, insisting upon party democracy as their natural, permanent right. That would be anathema for a Bureaucratic Collectivist party, particularly a mass party such as exists in Italy or

France. The leadership tries to create within the party the authoritarian atmosphere of a totalitarian state, whose level of authority, of course, is circumscribed by its limited, non-governmental character. It cannot execute dissenters, it expels them; it does not dictate repressive legislation, it promulgates manifestoes which must be adhered to at the risk of losing membership status; it does not exercise a state police authority over the masses, but it does aspire to achieve an iron discipline and unthinking acceptance of the latest party line. A microcosmic precursor of the totalitarian state, the party cannot abide an extended democratic, internal life.

But isn't there dissension in the Communist parties now? Aren't the leaders of various Communist Parties permitting differences to appear in the party press? Hasn't that miserable agglomeration at the head of the American Communist Party organized a "Discussion Committee" which fills the pages of the *Daily Worker* with auto-lacerations, inviting the membership to take a turn with the whip? Isn't this taste of internal discussion and criticism of the Russians unique?

We repeat: the top leaderships of the Communist Parties have been forced into this position against their wishes. Ferment among the rank and file produced by the Revelations could not be coped with by standard operating procedures. In permitting a relaxation of internal discipline the world Communist Parties are leading from weakness, not strength. They are trying to make the best of a bad situation, to forestall mass disaffection and bring the party to its more accustomed techniques without too many casualties.

It is axiomatic that in the relations between the Kremlin and the Com-

munist Parties, particularly in the West, there can be no independence and no equality. But Moscow needs the support of the Italian and French workingclass. It can dispense with the services of a Togliatti or a Thorez—which it may yet decide to do—but its mass base in Europe is another matter. To maintain its influence over millions of European workers the Kremlin has given the national leaderships the green light to criticize. Some of these leaders may have used this green light to bypass the normal show of uncritical devotion to the Kremlin with unseemly speed. But the Kremlin is sure of such types as Thorez and Togliatti. It is not so sure of the French and Italian parties' memberships. It had no alternative to authorizing the national committees of these parties to go along with the rank and file, to harmonize with their moods, even to simulate disapproval.

Thus the stage for Act III was set (an act only insofar as it concerns the subordination of the *leadership* of Western parties to the Kremlin). The theme of this act is Explanations: good Marxist Explanations for the rise of Stalin's reign of terror. Following the Explanations, which will be mulled over for a moment or two, the performing hirelings at the head of the Communist Parties will then murmur their lines, in some cases with the necessary affected hesitations: "Well, comrades, we demanded a Marxist explanation and here it is." Fissures in the national parties will be sealed, it is hoped, with the rank and file appeased by Moscow's explanations and by the show of independence of leaders locally. That this is Moscow's tack should have been clear to anyone with a modicum of understanding of Stalinist totalitarianism and of the relationships of Moscow to its subordinate agencies in other

lands. But with the events of the past few days it is barely a matter for theorizing or speculating. On June 27th, *Pravda* printed, without comment, a recent report of Eugene Dennis, high potentate of the American CP. In Dennis' report to his national committee were "criticisms" of Khrushchev's report and a plaintive call for a Marxist explanation for Stalin's rise to power. Dennis did not have long to wait. A week later a "Marxist explanation" was given by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, and others are likely to follow. Alongside absurdities in its explanation of Khrushchev and Co.'s forbearance of Stalin's crimes, e.g., Stalin was too popular to be removed, the present collective leadership did not realize the extent of Stalin's crimes, etc., there appeared much that is incontrovertible. The rise of Stalin is related to the fact that after the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia "was like a besieged fortress situated in a capitalist encirclement." "In the shortest space of time, our country, without any economic help whatsoever from abroad, had to liquidate its centuries-old backwardness. . . ." In order to raise its technological level and "liquidate" its backwardness this "besieged fortress" had to make extreme demands on its populace, calling for "iron discipline, evergrowing vigilance and a most strict centralization of leadership which inevitably had a negative effect on the development of certain democratic features."

Now, however, the report argues, Russia is no longer isolated, it is surrounded by friendly "People's Democracies" and the Chinese "Republic." Its productive forces are much greater than after the Russian Revolution. Thus, the social-economic base for an all powerful maniac no longer exists. Very "Marxistical." Terribly "scien-

tific." Most convincing—to the CP's top hacks.

The report singles out the criticisms of Togliatti by name. The monarch of the Italian party, whose rule is made uneasy by his own past, by disquiet in the ranks and his endangered alliance with Nenni's PSI (which made serious inroads in the CP support during recent elections) had asked if Russian society has not reached "certain forms of degeneration?" Togliatti is told "There are no foundations for such a question." He is even quoted against himself to show that he doesn't really mean it. And what is the response of this tiger of Italian Stalinism? It is that of a well-fed and well-trained pussycat. The ink is barely dry on the "Marxist explanation" before Togliatti rushes into print with a statement of his own printed in *Paese Sera* voicing "unreserved approval" of Moscow and praising the "Marxist explanation" as a major step "toward clarification of questions that have been raised in the international workers and Communist movement." And not far behind Togliatti is the statement of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party "warmly approving the resolution of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that shows how the cult of the personality of Stalin has been surmounted in the USSR." The French leadership is now "fully satisfied" that Russia remains the land of victorious socialism. And here, in the United States, Eugene Dennis dashed onto the front page of the *Daily Worker* of July 4th with a statement. Its opening sentence: "The Soviet Communist Party's resolution is a most welcome development in the friendly interchange of opinion among Marxists of the world," the concluding thought: "In my opinion the resolution of the CPSU goes a long way in explaining—

while clearly not justifying—what has become known as the growth of the cult of the individual and the unforgivable violations of socialist legality and principles that took place in the latter period of Stalin's leadership." The Russian party's statement was made known on July 1st and excerpts were printed in the *New York Times* the following day. The complete text was not printed in that paper until July 3rd, the same day that Dennis wrote his statement! Dennis the "independent," Dennis the "critic" of Khrushchev's report, Dennis the bold, demanding of Moscow a Marxist analysis thus provides us with a true measure of the depth and sincerity of his critical attitude.

FOR THE FIRST TIME the totalitarian Communist movement is faced with the possibility of internal disintegration. Its membership is both shaken and indignant. The Kremlin is forced to offer "Marxist Explanations." But the explanations might not stick. Compounding its difficulties the Kremlin has been obliged to tolerate a breath of "democracy" in its international parties. At least one is now permitted to look crossly at the "collective leadership" and its local satraps. Compared to what existed before, this is "democracy." For the leadership of the Communist Parties this "democracy" *must* be a shortlived expedient. But for the ranks this novel taste of "democracy" *might* become an ever more demanding habit. Such habits are deadly—for totalitarianism.

Let us not underestimate the cleverness of the Kremlin-ruled Communist movement. With the indispensable help of bourgeois politicians, the Kremlin may calm its turbulent waters, turning today's retreat to tomorrow's advantage.

Coincidental with the Revelations

of the Twentieth Congress the Russian-directed Communist Parties embarked on their new popular front policy. The new strategy is to turn the cold war into a "smiling war," to borrow an apt phrase from the *New York Times*. Where socialists, liberals and bourgeois politicians were all coupled and all condemned a short while back, their good graces are now sought. United Front is on the order of the day. Mollet is backed in the French Chamber and the Democratic Party looked at wistfully in the United States. To sell the liberal and social-democratic world once again its rotten wares the Kremlin needs to soften them up. It is here that Moscow is attempting to turn its internal world crisis to its own advantage. With Stalin denounced, Russia now ruled by the cult of collective leadership, with differences manifested within national Communist parties and between various party central committees and the Russian Politburo, the totalitarian Communist movement is attempting to pass itself off as one of amiable, independent, peace-loving democrats. Incredible as it may seem the attempt has achieved some measure of success. From many sources one now begins to hear barely audible whispers, hints, suggestions that perhaps there is really a fundamental democratic change taking place, not only in Russia, but in the structure and attitude of various Communist parties. With short memories, weaker insights and an enormous gullibility and bureaucratic mentalities, the confused liberal, the kindly pacifist and the overwhelmed social-democrat is, here and there, sucked in by the Kremlin's New Look. And not only they. An authority no less than the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, has given mankind the benefit of his expert analysis which must have

earned him at least one round of wild applause from the Russian Politburo. In a widely heralded TV interview Dulles analyzed the division between Moscow and its Western parties as follows:

The Communist parties in the United States, France, Italy and the United Kingdom have all made statements which indicate their dissatisfaction and their belief that something must be done to make the Communist party, or international communism, more broadly based to prevent such concentration of power and provision for terrorism as existed during the Stalin era.

There is no agreement yet as to what shall be done, but there are demands arising from all quarters that something has got to be done about it.

The Secretary of State, a few moments later, underscores the above:

I think the statements issued by the various Communist parties show a very high state of dissatisfaction with the present leadership of the Communist party as exemplified by the Soviet Communist party. There is a good deal of criticism of the Khrushchev speech and a feeling it does not properly evaluate the situation, and that the trouble with Communism is much deeper than is indicated if you merely attribute it to the so-called aberrations of one man.

Is it possible that the leaderships of Western parties criticized Khrushchev with permission, possibly at the invitation, of the Russian Politburo? Dulles categorically replies:

I reject that theory. To my mind the evidence is so strong the other way that, to me, it is quite conclusive that this is coming about as a result of real differences, and that there is not a pre-arranged pattern in this matter at all.

"Real differences" between whom? Between Moscow and Togliatti or between Moscow and the CP rank and file? There is no doubt that Dulles means the former.

With these insights the Secretary of State continues to build his now solid-

ly rooted reputation as nobody's fool but his own.

Those who, like Dulles, accept the sincerity of, say, Togliatti's "criticisms" and demands of assurances that Russia will be protected from a reincarnated Stalin must also ask us to credit Togliatti with a genuine ignorance of Stalin's crimes. What Dulles asks of us is to believe that Togliatti on learning the truth about Stalin from Khrushchev, became so indignant, that he turned on this portly Russian who had just enlightened him and wagging his finger at Khrushchev said: "Look here, Khrushchev, better give me a Marxist explanation for how that murdering blaggard, Stalin, got so much power, and give me some security that it won't happen again, or we're through." How delighted Togliatti and Khrushchev must be with this view of Dulles', which, in effect, absolves the Togliatti from responsibility for Stalinist crimes committed during the "Stalin era." Also they could ask for nothing better than to have the U. S. Secretary of State announce to the entire world that there are, in Dulles' phrase, "real differences" between Togliatti and Khrushchev. More than that, if it is true, as Dulles assures us, that the Western Communist parties (not merely the rank and file membership) are beset by doubts, "that the trouble [sic] with Communism," they now feel, "is deeper" than one-man rule, that they are determined to prevent such a concentration of power and provision for terrorism as existed under Stalin, then isn't it true that the Communist parties, *as such*, are moving toward democracy? And if they are moving in this direction is it unreasonable for a peace-loving, democratic minded individual or group to respond positively to the new CP appeals for a United Front for Peace?

Dulles' analysis is an involuntary, but signal service, to the latest political strategy of the Kremlin.

AS NEVER BEFORE the possibility exists for socialist parties throughout the world to win to themselves entire sections of the Communist rank and file. The disturbing and potentially disintegrating effect of the Revelations on the Communist parties is without precedent. Even the Stalin-Hitler pact was passed off as a maneuver. It was all a clever trick to stall Hitler until Russia was ready to smash him. It did not involve a repudiation of the past, it did not mean the smashing of idols, above all *the Idol*. While thousands, hundreds of thousands of Popular Front recruits and peripheral apologists broke with Stalinism after the Pact, the Parties were able to keep their hardened core, their experienced and most devoted members in line with its mumbo jumbo. Unlike the Pact the events of the Twentieth Congress hit at the very core, the hardened cadres, rank and files, branch secretaries, district leaders, etc. Everything they have said and done of importance in the past, if not repudiated entirely, is now, at best, of suspect merit.

For socialist parties to capitalize on the ferment inside the CPs, however, there are two pre-conditions: one, there can be no compromising the fight against the Kremlin dictatorship and no let-up in exposing the hypocrisy and sham criticisms of the party leadership; second, the socialist parties must offer a militant, fighting alternative to the now vulnerable memberships of the Communist parties. The French Socialist Party can gain tremendously from the CP—but not so long as it pursues its present crass imperialist policies so repugnant to the French working class. The Italian

social-democrats can make a significant dent in the CP but only if it abandons its political apologies for Western imperialism; and Nenni's Socialist Party (PSI) might become the party of the Italian working class but only if it decisively repudiates the Italian CP and Russian totalitarianism. Political independence from the

two war-camps, and a socialist democratic aggressiveness can reduce Stalinism in Europe to impotence today. Otherwise we are faced with the dreadful prospect of these totalitarian parties recovering with relatively minimal losses.

JULIUS FALK

July 10

## Quarterly Notes:

# Bread and Freedom

## The Revolutionary Theme of Poznan Working Class

### "BREAD AND FREEDOM"

This is the theme and battle-cry of the Poznan working class. Bread and Freedom: simple and profound; literal, yet eloquent and touching; an elementary appeal and because of it, elemental and thoroughly revolutionary. With such slogans inscribed on their banners, the revolutionary workers of Poznan have struck a mighty blow against dictatorship. Poznan followed by three years the June uprising of East Berlin workers, and because it was the second such event—and because of its special timing—its repercussions are even greater.

The Poznan revolution is far from aborted. The working class of that industrial city has not been crushed. The Poznan revolution was a dramatic, planned revolutionary action which must be regarded as a phase of the mounting revolutionary ferment behind the Iron Curtain. The momentarily "defeated" populace of Poznan, itself, understands this. In none of the reports in the press can one detect that the Poznan workers feel defeated or demoralized. On the contrary, all the evidence points to a de-

fiant working class in Poland's fourth largest city which understands the service it has performed for democracy, for independence—for Bread and Freedom.

The aspirations of the Poznan workers went beyond the town limits, and their demands were far more general than economic reforms. Their battle against low wages and high production quotas was but an element of their revolutionary protest against political and economic dictatorship, against Russian invaders and Polish Quislings. "Tell the outside world that this is our revolution," the Poznan workers shouted to Western businessmen in the city (expecting to attend an international trade fair).

In this they were not frustrated. The entire Stalinist empire has been shaken by the repercussions. Poznan was a preview of what lies in wait for the totalitarian ruling class. The entire working class of the city revolted and they had the complete support of the civilian population. More than that, the revolutionary workers were aided by soldiers and even by police. Arms were secured

Tanks were captured. Barricades were erected. The hated symbols of oppression, the headquarters of the Communist Party and the local prison were captured, the latter gutted and the prisoners released.

What happened in Poznan can happen in all Poland, and can spread throughout the length and breadth of the totalitarian empire. And this thought strikes home most clearly to the oppressors. They are a hated minority, hated by the workers, by the peasants, by housewives, by the young, by the old, even by many in the army. They could contain the Poznan rising, but they know that the social conditions which generated it exist throughout the empire. Thus, in East Germany, with the Berlin uprising still fresh in mind, the CP responded to the Poznan events immediately and with understandable alarm. The East German Party organ, *Neues Deutschland*, attributing the Poznan revolt to the work of "provocateurs" issued a warning that could only be intended for the working class of East Germany: "[It is] a big mistake that democratization means a softening toward the brutal enemies of democracy." Furthermore, "Freedom for the people and freedom for provocateurs is a different thing. There is no freedom of the second kind with us." By "provocateurs" is meant all those who oppose the regime, i.e., the overwhelming majority of the population.

WHAT OF THE "DEMOCRATIZATION" that is going on in Poland? What of the "conflict" between the "softs" and the "hards" in the Polish Communist Party? Following the Twentieth Congress it was in Poland, presumably, that "relaxation" and "democratization" were moving forward most rapidly. Now, all the stupidities which have been uttered from all corners of

the globe by politicians and experts who had been taken in, hoodwinked, have been exposed in Poznan. Conflict does exist within the Polish Communist Party. Some bureaucrats want to relax, others fear to do so; some, perhaps, would like to act a little freer of the Kremlin, others fear to chance a show of independence; some want to make concessions to workers' "grievances," others in the Party are opposed to any dealings with the rabble. These inner-party conflicts are not to be denied. They are important. But what is of greater importance is to understand the limitations of these conflicts. And their boundaries have been shown at Poznan. The hundreds of workers who were killed, the thousands arrested attest to the limitations of totalitarian "democratization."

The Polish Party leaders have their differences. Ochab, the Party secretary, is the reputed "hard"; Premier Josef Cyrankiewicz, is the "soft." Ochab is in favor of trials of the Poznan prisoners in a spirit of retribution; Cyrankiewicz favors punitive measures, but, as he assures the British Labor Party, not in a spirit of vengeance. Is there a difference? Obviously. A great difference, a fundamental cleavage, a conflict between one leader moving toward democracy while another stubbornly upholds the banner of totalitarianism? Hardly. Ochab is the "hard" and Cyrankiewicz is the "soft," but it was Premier Cyrankiewicz who upon learning of the Poznan revolt immediately broadcast over the Warsaw radio. "Everyone who raises his hand against the people may be sure it will be hacked off in the interest of the working class, in the interest of raising our standard of living, and in the interest of the fatherland."

Cyrankiewicz the Soft, is prepared to hack off the hands of the entire

Polish working class—in its own interests, of course. It is of such stuff that totalitarian “democrats” and “softs” are made.

POZNAN DESTROYED THE MYTH of totalitarian “democratization.” This myth is not its only victim. It is no less decisive a proof of the bankruptcy of those in the West, intellectuals, real and professed, ex-radicals, superannuated students, academicians, disillusioned nobodies, all of whom will assure you that the working class really isn’t very much. Highly overrated “strata of society.” “Karl Marx,” they

will tell you, “is thoroughly outdated, disproven. He said the working class would fulfill its historic mission of liberating itself and all society from oppression and it hasn’t done it yet.” And while the disillusioned, cynical and learned mediocrities elaborate on this theme and write off the working class, the working class, living under conditions of terror, continues to elaborate on its own revolutionary theme of Bread and Freedom preparing to wipe out dictatorship. That is one lesson of Berlin, June, 1953, and Poznan, June, 1956.

J. F.

## **Quarterly Notes:**

# **The Deepening Struggle**

## **The Fight for Democracy Continues in the South**

The struggle of the Negro masses of the South for democracy and equality, the major social conflict in the country today, continues unabated. Indeed, it advances from month to month, both intensively and extensively. Against what would have been regarded yesterday as insurmountable obstacles, the bus boycott by Montgomery’s 50,000 Negroes remains invincible after seven months, despite intimidation, economic pressure, violence and “legal” attack. And with each passing day, report all observers, the self-confidence of the Negroes, their awareness of greater meaning and dignity in their lives now that they have embarked on the road of struggle, their certainty of ultimate victory, mount. At the same time, the voices of racists become shriller and more apologetic, more desperate and anxious.

And it is not only in Montgomery

that this development occurs. In Tallahassee, Florida, another bus boycott began on May 26 under circumstances similar to the one in Montgomery. This time two students of the Florida A & M University for Negroes were arrested for sitting in the “white” section of a bus. On the following day the students held a protest meeting in the school auditorium and petitions calling for a boycott of the bus line were circulated. The students stopped riding the busses that day; during the next day, the movement spread to over 80 per cent of Tallahassee’s 14,000 Negro inhabitants. With the cooperation of the local NAACP, an Inter-Civic Council was organized to conduct the campaign.

The Tallahassee city officials, wary of another Montgomery, showed themselves ready for compromise. The charges against the two students

were dropped. The city offered the Negroes a compromise settlement. But it is too late. The Negroes are fighting for the total abolition of segregation.

In several other Southern cities the Negroes are on the verge of boycott. The Miami NAACP considers instituting a boycott campaign on two occasions, but both times decides to continue its attack on segregation via the courts instead, at least for the time being. In two Texas cities Negroes are arrested for violating Jim Crow laws with regard to segregation in transportation but they are quickly released. The shame-faced defenders of Jim Crow are not prepared to face all-out showdowns. But even these events do not exhaust the proportions of the fight. In Orangeburg, South Carolina, Negro students at the State College for Negroes boycott the school dining halls in demand that the food served there not be purchased from supporters of the White Citizens Council of that city. In other localities there are demonstrations and mass petition campaigns for the use of municipal beaches, golf courses, tennis courts and other public facilities on a basis of equality. Throughout the South, efforts by Negroes to register and vote go forward, as do also petitions calling for desegregation of the schools. A gigantic battle is in progress.

The Southern Bourbons are not idle. Reaction in the South girds itself, for it realizes, even if so many liberals and labor leaders do not, that the time is now, that if it can delay or hold off the rising militancy of the Negro people, then perhaps it can prevent the end of Jim Crow. And so, Alabama and Louisiana outlaw the NAACP and a half dozen other Southern states prepare to do likewise, or to hamstring it in one or another

fashion. The White Citizens Councils exert a grinding economic pressure against all Negroes who fight back, and against anti-Jim Crow whites as well. Several Negro leaders are killed, the homes of others are bombed, still others are beaten up, or arrested by local authorities.

The prestige of the NAACP rises throughout the country and its membership zooms. The NAACP leadership inaugurates a campaign for 1,000,000 members, the number enrolled in it having already reached 400,000 in over 1500 branches, half of which are in the South. Heretofore, a respectable middle-class organization which shunned any kind of mass activity and confined itself solely to court campaigns, political lobbying and general propagandistic work, sections of it begin to initiate or at least participate in mass actions. In Montgomery and Tallahassee the local chapters of the NAACP participate in the boycotts, although these are conducted by other mass organizations which spring up to meet the need for organizations, the Montgomery Improvement Association and the Tallahassee Inter-Civic Council, respectively. NAACP chapters in Northern cities organize or participate in mass rallies and demonstrations to protest the slaying of Emmett Till and the ousting of Autherine Lucy from the University of Alabama; general civil rights meetings are held; and demonstrations to express solidarity with the Montgomery boycotters take place. The need for mass action to provide the pressure which alone can assure real civil rights victories becomes apparent to all.

Law-suits have their place in the anti-Jim Crow struggle. The legal victories registered by the NAACP have played a role in helping to create the new atmosphere which exists in the



country on the questions of segregation and discrimination. For its continued hammering away at the legal front, as for its activities in general, the NAACP deserves the support of all opponents of the rotten Jim Crow system. But two things should be obvious about those victories. In the first place, the various judicial rulings did not fall from the sky. The decision of the Supreme Court which declared segregation in the schools unconstitutional was rendered within the framework of a complex of forces which include the struggles of the Negroes and the anti-discrimination stand of a mass labor movement. Second, these judicial rulings have not, and will not, by themselves, desegregate a single school or bus or swimming pool. To transform these rulings into reality requires mass pressure from the Negroes and their allies, above all, the labor movement.

THE MASS ACTIONS which have taken place up until now have been important phenomena: rallies, meetings, demonstrations. But they have not been enough. They have all been local activities, isolated from each other, with a shortlived impact. What has been lacking is a sustained and coordinated campaign, which would have a national focus. The weapon for such a campaign lies at hand. Its name: March on Washington.

This is not the place for a detailed account of the March on Washington movement whose mere threat won an FEPC from Roosevelt in 1941. The fact is, however, that every single Negro leader knows that without the March on Washington movement which A. Philip Randolph led fifteen years ago, it is most unlikely that the war-time FEPC would have come into existence. The maneuvers in which various members of the Roosevelt Ad-

ministration engaged in an attempt to persuade the leadership of the movement to call off the planned demonstration are likewise well-known; they offered all varieties of promises short of the desired FEPC, and when it became evident to them that the March would be held if Roosevelt did not issue an order ending discrimination in employment, he finally yielded on that.

One does not have far to seek to discover the reason for Roosevelt's fear of such a march. Demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of Negroes from all over the country in Washington would have dealt a serious blow to the Administration internationally, especially in view of the looming entrance of the United States into the war as the "champion of democracy." And it would have embarrassed Roosevelt in front of his labor and liberal supporters.

Everything which made it a potent weapon fifteen years ago applies today, and in some respects even more so. The emergence onto the stage of world history of hundreds of millions of colored people, the propaganda needs of the United States vis-a-vis Russia, especially now, given Moscow's attempt to effect a "new look," could only make the possibility of such a march a nightmare for the Eisenhower Administration. Moreover, this is an election year, and while both parties are eagerly wooing Southern reaction and ignoring the Negro people, they do so only because they can think that no mass defection from the people is in store for them. A March on Washington, which might very profitably be combined with side demonstrations before the Democratic and Republican conventions this August, would speedily convince both parties that their calculations were in error.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME TALK of a new March on Washington within the last few months. At a recently-held civil rights rally in Madison Square Garden in New York City, Congressman A. Clayton Powell called upon A. Philip Randolph to lead such a movement. Other Negro spokesmen have referred to the need of organizing such a campaign at various other meetings and demonstrations. But to date, there has been nothing beyond such occasional remarks. What is needed is for an organization of the Negro people, or a group of Negro leaders, to issue a call formally and publicly, and to begin to organize the machinery for it. This is being written several days before the opening of the 47th annual convention of the NAACP in San Francisco. It could render an outstanding service to the struggle for equality were it to declare itself in favor of such a campaign and begin to plan it.

What stands in the way of the spokesmen for the Negro people calling for such a militant struggle is not so much timidity in general, as it is political timidity, specifically. A national March on Washington movement would embarrass not only the Republicans who are in power, but the Democrats as well. And the overwhelming bulk of the Negro leadership stands committed to the Democratic Party, with a great deal of private unhappiness and with some public grumbling, to be sure, but still committed. Sooner or later, however, it will have to be willing to come into open conflict with those it supports politically, not merely to free it for a March on Washington campaign, but in order to struggle effectively for civil rights in general.

On the order of the day, indeed, long overdue, is the break-up of that combination of Southern racists and

the Negroes, of the labor movement and reaction, which is the Democratic Party. The emergence of a third, independent party, composed of labor and its allies, from the disintegration of that unnatural animal, the Democratic Party, would hasten progressive developments in all areas of social life. One of the most significant aspects of the current Negro struggle is that it may be the factor which produces this long-needed development, thereby contributing to its own further progress.

Given the present thinking of the Negro leadership, one cannot expect such a development today. What one does have the right to expect, however, is that the Negro leadership will at least insist that the labor-liberal-NAACP bloc inside the Democratic Party begin a fight in earnest for its program. One of the reasons for the ability of so many trade-unionists, liberals, and Negroes to be duped on what can be expected from the Democratic Party lies in the fact that the labor, liberal and Negro leaderships do not conduct a fight for their programs inside that party, thereby postponing the end of illusions about it.

It is the duty of the labor-liberal-NAACP bloc inside the Democratic Party to conduct a struggle at its convention this August around a program of endorsement of the Supreme Court decision, repudiation by name of those who oppose desegregation including the signers of the congressional "Southern Manifesto," endorsement of the Powell amendment, and a concrete program of Federal aid to the embattled Negroes, and of Federal action to outlaw racial discrimination. Such a struggle, in our opinion, must lead to the break-up of the Democratic Party, and the creation of a labor party if carried through consistently.

MAX MARTIN

# Israel's Arab Minority: The Beginning of a Tragedy

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.—2 Samuel 1:20.

It is never agreeable to pick flaws in the things we love, and it is frequently thankless. . . . But what should a reporter do about the faults that do exist? I think he should do his job—and report them. . . . When the truth finally comes out, as it must, those who have been misinformed will not be grateful to the purveyors of fables.

There is another reason for telling the whole truth clearly. Israel is new. Israel is malleable, like a little child with soft and delicate bones. The evils of older states are the accretion of age, the slow hardening of youthful tendencies into ancient ritual. There is still time in Israel. But in Israel the bad, like the good, is aging quickly.—Hal Lehrman, "Commentary," July 1949.

All well-wishers of Israel, including the official Zionists themselves, are accustomed to the platitude that its peace and security depend upon normal relations with the Arab world which surrounds it. Instead, there has been increasing hostility, in a vicious circle of reciprocal hatred, which threatens to embroil the region, perhaps the world, in war. It is to be feared that the outcome of the Zionist "fulfillment," so far from being the solution to the Jewish problem that was heralded by Zionism, may mean a new act in the tragedy of the Jewish people.

The tragedy is not inevitable. The vicious circle has a break-out point. The pity of it is that precisely this point is blocked up by deep-rooted aspects of the official Zionist ideology which dominates the leaders of Israel.

To break out of the vicious circle requires an attempt to win the support and friendship of the Arab masses away from and *against* the Arab rulers, from below, toward the goal of a binational state. For Israel this program begins at home: Israel will never

be at peace with the surrounding Arab world, even if it makes a deal with the Colonel Nassers, as long as it is at war with its own Arab minority. This is the place to start.\*

The very existence of an Arab minority is shadowy in the minds of most Americans—some say, also in the minds of most Israelis—in spite of the fact that it is over one-tenth of the nation, like the Negro minority in the United States.

When the Israeli Arabs are not ignored, they are often labeled *en bloc* as "fifth-columnists" and suspect agents of the foreign Arabs who are foes of Israel; for they are all Arabs, aren't they? They are spoken of as the "remnant of the enemy defeated in 1948" in spite of the fact that they were not defeated in 1948 since they did not fight against Israel.

Israel's Arab problem, of course, goes back to the beginnings of Zionist colonization. It is not true that the Zionists came into Palestine as "agents of British imperialism" with the creation of the Mandate after the First World War. What is true is that they came as conscious junior partners of British imperialism: they would ensure continued British domination of the country, they proposed, if they were in turn given a free hand to take it over from the indigenous Arabs. Chaim Weizmann, who became Zionism's world leader and later first president of Israel as the shrewd architect of this symbiotic relationship, is quite candid about this in his autobiography:

\*For a fuller explanation of this viewpoint—which is also the real introduction for the present article—see my "To Break the Vicious Spiral" in *Labor Action for March 5, 1956*.

phy.<sup>1</sup> It was not his fault, or that of the Zionists, if this policy foundered after 1945, when the British government under Bevin made a sharp turn to the Arabs.

The Zionist infiltration into Palestine, therefore, took place before Arab eyes as the entrance of an alien and hostile force, under the umbrella of another alien and hostile force. Unfortunately the Zionist movement and the Israel government, despite frequent bows to the ideal of Jewish-Arab friendship, have never ceased to give nourishment to this feeling.

At least ever since Dr. Weizmann

1. Superior numbers mark reference notes, which are collected at the end of the article and give source data only. Footnotes are marked by asterisks.

## SOURCES AND DOCUMENTATION

The self-imposed ground rules for this article require that all important statements be documented from Zionist or pro-Zionist sources, including Israeli sources; and, in any other case, at least from sources that Zionists would recognize as being pro-Jewish rather than pro-Arab. Any exceptions or qualifications are clearly labeled in the text or reference notes, wherever the character of the source might not be immediately obvious. The sole purpose of this purely artificial limitation is to neutralize the typical Zionist's automatic reflex that any unpleasant truth about Zionism or the Israel government is by definition biased, pro-Arab, anti-Semitic, or fabricated. All sources used, therefore, are in fact biased in a pro-Israel direction, unless otherwise noted.

Where the Ichud is mentioned, it should be kept in mind that this is the only wing of the Zionist movement (a small group in Israel) which still consistently stands for Jewish-Arab cooperation.

Place names in Palestine often have variant spellings in English; hence the variation in quoted passages.—H. D.

blurted out in 1919 that Zionism aimed to make Palestine "as Jewish as England is English," the Arabs have feared that this aim could not be achieved without driving out or otherwise getting rid of the population that was in the way. The Zionists countered with arguments supplemented by promises and pledges. Deeds are always more important.

Today we find that, in truth, the setting up of the Zionist state coincided with a process whereby the large majority of the Palestinian Arabs found themselves separated from their land and homes. How did this happen?

1

And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers . . . to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not. . . .—Deuteronomy 6: 10-11.

THIS IS THE NEAREST good starting point for an investigation of the current situation of the Arabs in Israel, as well as of the Arab refugees around Israel. It is a story enveloped in a fog of propaganda on both sides.

On November 29, 1947 the UN General Assembly adopted its resolution for the partition of Palestine. When the British Mandate ended next May, the Zionists declared the establishment of the State of Israel, and the Arab states invaded Palestine to forcibly annul the partition by aggression.

When the fighting broke out in 1948, even before May, there began a great flight and displacement of the Palestinian Arab population, a veritable exodus from their homes and farms. Out of 700,000 Arabs, there were only about 170-180,000 left within the enlarged borders of Israel when it was over.

The official Zionist version is that this flight took place in cooperation with the invading armies of the foreign Arab states. The official Israel government pamphlet *The Arabs in Israel* asserts:

It began on the express orders of the Arab commanders and political leaders, who assured the [Palestinian Arab] people that their evacuation to the neighboring Arab countries would only be of short duration and that they would soon return in the wake of the victorious Arab armies and receive a handsome share of the booty.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, according to the same official version, the Palestinian Arabs had thought the invasion would be a walkaway, but when the Arab armies were defeated, "they panicked and stampeded across the frontiers. . . . Knowing what they had intended to do to their neighbors, they now expected the victorious Jews to mete out similar treatment to them."<sup>3</sup> A mass guilty conscience. The Jews, on the other hand, according to this same account, vainly tried to convince these Arabs to stay and keep the peace.

This official version, therefore, provides the moral and even juridical justification for three aspects of Israel policy:

(1) Israel claims little responsibility for or to the hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees from its territory who are now living across its borders in misery and seething hatred.

(2) The government used the Arab flight to justify a series of laws which have stripped these refugees, as well as many Arabs who never left Israel, or are still in Israel, of their lands, groves and property.

(3) This version of the Arab flight, with its accompanying view of Arab disloyalty, is also the justification for the maintenance, up to today and

for the indefinite future, of military-government rule over the large majority of Arabs still in Israel. Eighty-five per cent of the Arab minority in Israel live under political conditions which often resemble that of a conquered enemy under army occupation by its foe. This is not exactly a help to Jewish-Arab friendship.

How important this version of the Arab flight is to the Zionists can be realized only by indicating its economic meaning. In the following summary, the legal terms "absentee property" or "abandoned" property refer to property seized from Arabs who had left their homes during the fighting for any reason:

Of the 370 new Jewish settlements established between 1948 and the beginning of 1953, 350 were on absentee property. In 1954 more than one-third of Israel's Jewish population lived on absentee property and nearly a third of the new immigrants (250,000 people) settled in urban areas abandoned by Arabs. . . . Most of the Arab groves were taken over by the Israel Custodian of Absentee Property. . . . In 1951-52, former Arab groves produced one and a quarter million boxes of fruit, of which 400,000 were exported. Arab fruit sent abroad provided nearly 10 per cent of the country's foreign currency earnings from exports in 1951. In 1949 the olive produce from abandoned Arab groves was Israel's third largest export ranking after citrus and diamonds. . . .

The CCP [UN's Conciliation Commission for Palestine] estimated that the amount of Israel's cultivable abandoned Arab land was nearly two and a half times the total area of Jewish-owned property at the end of the mandate [1948]. . . .

In 1951 abandoned cultivable land included nearly 95 per cent of all Israel's olive groves. . . .<sup>4</sup>

The government's Custodian of Absentee Property was in 1953 "one of the largest employers in Israel, and perhaps the largest single landlord, renting over 65,000 housing and

business units of Arab absentee property. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

This will give a preliminary idea of the role played by the flight of the Palestinian Arabs in the establishment of the State of Israel. Much is at stake when the Zionists insist that the flight represented an act of hostility to the State of Israel.

But suppose it was only the normal reaction of people trying to get out of the way of flying bullets? Suppose it was not in cooperation with the Arab invaders, but out of fear of them? Suppose it was also out of fear of Israeli atrocities? Suppose it was also due in part to the ouster of peaceful Arabs by Israeli troops?

Let us investigate three forces at work in precipitating the flight: the Arab states' invasion; the Zionist forces, regular and irregular troops; and the British who were departing the country in bitterness in the twilight of their power.

## 2

Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels . . .  
—Genesis 25: 23.

A COUPLE OF THINGS about the social structure of the Arab community in Palestine should be mentioned for background.

When the British ended the mandate and withdrew, the Jewish communities had a whole quasi-government, or shadow government, ready to take its place and carry on all essential government functions and social services. Not so the Arabs.

When the British administration evacuated . . . there was no organized Arab body to manage the services of government essential for communal organization. With the breakdown of all functions of government necessary to maintain public law, order, and well-being—water, electricity, ports, police, educa-

tion, health, sanitation, and the like—Arab morale collapsed.<sup>6</sup>

This provided the context, not the cause, for the flight.

Besides, mass flight was not uncommon in the history of the Middle East, in similar cases where a population had reason to fear the waging of a war over their soil.

It was not only governmental services that collapsed, but also the social structure. As we shall see, it was the Arab upper class which fled first.

The upper class consists, as a rule, of a few great families whose members occupy key positions in the economic, professional and other occupational fields in the country. . . .

It was this small but extremely wealthy and influential class which represented Arab Palestine in practically every manifestation of social, civic, economic and political life. . . . It was common knowledge that their interests were often diametrically opposed to those of the fellahin who constituted three-quarters of the Arab population of Palestine but were illiterate, inarticulate and unable to voice any opinion.<sup>7</sup>

This thin upper-class layer was highly nationalistic but also socially and politically reactionary. Though it did not represent the interests of the peasant masses, yet when it fled, the whole Arab community became structurally unstable. This was even more true in the Arab urban communities, like Jaffa and Haifa.

According to the official Zionist and Israeli version (for example, the government propaganda pamphlet *Arabs in Israel*) not only did the Palestine Arabs support the invasion by the foreign Arab states but, even before the May invasion, Palestine Arabs formed the majority of the bands of Arab irregulars who harassed Jewish settlements in the first months of 1948.<sup>8</sup> This may or may not be so, but how many such Palestine Arabs were there? On the other hand, what

was the attitude of the mass of Palestine Arabs?

Arthur Koestler, a lifelong Zionist (Revisionist) who was then in Palestine as a correspondent, writing of this early-1948 period, reports:

Ragged strangers kept appearing in increasing numbers in Arab villages and towns. . . . As the Palestine Arabs showed little willingness to fight, most of the sniping, ambushing and guerilla warfare was done by the foreign volunteers . . . after the first serious clashes had occurred between Arabs and Jews in Tiberias . . . the heads of the two communities arranged a truce, the Arab delegates stating that the attackers of the Jewish quarter were "strangers who had forced their way into the town."<sup>9</sup>

The Jewish ethnologist Raphael Patai writes:

The majority of the Israeli Moslem Arabs, however, chose not to become involved in the Arab-Jewish fights. On the Jewish side there was never any pressure exercised on them to take up arms against their own brethren; and they themselves tried hard to escape the demands of the Arab armies and guerillas for active help or financial support.<sup>10</sup>

David Ben-Gurion himself, in a magazine article published at the beginning of 1948,<sup>11</sup> testified that

Indeed, the vast majority of the Palestinian Arabs still refuse to join in this war despite the combined pressure of the Mufti and his gangs, of the Arab rulers and potentates who support him and of the Mandatory Power [Britain] whose policy aids and abets Arab aggression.

. . . the Arab villages have in their overwhelming majority kept aloof from the struggle. Were it not for the terrorization by the Arab bands and the incitement of their British supporters, the Arab people of Palestine would have soon resumed peaceful relations with their Jewish neighbors.

This was written before the land-grab had begun. It was only later that Israeli propagandists started put-

ting forth a different version—i.e., *after* the land-grab was under way.

In the same issue of the same Zionist organ from which we have quoted Ben-Gurion, the same picture was drawn by another Arab expert of the Zionists, Yaakov Shimoni.<sup>12</sup> Among other things he stresses that

the fact remains that the bulk of the Arab population has so far kept aloof from attacks on the Jews. Up to the present, the instigators of the disorders have been unable to enlist the mass of either the fellahin or the urban Arabs. . . .

And after a detailed account of the people's reaction, he concludes:

The hopes of the Mufti and the AHE [Arab Higher Executive] have thus far been disappointed because although they instigated and initiated the attack, they have been unable to deliver the goods: the mass of the Arab people of Palestine have failed to rise at their orders and have proved reluctant and incapable of fighting the Jews.

The interested reader can find testimony to the same effect in several other Zionist sources.<sup>13</sup>

Now, as mentioned, the Zionist story is that the Arab Higher Executive called on the Palestine Arabs to flee their homes, come over the border, and wait till they could return in triumph to a conquered land.\* Now,

\*For quotes purporting to show this, see the Israel government pamphlet *The Arabs in Israel* (ref. n. 2), pp. 9-10. None of the quotes is from the AHE or its leaders. Another question not satisfactorily handled is why, from their own standpoint, the Arab leaders should have issued such a general sweeping call. A quite different explanation for the flight is given in the book by McDonald, first U. S. ambassador to Israel (ref. n. 26) who was and is more pro-Zionist than the Zionists, and who is undoubtedly merely retailing what he was told in Tel-Aviv in 1948 (p. 175). See also the different explanation in the propaganda book by the Revisionist Schechtman (ref. n. 8), pp. 6-7. For an Arab rebuttal of the charge, see F. A. Sayegh (official of the Arab Information Center in New York), *The Palestine Refugees*, Amara Press (Wash., D. C.), 1952. A pro-British historian recommends that the Zionist story about the AHE call for a mass exodus at this time "should be treated with reserve in the absence of positive evidence to corroborate it. . . ." (George Kirk, Royal Institute of International Affairs, anti-Zionist from British imperial angle, *The Middle East 1945-1950*, p. 263).

if we assume for the sake of argument that it was indeed the policy of the AHE to issue this call, it still does not tell us whether or not the Palestinian Arabs did in fact heed the call. For that, the testimony we have just cited is more relevant.

3

What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor?—Isaiah 3: 15.

WHAT IS AGREED UPON by virtually all sides, however, is the *class differentiation* in the flight. This may also serve to explain a kernel of truth in the Zionist version of the flight.

It is to the well-to-do Arab upper class (a small minority) that part of the Zionist story *does* apply, not to the Arab masses. In the first phase of the flight—i.e., before the start of heavy fighting, also before the Deir Yassin massacre, for example—it was these elements, the rich leaders of Arab society, who fled of their own free will.

Even the Israel government propaganda pamphlet takes note of the class distinction:

During the earlier phases of the fighting, the movement [of mass exodus] was on a small scale. Approximately 30,000 Arabs, mostly of the well-to-do classes, left for the neighboring states to await the outcome of the struggle, as they had done during the troubles of 1936-39.<sup>14</sup>

But this is relatively grudging admission compared to the abundant evidence on this point from Zionist sources. The *Israel Digest* in April 1949 said that "The well-to-do ones departed before May 14th in pursuance of a deliberate plan" (the plan being the AHE strategy previously quoted from the Zionist story, but the significant thing to note is that *it is here ascribed only to the few rich Arabs*) but "The poorer classes did not flee until the first month of Israel's existence. . . ."<sup>15</sup> According to this,

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the "poorer classes" did not join in the flight until *after* the Deir Yassin massacre and many other things had happened. What then happens to the now-official Zionist story of an AHE plot for a mass exodus as the justification for Israel's refugee policy, land policy, and military government over the Arab minority?

Exactly the same statement is made in the January 1949 issue of the Tel-Aviv journal *Israel & Middle East*.<sup>16</sup>

Yaakov Shimoni wrote a few months later that "the educated and wealthier people . . . were among the first to run away, in contrast to the poorer strata of the community. . . ."<sup>17</sup> As early as February 4, 1948, the British High Commissioner reported that "panic continues to increase . . . throughout the Arab middle classes, and there is a steady exodus of those who can afford to leave the country."<sup>18</sup>

A Zionist writer reported: "In the town it was the workers and the poor who remained, together with a thin layer of middle-class families."<sup>19</sup> The well-known journalist Hal Lehrman, writing in *Commentary* for December 1949, summed up:

The imams fled from the mosques, the kadis from the courts, the doctors, the teachers, practically all the intellectuals. Only workers and peasants remained.<sup>20</sup>

A great understanding can be gained if one remembers that the Israeli Arab minority problem as we know it today concerns the treatment of *these workers and peasants who remained*, in spite of all.

4

For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.—Isaiah 21: 15.

"IN SPITE OF ALL" COVERS a great deal. Even if the Arab invaders' contribution to the flight was not that given in the Zionist version (the call to an

exodus, etc.), still it played a big role. This role, however, was usually just the opposite of that which is commonly used to justify Israeli policy.

The Palestine Arab population did not flee out of sympathy with and in cooperation with the Arab invaders, but *out of fear of them and of the war*. This is easy to understand, but for the Zionists to admit this is to stamp their subsequent Arab minority policy with a certain brand.

Yet it creeps into even the Israel propaganda pamphlet which puts forward the official story; there we learn incidentally that time and again the foreign Arab commanders had to use force to prevent the local Arabs from making truces with the Israel forces.<sup>21</sup> It creeps into the book by the Revisionist leader Schechtman where, as a matter of fact, we get the theory (by Schechtman) that the very reason why the AHE called for a mass exodus was "to prevent the possibility of establishing normal relations between the Jewish authorities and the Arab minority; for once this occurred, it might lead to Jewish-Arab cooperation and ultimately to Arab acquiescence in the existence of Israel."<sup>22</sup> For a chauvinist like Schechtman, this already confesses a great deal.

Pierre van Paassen, a well-known pro-Zionist of the Christian-mystic fellow-traveling type, is anxious to prove in his book<sup>23</sup> that the Arabs did not flee out of fear of *Israeli* atrocities. No, he argues, they fled out of fear of being murdered by the Mufti's henchmen if they stayed and refused to cooperate. He seems quite unaware that he is giving the lie to the official Zionist version and condemning its policy.

The ardent Zionist historian Harry Sacher likewise gives us this truth: he remarks that "the Arab commandants ordered the Arabs on the fringes to

evacuate their villages" (italics added).<sup>24</sup>

An Israeli writer told in 1949 of the village of Tarshiha, whose Arabs did not flee. The villagers described how Kaukji, the Syrian leader of the Arab irregulars who had undertaken guerrilla operations even before the formal invasion,

ruled this district for several months and quickly brought it towards destruction and death. . . . One hears the same story throughout the whole of Western Galilee, in dozens of villages along the Lebanese frontier, the same tale of the despotic rule of Kaukji's brigands. They would carry people from their homes in the darkness of the night—never any questions asked. It was enough to "be on the list" on the slightest suspicion, a single word from one of the brigands. They removed them from their families to places outside the village, a few shots were heard in the darkness, and once more the population was reduced by a couple of villagers.<sup>25</sup>

This is hardly the description of a population which was so sympathetic to the invader that it deserves, today, to be robbed, discriminated against, and slandered as "fifth columnists" en masse.

Chaim Weizmann, speaking to U. S. Ambassador McDonald in 1948, talked "of the flight of the Arab population from Israel—a flight at times so panicky that coins were left on the tables of huts in the Arab villages. . . ."<sup>26</sup> This also scarcely fits the official story about a planned exodus at the call of the foreign Arabs.

## 5

But this is a people robbed and spoiled; but they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?—Isaiah 42: 22-23.

A SIMILAR PICTURE EMERGES from war-news items of the time in the *Palestine Post*, semi-official Zionist English-

language daily in Jerusalem. When Iraqi invading forces took over the Ramallah area, which was and is Arab, they had to proclaim martial law and a curfew—

and the population was warned that violators would be shot at by the Iraqis. . . . Houses of Arabs who try to run away in the future will be blown up, the P. B. S. [radio] announced. Mukhtars and elders of villages in the Ramallah area were. . . threatened with severe punishment in the event of panic or chaos. [May 7, 1948.]

This is a population under foreign occupation, not a population cooperating with invaders. Or take the report on Tiberias, quoting a Jewish Agency spokesman, which appeared in the *Palestine Post* on April 21, 1948: The local Arab leaders there had always been friendly, opposed to the anti-Jewish policies of the AHE; Kaukji's irregulars had occupied their houses "against the wishes of the inhabitants"—

A number of clashes occurred between the local and foreign Arabs, and local Arabs asked the British authorities for help to get rid of the invaders, but none was given.

Then, when the invaders were defeated by Jewish forces, they forced the local Arab families to evacuate. "This measure was meant to rouse the neighboring Arab States and induce them to send help."

In the same issue, the Zionist daily editorializes on the fact that the entire Arab population of Tiberias "were forced to leave by the Arab command. . . . In fact, the gangs were resisted as far as possible by those whose interests they had come to 'protect.'"

The nearly five months of fighting in Palestine has proved that the Arabs of the country—the ordinary townsmen, the fellahin and the Bedu [Bedouins] of the South—have no heart in the struggle. They did not want it to begin and they have no wish for it to continue.

But many of these Arabs, forced to abandon their land, were later robbed of it through the "abandoned land" and "absentee property" laws rigged up for the purpose by the Israelis.

Or if they wound up across the border in refugee camps, they became willy-nilly part of the hapless hundreds of thousands who were reviled as "enemies" and "fifth-columnists" while their property was being stolen.

How could non-hostile Arabs wind up across the border? Read, for example, a feature article in the *Palestine Post* of May 12, 1948, written sympathetically by Dorothy Bar-Adon: she describes how

the "displaced" Arabs seeking refuge in the Emek unburden their hearts to the Jews whom they meet at roadblocks or in the fields. It is the familiar, time-worn complaint—"they," the outsiders, are responsible for all this.

And she describes how "The refugees are driven from pillar to post. There is simply no room and no food." They go to Nazareth; then despairingly have to move on to Jenin; to Beisan; nowhere can they be provided for.

So the refugee crosses to Trans-Jordan. From here he may be deported back again. And where does one go then?

Dorothy Bar-Adon prefaces this account with the appealing remark: "*And who can understand this bewildered running better than the Jew who has been doing it on and off for a few thousand years?*"

A Revisionist-Zionist writer who minces no words about his aim of squeezing all the Arabs out of Palestine—even this chauvinist found it possible to report honestly in 1950:

I truly sympathize with the great pain of those tens of thousands of Arabs who fled from Israel under pressure of the Mufti's hands, although they themselves wished to continue to live in neighborli-

ness with the Jews and find work and their livelihood among them. I know of villages which defended themselves with arms against the forced entry of hired Mufti soldiers, and subsequently "evacuated" the villages for fear of military courts which threatened them.<sup>27</sup>

He mentions about a dozen that he knows of "personally."

Or take the case of the Jawarish (or Arab el-Guarish) tribe, as it came to light after they were finally resettled. This tribe had been such firm allies of the Zionist colonizers that they had been trusted to guard the Jewish settlements at Gedera; they had helped Jews get around British regulations and Arab hostility against Jewish purchase of land by lending their own names for the deals. Yet, when the fighting began, they had to flee simply to live, winding up in one of the refugee camps of the Gaza strip.<sup>28</sup> They were not repatriated until years later—even these Arabs, who were quibblers from the point of view of the nationalists—and even they never got their own land back, but were resettled on new land provided by the state with a well-publicized ceremony in 1953.

Perhaps the most notable case of a tribe that was friendly to and supported the Jews, but which fled across the border during the fighting, was that of the village of Abu Gosh, which we will not document here since it is a longer and more important story which will fit better into a subsequent article on Israel's Arabs since 1948.

But in most cases it did not matter whether Arabs were friendly or hostile; it did not matter why they had to flee; it did not matter whether their flight was due to fear of the foreign Arab "liberators" or of Israeli atrocities like Deir Yassin; many were impartially stripped of their land and property, or relegated to the miserable refugee camps if that was

where they landed, or subjected to military rule inside Israel—on the pretext that they had fled in order to answer the call of Israel's enemies!

6

Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.—Psalms 44: 14.

IF THE FOREIGN ARAB INVADERS are the first force to be considered that precipitated the flight, then the second that must be taken up is the British.

The attitude of the British imperial power in giving up the mandate was a vicious snarl of spite: "We wash our hands of this mess, and may you all bog down in it. . . ." And if the resulting disordered tangle were to become bad enough, who knows but that the British might be called back? They were not sorry to see themselves followed by chaos. And more than one observer has charged that they helped chaos along a bit.

The sharpest indictment of the British role as a precipitant of the Arab flight was made by E. N. Koussa, a prominent Israeli Arab attorney, in a letter to the *Palestine Post* of February 2, 1949.\* Koussa testifies how the British authorities, before departure, encouraged and often initiated Arab evacuation, worked "to create an atmosphere permeated with fear and alarm," etc. "When conditions in Tiberias, where the friendly relations between Arabs and Jews formed a bright illustration of the possibility of the two communities cooperating, became acute, the British authorities forcibly transported the Arab inhabitants en masse to Transjordan," he

\*Although Koussa is Arab (Christian, not Moslem), it is within my ground rules to cite him here because, on this matter, he is also cited as an approved authority by the Revisionist propagandist J. B. Schechtman (ref. n. 8), pp. 12-13, and by Barou (see ref. n. 30). The same applies to Msgr. Hakim. I may add also that Koussa, who is perhaps the leading Israeli Arab defending his people's rights within the state as a loyal citizen, is a collaborator with the Iehud and its organ Ner.

charged (as quoted by Schechtman).

The Greek Catholic bishop of Haifa, Msgr. Hakim, also ascribed much responsibility to the British.<sup>29</sup> A World Jewish Congress leader, N. Barou, wrote that the British helped the flight along "by spreading atrocity stories. . . . They also provided transport, convoys, etc."<sup>30</sup> and he repeats the accusation about Tiberias. When British authorities told Arabs (in Haifa, for example) that the Jews would cut them to pieces if they stayed,<sup>31</sup> some may really have thought so or they may have been motivated by guile, but in either case our own investigation has only the following question before it:

Insofar as the British role was a factor in causing the flight, how can one justify the draconic punishments imposed by Israel on the Arab minority as well as the refugees for what was not their own doing? How in good conscience can even the paid Israeli propagandists claim that the harsh refugee policy, or the land-grab, or the military government, is justified because these Arabs who were displaced were "enemies of Israel"?

7

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.—1 Samuel 15: 3.

ALL THIS MIGHT BE enough in itself to confute the Zionist version; but when we find further that the Zionist-Israeli forces themselves played a prominent role in causing and intensifying the flight, then a darker and more sinister shadow falls over the harsh penalties which they later imposed on the Arab victims of their own actions.

The first sector of this question concerns the Zionist terrorist group, the Irgun Zvei Leumi, the military

outgrowth of the Revisionist wing of Zionism—i.e., the most chauvinistic, most anti-Arab, most reactionary wing, which shaded into fascist tendencies (today organized in Israel in the Herut party, now the second strongest in the country). These extreme chauvinists always had, as compared with the other Zionists, the most consistent perspective of a Palestine which would not only be "as Jewish as England is English," but which would also be as *Araberrein* as Hitler wanted Germany to be *Judenrein*.

From early in the fighting, it seems clear, the Irgun oriented toward utilizing the war to achieve this objective, well in advance of the official Zionists' uneasy drift toward this same end. They struck their big blow on April 9, 1948 against Deir Yassin, an Arab village near Jerusalem on the highway to Tel-Aviv.\*

Why against Deir Yassin? The distinguished British Zionist editor Jon Kimche writes:

Dir Yassin was one of the few Arab villages whose inhabitants had refused permission for foreign Arab volunteers to use it as a base of operations against the Jewish life-line into Jerusalem; they had on occasions collaborated with the Jewish Agency.<sup>32</sup>

Deir Yassin had to be the victim *because* its Arabs were friendly with the Jews. In *Labor Action* Al and Ed Findley gave more details culled from the Jewish press:

It was the only village in the Jerusalem area that had not appealed to any Arab authority as being in danger from the

\*According to the Bulletin of the Council on Jewish-Arab Cooperation (a then-existing U. S. group based on Iehud's type of Zionist ideology), as quoted in *Labor Action* Aug. 23, 1948, the terrorists worked up to it during the preceding days: "On April 4 Irgun Zvei Leumi stole 1000 head of cattle from Arab villages in the coastal plain; Haganah pursued them and succeeded in returning part of the loot to the Arabs. On April 5 terrorists hijacked an Arab truck laden with citrus fruit. On April 6 the Stern group blew up the deserted Arab village of Bir Adas, when the Arabs began to return by day to work in their fields."

Jews. The villagers lived under an agreement of non-aggression with Jewish settlements surrounding it. In the winter of 1947 (long before the Dir Yassin massacre in April 1948) Abba Hushi, Jewish labor leader, cited a number of Arab villages in which the villagers had fought off Arab bands attempting to infiltrate and occupy them as positions against the Jews. Dir Yassin was prominently noted. Its villagers had successfully repelled an armed Arab band which attempted to entrench itself in the village mill. These Arab villagers . . . faithfully carried out their obligation to exclude strangers and to maintain peaceful relations, despite the partition fighting. . . .<sup>33</sup>

This was the village chosen by the Irgun for their planned massacre of (writes Kimche) "some 250 innocent Arabs, among them more than a hundred women and children."<sup>34</sup> The International Red Cross representative who visited the scene of the outrage, Jacques de Reynier, reported that the bodies of some 150 men, women and children had been thrown down a cistern while some 90 other bodies were scattered about.<sup>35</sup> The houses were destroyed. The few villagers who were not slaughtered were paraded by the Irgun through the streets of Jerusalem—in triumph.

Deir Yassin resounded through the land, indeed through the world, and with the desired effect. Even a record of friendship for the Jews was no protection, no insurance. It was after this that the Arab flight became general.

There is no question about the fact that there were also atrocities committed by the Kaukji and Mufti armed forces against Jews; the invaders had their Deir Yassin too, even if on a smaller scale. There is an abundance of testimony on this. But this would be relevant only in a debate on a subject which is not ours: namely, which side was worse in the Palestine war?

Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.—Proverbs 30: 20.

BUT DIDN'T THE JEWISH AGENCY condemn the Deir Yassin massacre and apologize for it? It did. Even if that were the whole story, few people would wonder why the mass of Arabs, already confused and panicked by Arab invaders and British, decided that flight held greater safety than trusting in the regrets of Ben-Gurion. But there are two other facets to this story.

(1) The official-Zionist army, Haganah, repudiated the massacre, undoubtedly sincerely, but also went on to claim that the Irgun had attacked Deir Yassin without any military justification and without the agreement of the official forces. The Irgun countered by releasing the exact text of the letter from the regional Haganah commander agreeing to the attack (not to a massacre, of course).<sup>36</sup> This has not really been refuted. The friendly village was not supposed to be turned into an abattoir, naturally, but it *was* supposed to be assaulted and invested as a military operation, in cynical violation of any non-aggression obligation to it.\*

(2) The official-Zionists righteously deplored and condemned—but did absolutely nothing to take any effective steps against the repetition of Irgun atrocities. On the contrary, the relations between the official Zionists and the Irgun were now closer than ever.

Only seven months before, on September 18, 1947, the Haganah had

\*For example, at the time the *Palestine Post* (Apr. 12, 1948) editorialized that "No good reason can be given even for the action as a military operation"—i.e., even aside from the massacre aspect. It went on to say that the Irgun "scored a cheap victory, 'capturing' a village which was peaceable and constituted no menace, even if some few Iraqis or other armed Arabs were in it against the wishes of its inhabitants."

raked the Irgun and Sternists with the denunciation: "these organizations gain their livelihood by gangsterism, smuggling, large-scale drug traffic, armed robbery, organizing the black market, and thefts;" and announced measures to root out terrorism.<sup>37</sup> But partition changed all that in November. By December the Haganah had overcome its moral sensibilities and was negotiating with Irgun for an agreement on cooperation. *Such an agreement was reached in April, the very month of the Deir Yassin massacre.*

The prominent Zionist historian Harry Sacher uneasily limits his comment on this to:

. . . much is still obscure as to the relations between the Haganah or the Government and the Irgun. For comprehensible reasons the Government does not think the time yet come to tell its story fully and frankly. . . .<sup>38</sup>

Among the obscure relations is undoubtedly the role of the other official-Zionist armed force, the Palmach. The *Palestine Post* reported four days after the massacre:

The Haganah statement denied IZL [Irgun] claims that Palmach units had cooperated in the attack, and pointed out that it was only after urgent appeals for help that the Palmach had provided covering fire, to enable the administration of first aid to the wounded dissidents [Irgunists] in the village. [April 13, 1948.]

It is not easy to see what, according to the official story, the Palmach was doing there in the first place.

So it is not quite true that the Deir Yassin massacre was *simply* the uncontrollable act of mavericks for whom the official Zionists were not responsible, as it is represented by all good Zionist writers who duly express their horror at it. They do not express any horror at the idea that the government and Haganah at this

time made their alliance with these perpetrators of this "Lidice," and continued it. (It was not Arab-exterminationism which moved them to break with the terrorists; it was the assassination five months later of the UN mediator, Count Bernadotte, by Sternists.)

Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?—Genesis 31: 14.

THE DEIR YASSIN MASSACRE "was a turning point," says Sacher quite accurately. The foreign Arab invaders trumpeted its horror far and wide, no doubt with the aim of stimulating anti-Israel militancy on the part of the anti-war Palestine population; the actual result of their propaganda was to convince all strata, poor as well as rich Arabs, that the best thing to do was to get out of the war zone—to flee until the hostilities were over.

The massive effect of Deir Yassin on the flight is testified to from all sides.<sup>39</sup> The flight for the first time became general. The matter of chronology is very important; for it proves that the flight cannot be explained away as due to some previous call by the Arab invaders, as is done by Zionist party-liners and the official history-rewriters of Israel.

Another thing has to be noted about the impact of Deir Yassin. Like others we have used the term "official Zionists" as distinct from the terrorists. But this was the month *before* the establishment of the state. As far as the Arab people knew, was the Irgun really less "official" than the Haganah?

Jon Kimche's book provides an important bit of background here. He explains at length how the Irgun set about convincing the British, the world press and the Arabs that it, not Haganah, was the decisive power

in the Zionist community, that it was "taking over," etc. The British passed this on to the Arab governments.

It had the desired effect among the Arabs. It swayed many who had been hesitating on the brink of decision, whether to flout the United Nations and go to war against the Palestine Zionists or not. For though it has become a habit among Israelis and pro-Zionists to assume that there was nothing but evil hatred behind the Arab decision to go to war against Israel, and that the Arab explanation that they came to save their brethren from attack by the terrorists was a cheap excuse for the benefit of those who cared to believe it, it must be stressed that there was great and very real Arab concern for the fate of the Palestine Arabs. This concern reached fever-heat when the British information was passed on that the terrorists were becoming the decisive factor in the Jewish armed forces.<sup>40</sup>

Kimche notes that this belief was reinforced when the Irgun took it upon itself in April to attack Jaffa, the Arab twin city to Tel-Aviv.

## 10

Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!—Habakkuk 2: 12.

DEIR YASSIN WAS FRESH in the minds of all when later in April the Zionist forces got ready to attack the Arab city and port of Haifa in anticipation of the withdrawal of the British troops. The Haifa situation requires special attention because it is the big show-piece for the Zionist contention that, far from pushing the Arabs out, the Jews pleaded with them to stay. As in some other cases, there is a kernel of truth here which the Zionist apologists pretend is the whole story.

Menachem Begin, the Irgun commander, stresses in his book that the effect of Deir Yassin was decisive for the flight from Haifa:

The legend of Dir Yassin helped us in

particular in the saving of Tiberias and the conquest of Haifa. . . . [And after describing the assault on Haifa:] All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic, shouting: "Dir Yassin!"<sup>41</sup>

In this period there were indeed cases where official Zionists tried to persuade the Arabs not to flee. Haifa was one of these;\* in this commercial city Jewish-Arab relations had been particularly friendly. It was the terrorists and their chauvinist ilk who realized earlier than the others that the Zionists had an exceptional opportunity to "solve the Arab problem" within the Jewish state-to-be by the expedient of getting rid of the Arabs themselves. Friendly relations stood in the way of this aim. Hence the year before, in this very port city, the Irgun had tried out a "Deir Yassin" on a small scale:

The Irgun picked an area in Haifa that was known for friendly Jewish-Arab relations and threw a bomb at the entrance of a factory employing 1800 Arabs and 400 Jews, killing six Arabs and three British workers. Their provocative act resulted in the massacre of 42 Jews.<sup>42</sup>

As we have seen, the Arab Higher Executive too reserved its choicest hatred for those Arabs who tried to maintain friendly relations with the Jews. In the middle was the Arab leadership of the Haifa community, who opposed the AHE and wanted to make a truce with the Zionist authorities.<sup>43</sup>

If there was an Arab community in Palestine that had no sympathy at all for the war against Israel, it was the Haifa Arabs, who stood to lose—

\*Zionist sources like to quote the British police reports on Haifa: "Every effort is being made by the Jews to persuade the Arab populace to stay. . . ." See Schechtman (ref. n. 8), pp. 7-9. In M. Pearlman's *The Army of Israel*, these British reports are reproduced in facsimile. The effort is to make it appear as if this applied to the Arab flight in general.

were indeed losing—their whole livelihood and existence. Their evacuation of the city was due to threats from the Arab invaders and panic fear evoked by the Irgun atrocity, reinforced and encouraged by the British.<sup>44</sup>

This feeling of panic was also reinforced by the tactics of the beleaguering Haganah, in spite of the fact that Zionist authorities urged the populace to stay. This was a species of psychological warfare waged against the population with the intention of producing demoralization. Koestler insists that this demoralization was an important reason for the Haifa flight, and furthermore:

By that time Haganah was using not only its radio station, but also loud-speaker vans which blared their sinister news from the vicinity of the Arab shuks. They warned the Arab population to keep clear of the billets of the foreign mercenaries who had infiltrated into the town, *warned them to send their women and children away* before the new contingents of savage Iraqis arrived, promised them safe conducts and escorts to Arab territory, and hinted at terrible consequences if their warnings were disregarded. [Italics added.]<sup>45</sup>

Kimche, who was there, also describes the "psychological blitz" launched on the Arab quarters, and concludes: "The Arab nerve broke shortly after dark, and the flight from the town assumed panic proportions even before general fighting had started."<sup>46</sup> (He does not say anything about a warning to send away the women and children.) It was particularly after this that the Jews tried to persuade the remaining Arabs to stay. The latter were anxious to agree and come to a truce, but, according to Kimche's personal account, it was the threats of the Arab League authorities which finally convinced the Haifa Arabs that flight would be safer. Only 5000 remained out of about 65,000.

But though they had left in a panic, there was a strangely unpanicky atmosphere in the port area. The departing Arabs meekly allowed themselves to be searched by the Haganah. They exchanged greetings and farewells with Jewish port workers, with many of whom they had worked for years.<sup>47</sup>

These are among the Arabs whose flight, according to the latter-day Zionist hack version, was due to sinister enmity against the Jews.

Whatever weight anyone chooses to give to the various cruel pressures on these Arabs pushing them toward flight, not one of the real reasons for the flight justifies the later merciless Israeli punishment of these victims, for the "crime" of fleeing.

Moreover, in the case of Jaffa, there were two additional factors: (1) As mentioned, this attack was launched by the Irgun itself, the very perpetrators of Deir Yassin; and (2) "The desire to get out of the range of Arab bombs which were soon to fall on Tel-Aviv was as potent an incentive as the fear of the Jews," explains a Zionist writer.<sup>48</sup>

## 11

By little and little I will drive them out before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land . . . for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. . . . They shall not dwell in thy land. . . .  
—Exodus 23: 30-33.

BUT THE BLACKEST PART of the true story is still to come. It was only in the first period that it was official Zionist policy to frown on the flight. They were still under the influence of the lip-service which they had been used to giving to the idea of Jewish-Arab friendship; the flight had been unexpected; but they were not too slow in reorienting. Within three months after Deir Yassin, the official Haganah forces themselves were driving the Palestine Arab population



out of their native villages, towns and cities, like cattle.

Referring to the flight, "Dr. Weizmann . . . spoke to me emotionally of this 'miraculous simplification of Israel's tasks'. . ." reported U. S. Ambassador McDonald (an active Zionist propagandist) in his book.<sup>49</sup> The flight was greeted as a "miracle" by more than Weizmann; and like other pious people, they had no objection to helping the miracle along.

By August 1, Foreign Minister Sharett was saying that "the Palestinian Arab exodus of 1948 is one of those cataclysmic phenomena which, according to the experience of other countries, changes the course of history." While Israeli soldiers were driving innocent Arabs out of their homes, the government was already making clear that it would be a long while before any of the refugees were allowed back.

The New York *Herald Tribune's* war correspondent Kenneth Bilby, in a book remarkable for the general impartiality of its tone, says, after relating that at Haifa the Zionists urged the people to stay:

Not until the war had swung noticeably in favor of the Jews and the pressure of the Jewish immigrant inflow had begun to exert itself did Israel's government policy change. Then those civilian Arabs who fell into the army net were not only permitted to depart: they were encouraged. And the borders of Israel closed to the refugees, except for a few family categories.<sup>50</sup>

Likewise Jon Kimche, in the British Zionist organ which he edits:

But after the first period of fighting, the Palestine Arabs were no longer encouraged to stay; on the contrary: they were "encouraged" to leave Lydda and Ramleh, and later, towns like Beersheba.<sup>51</sup>

The quote-marks around "encour-

aged" give way to a franker formulation in Kimche's book:

Ramleh and Lydda fell on the 13th [July]; and a flood of 60,000 panicky Arabs were compelled to take the road to the nearby Arab lines. This was no Haifa. The Jews no longer hoped the Arabs would stay. They had tasted the benefits which the earlier Arab policy of evacuation had bestowed upon them.<sup>52</sup>

Which means that the 60,000 people were expelled. There had not even been a pitched battle with Arab forces (let alone the civilians), because the Arab Legion had withdrawn without a fight. The people were simply driven out, to make the towns *Araberrein* and provide property for incoming Jews to expand into. Among the people expelled were refugees from Haifa and Jaffa. This was done by the Haganah, not by Irgun.\*

But although the Arab Legion had already withdrawn, here is Bilby's description of how the Israeli troops entered Lydda. It is the only such passage in Bilby's book, which has been favorably cited by Zionists as source to disprove *other* Arab charges of atrocities:

The ring around the twin cities [Lydda and Ramleh] was now complete.

At dusk one evening an Israeli jeep column took off from the Lydda airport and raced into Lydda, with rifles, Stens, and submachine guns blazing. It coursed through the main streets, blasting at everything that moved. The town toppled in panic. I went into Lydda the following day with Major Yeruham Cohen, brigade intelligence officer, and the corpses of Arab men, women, and even children were strewn about the streets in the wake of this ruthlessly brilliant charge. Civilians who had been trapped by the Jewish encirclement cowered behind shuttered windows; white flags were draped from every home.<sup>53</sup>

\*Kirk (see fn. on p. 90) adds that expulsions also took place of the Arab population of Acre, Beersheba and Western Galilee (p. 264). The UN Mediator, Count Bernadotte, in July 1948 reported to the Security Council on Israel's expulsion of 8000 Arab inhabitants of three villages south of Haifa and the destruction of their homes.

The reader must keep in mind that many Arab inhabitants who survived the submachine guns, and were merely driven out onto the open road, are among those who were punished for becoming "absentees" by laws which stripped them of their "abandoned" property.

In 1949 Hal Lehman wrote in *Commentary* (December):

Now that I've traveled every corner of this country [Israel], it has become clear that the Israeli troops must have been decidedly tough even with non-combatant Arabs during the war. There are, for instance, too many dynamited, desolated native villages where little or no fighting ever occurred. The Jews simply came in and smashed the place, often sparing only the mosques . . . it is obvious, too, that the Israelis—themselves surprised by the scope and speed of the Arab exodus—did an extra-thorough job of destruction to make sure that the Arabs would have nothing to come back to. There is no evidence that this was official government policy, but it certainly must have been in the minds of many local commanders. . . . Looting was not too zealously repressed either. No less an authority than the present Speaker of the Knesset, Joseph Sprintzak, has been quoted as saying that the looting of Arab homes and shops was a major defeat for the new government of Israel.

Then, after referring to the Deir Yassin massacre, Lehrman asks "Were there other outrages?" and quotes a UN observer as saying yes.\* And he continues:

I am more shaken by the expressions of

\*Arab sources charge other massacres (by Haganah), though none as bad as Deir Yassin: e.g., at Nasr-el-Din. Regarding this village, see *Palestine Post* Apr. 13, 1948 for the official Zionist report, which says that "Before the Haganah counterattacked, the women, children and older inhabitants were warned to leave the place." It does not go on to say what happened to them. The next day the same paper reported, without comment, the charge by the British colonel in the area (Tiberias) that "twenty Arabs, including women and children, were killed and the houses set on fire." The Ichud's organ *Ner* has stated that one cause of the Arab flight was "the Jewish leaders, who took advantage of Dir Yassin and similar deeds, not all perpetrated by 'dissident' (Jewish) forces, to spread terror among the Arab masses and to drive them away." (May 1954, as published in *Freeland*, May-July 1954. Emphasis added.)

grief and shame I have privately received from non-political but prominent Israelis whose personal integrity is beyond question. "The Israeli soldier has looted, burned, and slaughtered," I have been told, "and it is no comfort for us that soldiers of every other army do likewise." It is even hinted that certain officers actually ordered their troops to let themselves go. The best evidence that there were atrocities—and, I suppose, the best apology for them, if such things can be apologized for—came to me from a high-ranking veteran of the Jerusalem siege. "Our soldiers," he said, "were no worse than the Americans or British. They were even better. . . ."

But the question we are interested in here is not the moral superiority of the Haganah looters and perpetrators of atrocities over Americans or British, or vice versa, but in a far simpler one: Many Arab peasants against whom the looting and atrocities were committed, and who were driven out or who fled in fright, were later robbed of property and land and had a military government imposed over them *because* they fled or were driven out—i.e., because they left their habitations as a result of or in fear of such atrocities—and this was done not by Haganah soldiers but by the parliament and government of Israel. This was the real atrocity.

12

My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.—  
1 Kings 12: 14.

BESIDES, THE LOOTING WAS not mere looting for its own sake; at least in part it was committed in the Zionist cause; that is, as a means of driving out the Arabs. Jon Kimche explains with heavy heart, in his book, speaking of the Haganah and the Jewish Agency:

. . . the Irgun practice of looting Arab homes and shops was soon explained

away and later justified as ministering to the needs of Jewish evacuees who had lost their homes and their all as a result of the four months of attack from Jaffa. It was perhaps natural, though it was certainly detestable, that before long the rest of the Jewish soldiers of the Haganah and the Palmach should join in the orgy of looting and wanton destruction which hangs like a black pall over almost all the Jewish military successes. It could have been stopped by firm action at the outset. But it soon became a practice for which there was always a material incentive, a sophisticated justification, and an excuse.<sup>54</sup>

The fact that the "detestable" practice was initiated by the Irgun is significant. Irgun was the arm of a movement which consciously and systematically aimed at making Palestine *Araberrein*. Looting and "wanton destruction" was a political means. As in so many other cases, the Revisionist-Irgun-Herut movement showed the way to consistent Zionist practice, and the official Zionists followed with more or less reluctance, consistency and heartburning.

But it would be a mistake to think that the ousting of Arabs by official Israeli forces was a matter only of massacres or unofficial looting. The strange thing about the official-Zionist version of the flight is that one of the most important contributions of the Israelis to the ousting of Arab peasants was—in 1948—public, overt, and reported in the Zionist press as military news. This was the dynamiting of villages, and evacuation of their population, on grounds or pretext of military necessity, when foreign Arab invaders had used or might use them for a base. There is also involved the barbarous practice, introduced by the British, of collective punishments for a whole village in case of sniping.

Thus Arthur Koestler recorded in his diary on June 6, 1948 as he drove

along the road from Haifa to Tel-Aviv, observing some peaceful Arabs still tilling their fields:

But not for long. A few weeks later some Arab lads will start sniping from these villages at Jewish trucks on the road; the Jewish army will herd the villagers together, dynamite their houses, and put the young men into concentration camps; while the old ones will tie a mattress and a brass coffeepot on the donkey, the old women will walk ahead leading the donkey by the rein and the old man will ride on it. . . .<sup>55</sup>

At this point, the official Zionist apologist will inform us that this is military necessity, and cannot be helped. Before commenting, let us see some more military necessities. We quote from the military news published as a matter of course by the *Palestine Post* in 1948:

. . . Kolonia village overlooking Motza was destroyed by a Haganah striking force. . . . Most of the houses in Kolonia, occupied by Arab gangs [Kaukji's foreign Arab guerrillas] that had been attacking Castel, were blown up on Saturday night, and in a short but sharp fight the Arab unit in the village was wiped out. . . . *Yesterday, Haganah men completed the destruction of the village by blowing up the remaining houses. . . . The village had been evacuated by most of its residents during the past week. . . . [April 12, 1948. Italics added.]*

The next day the paper reported, in a similar news item, that three villages had been "pounded into desolation" and "reduced to rubble" after being deserted by their residents and occupied by "Arab gangs." It adds matter-of-factly:

Abu Shusha village . . . was recaptured by the Haganah this morning, and is being blown up. [April 13, 1948.]

The fact is, then, that Arab villages were systematically dynamited and razed not, or not merely, in the course of fighting but *after capture*. The mili-

tary necessity was presumably to prevent their use by hostile forces. No doubt, the system of destroying these villages down to their foundation stones had a real convenience for the Israeli forces from this point of view, though other civilized armies seem to have gotten along in various wars without this practice. For present purposes we will also assume for a moment that the Zionist authorities never gave a moment's thought to the fact that this convenient custom had the additional advantage of scorching the earth for the Arab inhabitants and contributing to the "purity" of an *Araberrein* Palestine. We only ask readers to remember, once again, that even if we accept the plea of military necessity at face value, the question which is at issue in this study is the subsequent fate of the innocent Arab peasants who were driven out and despoiled out of this alleged military necessity, and not because of their alleged offense in taking flight at the call of the Arab invaders.

But it would take great willpower to convince oneself that military necessity was the answer. Kenneth Bilby wrote, for example, summing up the 1949 picture:

Israel ruled three-quarters of Palestine, and scores of Arab villages deemed uninhabitable had been razed *as insurance against their owners' return*. [Italics added.]<sup>56</sup>

Harry Sacher, a prominent British Zionist leader, is very delicate in the following remarks:

. . . for strategic purposes the Jews began to blow up the Arab villages, which they occupied. . . . The massacre at Deir Yassin by the Irgun on the 9th April, 1948, was a turning point. . . . It became the rule that, when the Jewish forces advanced, the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territory fled; *nor was the flight always without stimulation or encouragement from the Jews*. [Italics added.]<sup>57</sup>

An internationally known professor and author at Hebrew University, Norman Bentwich, remarks regarding the injustice of the later Absentee Property Law:

Many [Arab residents of Israel] were driven out for a time from their villages by the Jewish military forces in the course of the campaign, and are now living in adjacent villages, and are prevented from recovering their properties which are vested in the Custodian.<sup>58</sup>

Hal Lehrman—writing about an entirely different topic, the widespread prejudice by Israeli Jews against the new immigrant Oriental Jews—quotes an Israeli friend who complained to him, "not entirely in sour jest, that 'we drove out our good Arabs, and now look at what we have in their place!'"<sup>59</sup> The alleged half-jest is about the Oriental Jews; the remark which slips out incidentally about having driven out the Arabs is *not* part of the sour jest.

### 13

And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?—2 Kings 9: 22.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, the infamous land-grab, which after the war was carried through systematically by special laws and ordinances, got started during the war itself under the umbrella of military operations. Dr. Don Peretz writes:

When Israel's military and paramilitary forces first occupied abandoned Arab areas military field commanders improvised policy on the spot, often turning property over to the secretaries of Jewish agricultural settlements or local security officers.<sup>60</sup>

In a series of articles on Israel's Arabs which appeared in the leading Israeli paper *Haaretz*, we read that

Every piece of land which had been abandoned for any reason whatever—whether in the whirl of war, or during the truces, or soon after the Israeli occupation—was at once seized by the nearby [Jewish] settlement or settlements and attached to their estates.<sup>61</sup>

This grab was not a matter of individual lawlessness merely; it was organized and stimulated by Zionist authorities for Zionist aims. Dr. Don Peretz describes it for this period:

Squatters [on seized Arab property] often received semi-official sanction for their occupation of empty buildings. Even before the status of the abandoned Arab areas was determined, the Jewish Agency was directing the flow of new immigrants toward the vacant Arab settlements. The military also participated in this unauthorized mass-requisitioning. In one instance, a group of army officers supported by tanks seized large areas of absentee [Arab] property in Jaffa. [Peretz's footnote here refers to the January 9, 1949 issue of *Haaretz*.]

When the first Custodian of Abandoned Property was appointed, in July 1948, all of Jaffa had been occupied. . . .

In one of his early reports the Custodian claimed that nearly all absentee houses had been occupied and that their seizure by the Jewish Agency for the use of new immigrants would be recognized. Nearly all movables in these houses, which had not been looted or destroyed, were sold to the army before the Custodian arrived.<sup>62</sup>

The role of the Jewish Agency in this grab was attested to in November 1949 when Finance Minister Kaplan (the cabinet member in charge) made a Knesset speech replying to charges of government laxness. He "accused institutions like the Jewish Agency, which were responsible for the settlement of new immigrants, of causing the greatest difficulties in management of absentee property."<sup>63</sup>

At this time, the callous robbery of the Arabs was not yet being justified officially by reference to the needs of the new immigrants. The conception had not yet taken root in all circles

that the injustices and crimes committed against European Jewry by bestial anti-Semites were sufficient reason for the wronged Jews in turn to commit injustices and crimes against the native Palestinian Arab population. It was being *done*, but only officially-unofficially. When the first Custodian made his report to the Knesset, such robbery was condemned at least in words, though nothing whatsoever was done against it. The government washed its hands; so did Haganah.

In his April 18, 1949 report to the Knesset Finance Committee, the Custodian maintained that the "moral feelings" of the Jewish community had "prevented the despoliation of the enemy," but he did admit this much:

Feelings of revenge, moral justification and material temptation did, however, overcome many.

In such conditions, only extreme measures by the military, civil and legal authorities could have saved, not only the property, but many individuals and institutions from moral degeneration.

Such action was not forthcoming and was, perhaps, impossible in the prevailing conditions, and affairs in many areas degenerated without restraint.<sup>64</sup>

Note that this official lists "material temptation"—i.e., looting for the sake of the loot—only third; and note his reference not only to individuals but to "institutions," which means the Zionist agencies and organizations.

The leading newspaper *Haaretz*—then, as now, a Zionist voice that was deeply conscience-stricken over it all—spoke out. Its columnist, the Hebrew author Moshe Smilanski (of the *Ichud*), agreed with the Custodian's report that a large part of the public was responsible for the theft of Arab property.<sup>65</sup> "Towns, villages and agricultural property were robbed without shame, and lawless individuals of

the masses as well as the intelligentsia enriched themselves from occupied property." He called for measures against those responsible, but that was naive.

Smilanski also wrote: "Some time we will have to account for its theft and despoliation not only to our consciences but also to the law." There he was quite wrong. The same people who tolerated the robbery devised a whole series of laws which not only legalized the grab but permitted its systematic extension; but that is for another article on the story of the Israeli Arab minority.

14

Now ye may see this, as we have declared, not so much by ancient histories, as ye may if ye search what hath been wickedly done of late through the pestiferous behavior of them that are unworthily placed in authority.—*Esther* (Apocrypha) 18: 7.

WHILE THE ROBBERY COULD always be reconciled with law, given the power of a state, it could not be reconciled with conscience by those Israelis who hold out against the tide of chauvinism in the little country. The intellectuals of *Ichud* or *Haaretz* are wont to lament the moral degeneration exhibited when a people, themselves so recently persecuted and despoiled in

Europe, visit such wrongs upon a minority which is under their own newly acquired power.

Without in the least derogating this moral indignation at the treatment of the Arab minority, which is richly justified, one aspect of the denunciation-misses the mark. The moral indignation should not be visited in the first place against the miserable, harassed, driven Jewish DPs from Europe who, in their fear and need, were used as pawns to grab the land and property of the dispossessed Arabs. They were steered and pushed into this position by those who knew what they were doing—Zionist arms like the Jewish Agency, Zionist authorities in the armed forces and government, both by design and by toleration.

Zionism—the ideology of Jewish chauvinism—showed that it was and is one of the deeply reactionary conceptions of the political world. The child of anti-Semitism, it became the father of another form of ethnic oppression; if genocide means the murder of a people as such, then there should be a word for the robbery of a people as such.

What Zionism created in Palestine in 1948 was the first act of a tragedy.

HAL DRAPER

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## Organization and Consciousness Of the American Working Class

To what extent is American industry unionized? What is involved is not a mere statistical query but an investigation into the very nature of the working class. Marxists often refer to the "backwardness" of the American labor movement, a term which is accurate but only relative. Backward compared to what? In every industrially advanced country where democracy prevails, generations of workers have given allegiance to socialist and labor parties, or, in the case of the Communist Party, to a party which appears to them, however mistakenly, as a class party. Except in the United States. Here, the labor

movement rejects in principle the formation of a class party and supports bourgeois candidates. It is organized essentially as a labor-union movement and in this respect remains in the first stages of its political evolution. Nevertheless, though it does not exist as an independent party, the working class does exist as an independently organized class. Twenty-five years ago, only one generation, the American working class was disorganized, except for a small minority; today, it is overwhelmingly organized. It appears backward compared with the social needs of our times and measured against its own future. But look at its

past and a giant advance in organization and in consciousness is obvious.

In 1954, the total membership of labor unions, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was no less than 18,000,000. An impressive total. But bare membership figures only hint at the pervasive influence of unionism. If we estimated an average immediate family of 3 for each member, the total population directly linked to organized labor totals 54 millions: *one-third of the national population*. This is disconcerting because there is no space reserved for classes in American ideology; perhaps a happy middle class but nothing so vulgar as a working class. There is mutual cooperation; there is balance of forces; there are no classes; there is no class struggle; all chant this litany; industrial statesmen, once known as capitalists; labor statesmen, once known as workers' leaders; in between, writers, editors, lecturers, educators.

Yet unions are class organizations *par excellence*. Membership is nearly everywhere open only to those who work for an employer; and employers are strictly barred from holding membership and denied the right to speak at union meetings of their own employees. What cements the union together in the first place and then holds it together in good times and bad, what distinguishes it from all other organizations is the fact that it draws workers together in the workshop, mobilizes them to improve their daily conditions and organizes them strictly, even narrowly, as wage-earners.

The union begins by drawing a sharp line between worker and employer. To the extent that they enroll large sections of the working class and enlist their conscious and active loyalty, to that extent class lines are deepened. But since this simple truth

is not permitted to circulate as a free citizen, an annoying problem is posed for official sociology. How to interpret this labor movement? To put it more bluntly, how to explain it away?

But must it be explained away? There are other possibilities. Reactionary Democrats and conservative Republicans are not particularly concerned with delicate sociological leg-erdemain. For them it suffices, without philosophical speculation, to act as though unions represented one class and they another. Their unstated theory is expressed in deeds: Taft-Hartley laws; "right to work" laws; illegalizing labor political action. All aimed at curbing and restraining the power of unionism. But there is a limit: if you make us second-class citizens, warns George Meany, we will be forced to form a labor party.

The labor movement cannot be wiped out by any devices available and conceivable today. Intelligent ideologists of capitalism cannot permit themselves to understand the class position of American unionism, much less proclaim it publicly lest the labor movement be pushed into recognizing itself.

It is impossible to explain away the class struggle without explaining away the modern labor movement. Here lies the importance of analyzing our most powerful union movement.

Labor leaders grope their way unperturbed by thought processes. They reject a labor party on the grounds that it would create class division.. A moment later, they "divide" workers from bosses by unionizing them. It is not that they notice no contradiction; they simply don't think about it.

Just before helping to create the biggest and most powerful labor union movement in U. S. history, George Meany told the printing industry, "Now, as to those who fear the mer-

ger, I would say that there is no possible fear of this so-called labor monopoly, because even when we get merged we will have less than 25 per cent of the total work force of the nation and that will certainly not look like a monopoly."

His intention is innocent enough; by pointing to labor's weakness, he hopes to silence those who want to curb its power. The basically underprivileged position of labor lies not in lack of organization but in the monopoly of industry by a small class of owners. Workers must work to live; they can forego wages in strikes but not forever; the owner has enormous resources and great powers that go with ownership. No matter how strongly unions succeed in organizing, the power of the working class remains limited compared to the power of ownership. But Meany cannot do much with such an argument; it reveals too much about capitalism, the limitations of its democracy and its built-in class rule. Instead, he points, not to labor's limited social rights, but to its presumably limited organization. But look up at the mountains! What stands out is towering unionism, intensive and wide-ranging.

WHAT IS THE DEGREE of organization in the various industries? Such a question would seem readily answerable in passionless statistics. We should already be forewarned, however, that the subject is overladen with political and sociological preconceptions.

Take a passing comment from "American Labor and the American Spirit," a pamphlet issued in 1954 by the Department of Labor and distributed widely in unions.

The necessarily limited role of present day unions is indicated by a comparison of union membership with the entire labor force—the labor force is nearly

four times as large as the number of workers in unions. The term labor force as used in the United States includes self-employed workers; salaried workers as well as wage earners; casual and temporary workers; and those who are not at work but looking for jobs.

The comparison between the size of the *organized* working class and the total labor force is misleading. "Labor force" conjures up visions of men, sleeves rolled, hammering away with sledge and chisel. But beware! If the National Association of Manufacturers employs a director, who retains a firm of attorneys, who hire labor-relations advisors, who use a strike-breaking detective agency—with the aim of preventing or smashing unionism—all the individuals engaged in such unique human endeavors are duly recorded in the ever-patient and tolerant category of "labor-force."

If its statistical significance in society is to be judged, then the whole working class, *organized and unorganized*, must be measured against other classes. If the weight of the *organized* working class is to be compared, let it be gauged by the *organizations* of other classes.

The Department of Labor selects part of the working class, its organized sector, holds it up against all classes, organized and unorganized, and finds that one out of every four gainfully employed (all classes, all professions, all means of payment; employers, owners, storekeepers; city, town and farm) is a unionized worker. What hits the observer full in the face is the amazingly large section of the whole employed population already enrolled in unions.

But let us put this aside and consider another aspect of the question. Before labor can organize other classes, before it can lead the nation, it must organize itself. How far has it succeeded? What is its self-conscious-

ness? We want to know something about the inner state of the American working class.

For this, we compare the organized working class, not with the population in general, but with the whole working class.

Naturally, our interest lies beyond the laudable desire for accurate statistics and pure information. The rise of socialism in advanced industrial nations, (and ultimately in all), depends upon the rise, organization and class consciousness of the working class. And in time, history turned upon these factors—so it was in the past and will be in the future. We avoid, too, sociological generalities and precise definitions of what is included and what is not in the term "working class." The impact of the labor and socialist movement is linked to tendencies among workers in industry: those engaged in manufacturing production, in transportation, in mining, and in construction. Here lies the heart and spine of the modern working class.

From various political and social standpoints it is argued that other classes or sections of classes are growing at a relatively greater rate than the industrial working class. Sometimes this thought is linked to notions of the rise of bureaucracy and administration in general, or to a new middle class, or to automation, or to atomic energy. But regardless of what looms in the somewhat shadowy future, we begin with what we have. The political and social tendencies of new social strata will be shaped by the most powerfully organized class of modern times: the industrial proletariat; and the social results of new techniques of production and science will be determined by what this class does or does not accomplish. In terms of its self-consciousness and organiza-

tion, the industrial workingclass is rising, consolidating, viable and decisive. Leo Wolman, in the 36th annual report of the National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that union membership rose 148.8 per cent between 1939 and 1953, from 6,500,000 to 16,217,000. The percentage of trade union membership in non-agricultural employment rose from 21.5 per cent to 32.6 per cent in the same period.

In 1953, Daniel Bell, writing in *Fortune* on "The Next American Labor Movement," minimizes the impact of the labor movement and underlines, as he sees it, its basic adjustment to capitalist society. The following statistical fragment is a piece of the whole, "In 1946, US unions had organized about 15 million—48 per cent of 31 million potential members, since 1946, the working population has expanded but union membership has remained stationary."

We note a more impressive ring: from 25 per cent of the "labor force" to 48 per cent of the "potential members." Still, Bell emphasizes stagnation and limitation.

Three years later, Bell is even firmer in his view, reiterated now in the context of AFL-CIO unity. *Fortune*, June 1956: "In the past ten years, membership gains, as the AFL-CIO has admitted, came 'primarily from economic expansion in establishments and industries already organized.' And even this growth, a membership rise of three million or about 21 per cent in ten years, has barely kept pace with the percentage increase in the American labor force over the same period."

And the chief lesson:

But the basic fact about the labor movement today is that it has lost its élan. Its leadership is aging; its rhetoric is dulled and unconvincing even to

its own orators, its emotional appeals, such as Reuther's speeches to the AFL-CIO convention, evoke response primarily because of sentiment about the past. In part this is a paradoxical 'loss through victory.' The fact is that American business today is pledged to an expanding economy; once management became committed to annual productivity increases in wages over and beyond rises in cost of living, unionism lost much of its fire power. . . . Vast changes within labor reflect not labor's efforts to change the economy but changes in the technology of America and in the location of industry" And concluding, "blue collar unionism has been and will remain a phenomenon of American industry and . . . in the changing aspects of American life—the rise of services, recreation, research—it will play no great role in economic organization.

We fear that a bubbling lack of enthusiasm tempts Bell to exaggerate his own underestimation. Note his contention that between 1946 and 1953 "the working population has expanded but union membership has remained stationary." This conclusion is directly contradicted by a study of union membership 1897-1953 by Irving Bernstein in the June 1954 *American Economic Review*. According to Bernstein, the change between 1946 and 1953 was as follows:

| Year | Union Membership as % of Entire Labor Force |                    |
|------|---|--------------------|
|      | Union Membership                            | Entire Labor Force |
| 1946 | 12,980,000                                  | 22.6               |
| 1953 | 17,010,000                                  | 26.8               |

These figures demonstrate a big advance in total membership and an appreciable increase in relative membership.

Bell detects many little things but misses what is big. He is under a compulsion to highlight, underline and emphasize everything that reveals weakness, stagnation, limitation, triviality and passive adaptation in the union movement. The grand evolu-

tion, the main line of development escapes him completely. In a maze of detail he hits upon the "basic fact" in loss of "elan." But consider his introduction to a graph of union membership: "U. S. union growth . . . occurred largely in the 1935-45 decade. . . . But this growth was largely under hothouse protection: first of the NRA and the Wagner Act; later, the War Labor Board." It is incredible that Bell cannot see the obvious. His own "Hothouse" theory (which this writer contends is misleading) emphasized not stagnation but spectacular advance. Bell leaves the impression of a labor movement that could hardly stand alone and leaned on crutches of government help. But contrast the fate of unionism in two wars. During the first World War, it rose truly under "hothouse" protection only to be driven back after the war was over. Now, the hothouse is gone; the glass panels shattered, the steam heat turned off. Instead of the Wagner Act, icy winds blow: Taft-Hartley; right-to-work laws; curbs on union political action. Yet, the union movement holds on to every position; it grows; it unifies, it intends to grow even more. The "basic fact," demonstrated in the last ten years, is this: the American workingclass is fundamentally, permanently, organized; its unions are deep rooted and ineradicable. This is clear and obvious for the first time; a powerful, newly-organized class has taken its place on the political and social arena; such an event must decisively affect the nation's history. Unless this "basic fact" is clearly understood, every discussion of union problems will bog down in trivia.

Bell's finger remains pointed at the loss of "elan"; his doubts remain on its ability to organize the South or to expand into new fields. But is the stagnation inherent in the very nature

of labor organization today? Is it rooted in the basic long term power of capitalism? Is it linked to the limitations of the role and consciousness of America's workingclass? Or is it a transient phenomenon, a passing stage in the growth of unionism and the rise of workingclass consciousness, destined to be overcome as labor moves on to a new stage? Is it deeply rooted in the very nature of our society or is it a phase of labor's political evolution?

In answering such questions, we need a rough picture of what the American workingclass looks like.

SINCE WE ARE CONCERNED here with the state of the industrial workingclass, we will compare two figures. (1) The number of production workers in a given branch of industry with, (2) the size of unions in that field. Our figures are rough with no claim to statistical refinement. As we noted, the Bureau of Labor Statistics does not publish figures on the degree of organization by industry. The Auto Workers Union, for example, organizes thousands of workers outside the strict limits of its stated field of operations. The Machinists Union spreads over almost every branch of every industry. The Carpenters Union with its base in the building trades takes in furniture workers, lumber mill workers and others. We take one precaution in order not to exaggerate the total picture and list each union under only one heading, a device which will tend to exaggerate the degree of organization in some areas by minimizing it in others. Figures on union membership are almost all from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Directory of Labor Unions which lists claimed membership in 1954; figures on employment are from approximately the same period.

### Manufacturing

According to the estimate of A. H. Raskin, labor editor of the *New York Times*, three-fourths of all workers in manufacturing are organized: out of 13,400,000 production workers, more than 10,000,000 are in unions. But even this impressive figure understates the real spread and power of unionism. The more basic the industry, the stronger is unionism. By this fact, unionism exercises vast social power and makes its ideological impact even upon workers who are not organized or only weakly organized. Consider the expanse of unionism in the industrial heartland of the U. S.

### Primary Metals

*Workers employed:* 1,140,000 of which 700,000 are employed on production in the basic steel industry: foundries, mills, furnaces.

*Union membership:* The Steel Workers Union alone 1,200,000. Part of this membership covers metal fabrication. On the other hand, thousands of workers in basic aluminum, copper and other non-ferrous metals are organized into other unions. This industry is virtually 100 per cent organized.

### Transportation Equipment

*Workers employed:* 1,400,000 of which 1,100,000 are employed in auto and aircraft plants.

*Union membership:* The UAW alone accounts for 1,239,000. Part of this membership, however, is employed in agricultural implement plants and others in assorted metal fabrication. On the other hand, a large section of the aircraft industry is organized by the International Association of Machinists. Virtually 100 per cent unionized.

### Clothing Industry

(Apparel and other finished textiles)

Employed: 1,100,000.

Union membership:

|                              |         |
|------------------------------|---------|
| United Garment Workers ..... | 40,000  |
| ILGWU .....                  | 441,000 |
| Amalgamated .....            | 385,000 |
| Hatters .....                | 40,000  |
| Glove Workers .....          | 3,000   |
| Hosiery Workers .....        | 15,000  |
| Lace Operatives .....        | 3,000   |

Total ..... 927,000

### Paper and Allied Industries

Employed: 440,000.

Union membership:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| AFL Paper Makers .....                         | 73,000  |
| CIO Paper Workers .....                        | 50,000  |
| Pulp, Sulphite and<br>Paper Mill Workers ..... | 150,000 |

Total ..... 273,000

### Leather and Leather Products

Employed: 335,000.

Union members:

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Fur and Leather Workers<br>Industrial Union (defunct).... | 50,000 |
| Leather and Leather Goods<br>AFL .....                    | 28,000 |
| Shoe and Allied Workers .....                             | 6,000  |
| CIO Shoe Workers .....                                    | 64,000 |
| AFL Boot and Shoe .....                                   | 40,000 |

Total ..... 188,000

### Tobacco

Employed: 100,000.

Union membership:

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Tobacco Workers Union ..... | 34,000 |
| Cigar Makers .....          | 10,000 |

Total ..... 44,000

### Stone, Clay and Glass

Employed: 430,000.

Union membership:

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Brick and Clay Workers .....   | 23,000 |
| Cement, Lime and Gypsum .....  | 38,000 |
| Glass Bottle Workers .....     | 51,000 |
| Clay and Ceramic Workers ..... | 47,000 |
| Flint Glass Workers .....      | 30,000 |
| Potters Union .....            | 24,000 |

Total ..... 213,000

### Lumber and Wood Products

Employed: 680,000.

Union membership:

CIO Woodworkers Union ..... 105,000

Here it must be noted that the AFL Carpenters Union which is listed under construction is not included although it has a large membership in lumber camps and sawmills.

In the Northwest, this industry is completely organized. In the South, however, it is only 15 per cent unionized.

### Furniture

Employed: 300,000.

Union membership:

|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Upholsters Union .....  | 53,000 |
| Furniture Workers ..... | 50,000 |

Total ..... 103,000

Here, too, we omit thousands of members of the Carpenters Union.

### Printing

Employed: 520,000.

Union membership:

|                     |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| Bookbinders .....   | 54,000 |
| Engravers .....     | 16,000 |
| Lithographers ..... | 28,000 |
| Pressmen .....      | 99,000 |
| Stereotypers .....  | 14,000 |
| Typographers .....  | 78,000 |

Total ..... 285,000

### Food Industry

Employed: 1,100,000.

Union membership:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Packinghouse Workers and<br>Amalgamated Meat Cutters.... | 450,000 |
| Bakers .....   | 160,000 |
| Brewery Workers .....                                    | 62,000  |
| Distillery Workers .....                                 | 25,000  |
| Grain Millers .....                                      | 32,000  |

Total ..... 729,000

These figures show about two-thirds organization but that would be misleading. Packinghouses are totally organized. The two big unions in the

industry, United Packinghouse Workers, formerly CIO, and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, formerly AFL, are about to merge. Once this merger is finally consummated, a vigorous organizing drive is inevitable. Independent unions which have a sizable membership are not counted at all.

### Rubber Products

Employed: 200,000.

Union membership:

United Rubber Workers Union.. 175,000

### Textile Mills

Employed: 990,000.

Union membership:

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| AFL ..... | 90,000  |
| CIO ..... | 292,000 |

Total ..... 382,000

This is a relatively poorly organized industry. Yet well over a third of the workers are organized.

### Chemicals

Employed: 530,000.

Union membership:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| AFL Chemical Workers .....                | 90,000  |
| CIO Gas, Coke and Chemical<br>Union ..... | 100,000 |

Total ..... 190,000

The low degree of organization in this industry is generally recognized. Large unorganized plants in the South must still be unionized. Yet close to one-third of the workers are already organized. In the Atomic industries, whose workers are scattered among many unions, A. H. Raskin estimates that 75 per cent are already organized.

### Oil

Employed:

|                                  |         |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Oil mining .....                 | 135,000 |
| Products of petroleum and coal.. | 175,000 |

Total ..... 310,000

Union membership: The former Oil Workers Union, which merged with the Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers, claimed more than 100,000 members and was the backbone of union organization. But unionism in the oil industry is not yet consolidated and membership is spread over a host of small independent unions not listed here. In early 1954 an abortive unity conference attracted 149 delegates from 31 oil unions representing a claimed membership of over 212,000. Unionism is firmly established but not unified. Bell estimates that independent unions have a membership of 100,000.

### Mining

Employed:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Bituminous and Anthracite Coal           | 250,000 |
| Metal mining .....                       | 90,000  |
| Non-Metallic Mines and<br>Quarries ..... | 90,000  |

Total ..... 430,000

Union membership:

The United Mine Workers did not report its membership to the BLS. Our figure is an estimate. The Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union has declined sharply in membership but its losses have represented not a decline in union membership but a transfer to CIO unions.

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| United Mine Workers .....      | 400,000 |
| Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers | 100,000 |

Total ..... 500,000

Obviously, these 500,000 members are not all miners. District 50 of the UMW organizes chemical workers and others. MMSW organizes smelter workers and its membership figures are probably exaggerated. But, on the other hand, these figures omit metal miners organized into the Steel Workers Union.

Despite all qualifications, the pic-

ture is clear: unionism dominates the mining industry.

### Construction Industry

Employed: 2,527,000.

Union membership: (almost all in Building Trades Dept.—AFL).

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Asbestos Workers .....      | 9,000            |
| Boilermakers .....          | 150,000          |
| Bricklayers .....           | 147,000          |
| Carpenters .....            | 804,000          |
| Electrical Workers .....    | 630,000          |
| Elevator Construction ..... | 9,000            |
| Operating Engineers .....   | 200,000          |
| Granite Cutters .....       | 4,000            |
| Hod Carriers .....          | 433,000          |
| Iron Workers .....          | 139,000          |
| Lathers .....               | 15,000           |
| Marble Workers .....        | 6,000            |
| Painters .....              | 220,000          |
| Plasterers .....            | 65,000           |
| Plumbers .....              | 241,000          |
| Roofers .....               | 17,000           |
| Sheet Metal Workers .....   | 50,000           |
| Stone Cutters .....         | 2,000            |
| <b>Total .....</b>          | <b>3,141,000</b> |

Obviously union rolls include thousands of workers who are not employed in construction. On the other hand, thousands of others who should be listed are not. The Teamsters, for example, who organize construction drivers are not listed at all. In small towns, building trades workers are weakly organized; but this doubly emphasizes the fact that in the great industrial centers, where the basic character of the working class is established, they are almost 100 per cent organized.

### Transportation

Employed: 2,800,000.

Union membership:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Teamsters .....                           | 1,000,000 |
| Firemen and Oilers .....                  | 60,000    |
| Locomotive Firemen and<br>Enginemen ..... | 90,000    |
| Bro. of Maintenance of Way.....           | 219,000   |
| Pullman Porters .....                     | 15,000    |
| Signalmen .....                           | 17,000    |
| Trainmen .....                            | 204,000   |

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Railway Telegraphers .....    | 51,000           |
| Yardmasters .....             | 4,000            |
| Carmen .....                  | 170,000          |
| Conductors .....              | 32,000           |
| Railway Clerks .....          | 293,000          |
| Switchmen .....               | 15,000           |
| Locomotive Engineers .....    | 74,000           |
| Railway Patrolmen .....       | 3,000            |
| Transport Workers Union ..... | 100,000          |
| All Maritime Unions* .....    | 106,000          |
| <b>Total .....</b>            | <b>2,458,000</b> |

Note: This list omits the International Association of Machinists which organizes railroad machinists.

On the periphery of the organized labor movement, unionization is relatively weak. Of the 5,750,000 workers employed in the Service and Miscellaneous industries, A. H. Raskin estimates that it is "doubtful that more than 1,000,000." In finance, insurance, real estate, he guesses that less than 5 per cent are in unions. Of 11,000,000 in the wholesale and retail trade, he thinks about 500,000 are organized. Government workers are perhaps 10-15 per cent organized, and agricultural workers negligibly so.

Organizing the unorganized is not a matter of simple administrative efficiency and energy. In organizing the South, labor will have to examine its political line and its relations with the Democratic party, dominant one-party in the non-union South. To organize white collar workers, labor must create an atmosphere of sympathy for unionism among the people; that too is a political question.

But in grappling with its problems, labor begins with 18,000,000 organized workers; while it is true that thousands among them are indifferent to unionism and its goals, other thou-

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| *Maritime Unions:  |                |
| NMU .....          | 43,000         |
| SIU .....          | 44,000         |
| MEBA .....         | 9,000          |
| MMP .....          | 9,000          |
| ARA .....          | 1,000          |
| <b>Total .....</b> | <b>106,000</b> |

sands among the unorganized workers are undoubtedly eager for unions. It would be a miracle if the organized body of 18 million hadn't made its impact on the minds of all, organized and unorganized. Where it is weak, unionism does not begin with nothing. In such areas as chemicals and textiles 25 per cent at least are already organized. Among government workers and retail clerks, thousands are already in unions. Such footholds, backed by the resources and influence of a united labor movement, become the starting point for an inevitable expansion of unionism in the United States.

The majority of the industrial working class is already organized. So, far, our statistics only tell us *where* they are. The next question is: what do they think about their unions? For them or against?

WHO CAN PROBE THEIR MINDS OR test their enthusiasm? The National Association of Manufacturers campaigns for the "Right to Work" convinced that men are "coerced" into joining, herded by mighty "union bosses" and "labor monopolies," unwilling shahaied victims. Sponsors of the Taft-Hartley Law, in revolt against "labor dictatorship," rose in public indignation to give good Americans, imprisoned in unions, a chance to shake free. The closed shop was, and remains, outlawed. At first Taft-Hartley also ruled out a union shop unless a

majority of those *eligible to vote* in any collective bargaining unit elected for it. By its provisions, those who failed to vote were in effect counted as voting against the union. The results were startling.

In 19 years (1936-54) since the adoption of the Wagner Act, workers were given the chance to express their private feelings in secret government elections of three types: (1) collective bargaining elections, (2) union shop elections under the Taft Hartley Law, (3) strike ballots under the wartime Smith-Connally Act. In all types of elections during these years, more than 19,000,000 ballots were cast. In actuality, at one time or another virtually the entire organized working class voted in secret. Here, in the dark privacy of government protection they could, if they so desired, lash out against the unions. *Almost 16,000,000 votes were cast for unions, or 82.7 per cent.*

Most impressive were the union shop elections under the Taft-Hartley Law. These voters were no raw recruits to unionism; they were not swayed by momentary illusions or passing promises; as old-time union men they had to decide whether to make membership compulsory for others and for *themselves*. Between 1948 and 1951, over 46,000 union shop elections were conducted; more than 5,500,000 votes were cast; of these, over 5,000,000, or 91.4 per cent went for the union!

### UNION SHOP ELECTIONS UNDER THE TAFT LAW (in all tables figures are by fiscal year ending June 30)

|                     | Votes Cast       | For Union        | % for Union  |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| July 1-Oct. 22      |                  |                  |              |
| 1951 .....          | 210,507          | 185,847          | 88.5%        |
| 1951 .....          | 1,335,683        | 1,164,143        | 87.1         |
| 1950 .....          | 900,866          | 805,189          | 89.4         |
| 1949 .....          | 1,471,092        | 1,381,829        | 93.9         |
| 1948 .....          | 1,629,330        | 1,534,981        | 94.2         |
| <b>Totals .....</b> | <b>5,547,478</b> | <b>5,071,978</b> | <b>91.4%</b> |



The law was defeating its purpose! Instead of "freeing" workers from "compulsory" unionism, the elections became a weapon for mobilizing pro-union sentiment. Pressure was built up for the union shop where it never had existed before. Congress hastened to expunge this provision from the law in 1951.

In 1944, in an atmosphere of war-time strikebreaking, the Smith-Connally Act was passed making it illegal for unions to declare strikes without a government-sponsored vote. In 2½ years, over 2,000 elections were held. Close to 2 million votes were cast; of these nearly 1,600,000 or 82.8 per cent voted for strike as (in most cases) recommended by their union.

#### SMITH-CONNALLY STRIKE VOTES

|                      | <i>Votes Cast</i> | <i>For Strike</i> | <i>% for Strike</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1944 .....           | 98,224            | 69,978            | 71.2%               |
| 1945 .....           | 540,242           | 442,769           | 80.0                |
| July-Dec. 1945 ..... | 1,288,345         | 1,081,190         | 84.3                |
| <b>Totals .....</b>  | <b>1,926,811</b>  | <b>1,593,937</b>  | <b>82.8%</b>        |

But the most far-reaching and continuing test came in nineteen years of NLRB collective bargaining elections. More than 11½ million votes were cast; more than 9 million or 78.7 per cent for the union. The totals are even more impressive than they appear. As the years pass, most large factories are organized; elections take place in anti-union strongholds and small shops. By 1954, 56.7 per cent of all collective bargaining elections took place in units of less than 40 workers; and 84.7 per cent in units of less than 100. Unionism begins to

reach down where workers are most influenced by petty personal relations with their boss, most easily intimidated and influenced by trivial considerations. In 1948, a sharp drop in the percentage of pro-union votes is noticeable, opening the Taft-Hartley era. The employer is granted new means of intimidation; he can call meetings against the union on company property; he can threaten to move out of town; he can turn his workers into a captive audience. Yet, elections continue to go pro-union by a large majority:

#### NLRB COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ELECTIONS

1936-1954

| <i>Year</i>                | <i>Valid Votes Cast</i> | <i>For Union</i> | <i>% for Union</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1936 .....                 | 7,572                   | 6,162            | 81.4%              |
| 1937 .....                 | 164,135                 | 142,428          | 86.8               |
| 1938 .....                 | 343,587                 | 282,470          | 82.2               |
| 1939 .....                 | 177,215                 | 138,032          | 77.9               |
| 1940 .....                 | 532,355                 | 435,842          | 81.9               |
| 1941 .....                 | 729,933                 | 589,921          | 80.8               |
| 1942 .....                 | 1,067,037               | 895,091          | 83.9               |
| 1943 .....                 | 1,126,501               | 923,169          | 82.0               |
| 1944 .....                 | 1,072,594               | 828,583          | 77.3               |
| 1945 .....                 | 893,758                 | 706,569          | 79.1               |
| 1946 .....                 | 698,812                 | 529,847          | 75.8               |
| 1947 .....                 | 805,474                 | 621,732          | 77.2               |
| July 1-Aug. 21, 1947 ..... | 58,162                  | 45,988           | 79.1               |
| <b>Subtotal .....</b>      | <b>7,677,135</b>        | <b>6,145,834</b> | <b>80.1%</b>       |

#### (Under Taft-Hartley Law)

|                                   |                   |                  |              |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1948 .....                        | 333,900           | 256,935          | 76.0         |
| 1949 .....                        | 516,248           | 377,360          | 73.1         |
| 1950 .....                        | 781,382           | 649,432          | 83.1         |
| 1951 .....                        | 587,591           | 442,066          | 75.3         |
| 1952 .....                        | 674,412           | 506,212          | 75.0         |
| 1953 .....                        | 648,686           | 501,844          | 77.0         |
| 1954 .....                        | 458,762           | 319,016          | 70.0         |
| <b>Subtotal .....</b>             | <b>4,000,981</b>  | <b>3,052,865</b> | <b>75.0%</b> |
| <b>Grand Total 1936-1954.....</b> | <b>11,678,116</b> | <b>9,198,699</b> | <b>78.8%</b> |

Summing up the results of the balloting in all types of elections, we see the emerging picture of an organized

workingclass, overwhelmingly loyal to its unions.

#### COMPOSITE RESULTS OF LABOR ELECTIONS

|  | <i>Total Votes</i> | <i>For Union</i>  | <i>% for Union</i> |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Representation Elections 1936-1954 .....   | 11,678,116         | 9,198,699         | 78.7%              |
| Union Shop 1948-1951 .....                 | 5,547,478          | 5,071,798         | 91.4               |
| Smith-Connally Strike Votes 1944-1945 .... | 1,926,811          | 1,593,937         | 82.8%              |
| <b>Totals .....</b>                        | <b>19,152,405</b>  | <b>15,864,614</b> | <b>82.7%</b>       |

These are majorities that any politician would envy. The results are so preponderantly and consistently one-sided that it would be difficult to pick out free elections of any other type for comparison.

Some of them are just union members, dues payers who tolerate the union, perhaps among the 75 per cent who have voted for a union in NLRB elections. Others are definitely and positively pro-union, perhaps among the 91 per cent who voted for a union shop in Taft-Hartley elections. But there are still others:

WHEN THE NOON HOUR whistle blows and the noise of machine, motor and drill are silenced, millions of union workers in every town, city and state pull up stools to the nearest bench and, in little groups, chat over lunch. Their conversation continues on the way home in cars, buses, and trains. Or at the bowling club, on the fishing trip, at the union meeting, at the bar, at home visits. Naturally, among other things, they talk about their union, their work, politics, the events of the day. Sometimes a big event takes place: a strike, an important election, but not often. In this ceaseless, endless, permanent exchange of views, arguments, ideas, opinions, prejudices and thoughts the union consciousness of the American working class is being created.

There are those who are not merely members of a union; not merely intensely loyal to the union. They are the ones whose attachment to the union is part of a whole outlook on politics and social problems; they are the living embodiment of the emerging traditions of the workingclass; their unionism is part and parcel of their general social consciousness; they are the union conscious cadres of the American working class, the tangible, unifying, human force that cements together the modern labor movement. And they number, conservatively, in the hundreds of thousands.

How do these men and women think about political and social ques-

tions? We can watch the labor movement in its daily routine; its resolutions, its strikes, its conventions, its conferences, its official pronouncements, its elections. We live, however, in an epoch of polls, surveys and samplings, an era when few self-respecting analysts can feel at ease without a buttressing mass of evidence gathered by public opinion interviews, social research workers and sociologists.

A uniquely valuable survey is now available, published in June under the title "When Labor Votes."\* This study of the attitude of auto workers in the 1952 elections, prepared by three Wayne University sociologists, is based upon detailed interviews with randomly selected UAW members in the Detroit area. Eight hundred and twenty-eight unionists were questioned once before the elections; of these, 351 were interviewed a second time after the election results were known. Detroit auto unionists are not exactly the "average" worker, or even the average organized worker. They belong to the most progressive wing of the labor movement. But neither are they peculiar or atypical. They resemble millions of others, especially in the mass industrial unions. If they are more advanced, their attitude today foreshadows the labor movement of tomorrow. From them we get a roughly accurate picture of modern union consciousness. Their reply to one question gives us the key to everything. They were asked: "If you were asked to use one of these four names for your social class, which would you say you belong in: the middle class, lower class, working class, or upper class?" Only one replied, "upper class," and two, "lower class." But 206

\*When Labor Votes: a Study of Auto Workers by Arthur Kornhauser, Harold L. Sheppard and Albert J. Mayer. 1956. 352 pages, \$5.00. University Books, Inc.

said that they belonged to the "working class" and only 72 to the "middle class." Union consciousness bring a realization of an identity with the working class. This generality, the survey fills in with ample detail.

Three out of every four voted for Stevenson, most of these on the straight Democratic ticket. Of 678 UAW registered voters 80 per cent indicated that they were Democrats or leaned toward the Democratic Party. Only 13 per cent voted a straight Republican ticket. Why so many Democrats? The survey points to "frequent mention of the interests of workingmen, the view that Democrats and Stevenson are for unions and labor, whereas Republicans are for business and similar reflections of belief in opposed group interests" (p. 103).

Should labor have more influence in government? Fifty-five per cent answered, yes; Should business? Only 19 per cent said, yes; 41 per cent said, no. The authors point out that a "source of surprise is that so many Eisenhower voters thought that business should have less to say." And, "substantial numbers of Eisenhower voters were in full agreement with the Stevenson-supporting fellow members in wanting to see the political influence of unions increase and that of business groups decrease." If the responders are measured by their degree of trust versus distrust of the political recommendations of various groups we find that:

They trust unions 4-1  
They distrust business 4½-1  
They distrust newspapers 5-1.

In sum, "the reasons predominantly express belief in opposed group interests and a sense of belonging to or being identified with one side." One of the most frequent explanation for political sympathies was, "They're my

class of people; I'm a labor man; they represent my interests."

Naturally, not all union members are equally union conscious: this commonplace is frequently decked out in multifarious disguises to prove that there is no labor vote, no general union outlook, no working class. The Wayne study helps sift the membership into categories. By posing a series of revealing questions (the full questionnaire is reprinted in an appendix) the authors differentiate broadly between degrees of attachment to the union and participation in its activities, with these conclusions:

Strong union attachment ..... 35%  
Intermediate ..... 41%  
Weak ..... 24%

Similarly, opinion on union political action and policies is grouped as follows:

Strongly for union political action.. 55%  
Intermediate ..... 24%  
Not for or against ..... 21%

Looking more closely at the strong 55 per cent, the authors conclude, "The evidence suggests that most of these people see the political world in terms of opposed goals and group interests as between organized labor and business." And in general, it is the members most closely attached to the union who support its policies most firmly.

Fundamentally, the social influence of the union depends upon this stratum which reaches 35-55 per cent of the membership. This is its basic union conscious cadre.

There is "little doubt that a large sector of the membership (approximately one-half of all members) feels that they have political interests opposed to those of Business and Newspapers, interests that they can protect and advance by supporting the union's position on the political

front. . . ." The authors are impelled to report the same fact again and again; under one heading, then another. As, "The predominant political outlook or 'philosophy' is clearly one that conceives of workers' and union's goals as opposed at many points to those of business and wealthy groups. This is not translated as 'class consciousness,' belief in 'class struggle,' or a desire to overthrow the 'capitalist system.' We shall return to this important distinction in the final chapter. Contrary to common assertions, moreover, a majority of these unionists trust union organizations and leadership on the political as well as on the economic front."

We can hardly wait for the "final chapter," anticipating a refutation of "class consciousness," or at least an attempt. We seek in vain; what the authors promised, they forgot. Perhaps they became too engrossed in what they actually saw; for their last chapter cautions not against the concept of class consciousness but against the view that organized workers are becoming "middle class" in outlook.

Let us grant, however, that the advanced union worker is not class conscious. If asked, he would probably nod his approval of the capitalist system and disavow the class struggle. But he is intensely union conscious and that union consciousness is no bulwark against class consciousness. Quite the contrary, in union consciousness lies the underlying elements of class consciousness that must in time assert themselves.

THE UAW IS COINING a new slogan: "First organize them; then unionize them." It is intended to underscore the "education" of new members; actually it points up a profound idea: workers come into unions as raw recruits but in time their whole outlook

tends to change. At any rate, that is the union's aim.

From a few hundred thousand in the heartland of the auto industry, Detroit and Flint, the UAW expanded to over a million. The industry decentralized; the union grew and extended its jurisdiction until two-thirds of its members were outside the two old centers. These hundreds of thousands who flocked into the union knew little of its early militant struggles and hardly comprehended its deep significance. Physically, they were organized; it remained to "unionize" them, i.e., to change their way of thinking. The union sought to teach them a new language and code of solidarity; a new attitude toward the boss and fellow workers; it aimed to deepen their interest in politics. In short, the membership had to be lifted from the level of mere dues payers to conscious unionism. And it is this union consciousness which, in one degree or another, pervades the organized working class; its future history begins with union consciousness not only more widespread and deeply rooted than ever but permanent.

IN UNION ORGANIZATION is the consolidation of the American workers as a class; and in the spread of union consciousness, the emerging understanding of its class position. This we see without idealizing the labor movement as it is. Bureaucracy still weighs down rank and file democracy; union leadership is reinforced by a narrow-minded machine of paid officials; in politics, continued attachment to the patronage apparatus of bourgeois parties; in foreign policy, a basic identification and defense of the "bi-partisan" Democratic-Republican line. There is prejudice, there is pettiness, there are superstitions, there is rack-

eteering. Before the labor movement can become what it will become, the instrument for reconstructing society on the basis of full democracy it has a long way to go. Its internal regime must be revamped and its policies re-oriented.

Nevertheless, in all our criticism we remember that we are dealing not with a sect; not even with a movement of a hundred thousand like the old Socialist Party. This is a movement of millions. Normally, the changing of their ideas and condition of organization takes place slowly but upon a massive scale. We are witness to a great movement; the consolidation of a class, its emergence onto the political scene; its developing consciousness.

Twenty years ago, the traditions of the labor movement lived on only in a small minority of the working class. American labor made its first mass effort to organize industrially as a class after the First World War; but despite the sweep of its strikes, the greatest in the nation's history, it was defeated and unionism reduced to impotence in the twenties. Its minority, undefeated in spirit, was able to inspire the rising CIO movement a decade later. The decisive change in the spirit of our times lies in this: unionism is now deeply implanted in the minds of the great majority of our industrial working class, not in the minds of thousands alone but of millions. The creation of a working class consciousness is a long and difficult process, especially in the United States; it is the product of the experiences and traditions of generations, handed down from one to the next. That process is at last under way in American life.

H. W. BENSON

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

# The Working Class Movement In Tropical Africa

## Part I: Africa's Changing Economic Organization

### Introduction

Within the last few years Africa's societies have changed rapidly and fundamentally. The general trend is well known and irreversible: a change from a tribal society to an industrial one, from a subsistence economy to a market economy, and from colonial status to independence.

The African labor movement has been a product of this process. Today, it has become more and more an active factor, a leading and unifying force in the battle for African emancipation.

The rise of the labor movement took place simultaneously with the decline of European colonialism in Asia and Latin America; it has reached maturity as European colonialism, backed by the economic and military might of the United States, is preparing its last ditch stand on the African continent.

European colonialism is a concrete reality in Africa; Russia and China are remote myths. Stalinism attempts to use this situation to influence the new parties of African nationalism and the African labor movement. Its purpose is to use the African masses as pawns in a battle which is not their own: as the requirements of Russian foreign policy change, their struggles will be paralyzed or turned into disastrous adventures.

Africa is now a stake in the power struggle between the United States and Russia. Its future depends on the extent to which the African people

will be able to defend their own interests against these two great powers. In short, it depends on their struggle for independence, for the control of the administration and the economy of the continent. The success of this struggle, again, depends on its being conducted by the Africans' own organizations and leaders, with their own methods and their own ideas.

Today the burden of this struggle rests in the main with the African working class. Its cause is the cause of all socialists and democrats.

Finally, it is at least as important to know one's allies as it is to know one's enemies. We hope that the following notes, concerning the formation and the rise of the African working class, its organization into a social and political movement, and its intervention in the politics of African independence, will serve this purpose.\*

### The Economy

AFRICAN SOCIETY is the product of the African economy. To understand the society, basic facts about the economy must first be recalled.

\* Not all parts of Africa are included in this survey. North Africa and the Sudan have been left out, as they are distinct from the rest of the continent by culture, by language and by history. The problems of these countries are more closely related to those of the Middle East and are also better known. At the other extremity, the Union of South Africa again represents a special situation, not comparable to the situation in the other parts of Tropical Africa. However, it is difficult to understand the problems of the labor movement in Southern Rhodesia, for instance, without reference to the same problems in South Africa. For this reason, the labor movement in South Africa has also been considered here, to the extent that its history and its present situation helps to understand the labor movement in the rest of the continent.

The economy in Tropical Africa is colonial, organized to produce the maximum amount of profit in the shortest possible time. As the rate of profit is in ratio to the amount of variable capital, the most profitable enterprise in a backward area is based almost exclusively on the exploitation of a labor force.

In a sparsely populated country with a low level of technical development, too weak to resist conquest, this principle led to the triumph of an economy in which the colonized country sold its raw material and its labor, and bought finished products in exchange, thereby maintaining indefinitely technical backwardness and a low standard of living.

Thus, the great capitalist societies that built the African economy of today invested in those economic activities that could be carried on with hardly any equipment at all, such as marketing of agricultural products, of timber, etc., or those which demanded very little equipment in proportion to the return, such as mining. In order to carry the wealth out of the country, transport facilities were needed: railways, roads and harbors.\*

The railways, the harbors and, in the long run, the mines needed a

\*Since the purpose of the trading companies was not to equip the continent but to exploit it at the least possible expense to themselves, these transport facilities have always been inadequate instruments for economic development. Most of the time, the rolling stock is antiquated, the roads are mere tracks, there are ferries instead of bridges, the harbors are bottlenecks of trade. Therefore, colonial governments, periodically announce "development plans for overseas territories," which are usually only plans to modernize transport equipment. Applying the time-honored principle of "socializing" expenses and pocketing profits, the great trading and mining companies that own Africa got the governments to pay for the modernization of the means by which they are looting the continent. Typical in this respect is the French plan of government investments (FIDES) or the "economic development plan" of the Portuguese government. For a detailed discussion of these plans, see: A. L. Dumaine, "La signification réelle du second plan d'équipement et de modernisation des Territoires d'Outre Mer," *Présence Africaine*, April-July 1955, Marcel Willem, "Un bilan de la colonisation française: l'économie de l'Afrique noire," *Les Temps Modernes*, April 1955, and "Un plan de développement des colonies portugaises" in *Présence Africaine*, August-September 1955.

stable labor force to operate efficiently; the railwaymen, the longshoremen and later the mineworkers became the stable core of the African working class.

The plantations needed first of all land, which they acquired by driving out the African tribes that inhabited it. Second, they needed large masses of seasonable workers, who were constituted by the uprooted peasants and tribesmen who had had their land taken away from them, or who were no longer able to make a living from the exploitation of their land alone. When voluntary labor wasn't available in sufficient numbers, it was made available by force. Roads, railways and harbors were built with forced labor, at a tremendous cost in human lives and leading to a further disorganization of African agriculture.

Thus, a second category of workers arose: an unsettled, unorganized mass of unskilled proletarians, people who were "de-tribalized," that is, torn out of their customary way of life, without being "urbanized."

There were several important consequences to this "cheap labor" system. One of them has been a tremendous development of migratory labor. Over 100,000 men, women and children migrate each year from the Belgian territory of Ruanda-Urundi to Uganda and Tanganyika. About 140,000 migrate from Nyasaland to Southern Rhodesia and to the Union of South Africa. Officially about 100,000 and, unofficially, about 200,000 more, leave the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, also to work in Southern Rhodesia and in South Africa. Over 130,000 workers migrate to the Gold Coast from the neighboring territories under French and British rule.

These are only the most important migratory currents. There are also

seasonal migrations within the different territories, but their volume is difficult to assess. In French West Africa, for instance, there is such a migratory current from the territories of the interior (French Sudan, Niger Colony and Upper Volta) to the coastal areas (Senegal, Dahomey, Togo and Ivory Coast.)<sup>1</sup>

This migratory labor system, however, has disastrous consequences for the economy. First of all, it is impossible for a migrant to become skilled or efficient because of his working and living conditions. He travels sometimes hundreds of miles, often with his family, exposed to diseases and to great hardships. His wages are very low because, being in dire need, he is in no position to bargain with the employer. He hopes that subsistence agriculture will fill the gap between the wage and what is needed to keep him and his family alive; the employer knows this, and determines wages on the assumption that they are not supposed to keep a man alive by themselves. Furthermore, if the migrant works on plantations, his job is generally seasonal, and never lasts long enough to give him a chance to acquire some skill. In addition, labor laws, even if they exist, are almost impossible to apply in a situation where the majority of workers is not permanently settled—this, of course, also applies to trade unions.

Finally, the migrant labor system tends to contribute by its very existence to the further destruction of the subsistence economy. If entire families set out looking for work and food in other territories, it may lead to the depopulation of whole regions; if only men migrate, the backbreaking work of subsistence farming is left to the women alone. "Accordingly, not only will those who are left behind suffer physically, but native African

agriculture and tribal life will weaken and deteriorate. Inferior methods of cultivation necessitated by the absence of the stronger and more experienced may reduce the crops, and the worsening of the population to food potential may in turn lower the standard of living in the subsistence sector. Thus the needs of the plantations may be met at the expense of production for subsistence."<sup>2\*</sup>

A second, related consequence of the "cheap labor" system is the instability of even the industrial workers in the urban centers. George Padmore gives a description of African society in Gambia in the early 1930's, which shows the urban proletariat in its early stages. He writes:

An industrial proletariat in the modern sense of the word hardly exists in Gambia. Most of the so-called workers are landless peasants rather than proletarians. The others are people who plant ground-nuts, drift into the "Colony"

\*An interesting account of the mechanism of migrant labor in British East Africa, combining genteel understatement with unusual frankness, may be read in Major Orde Browne's report to the British Colonial Office:

"The migration (from Ruanda-Urundi) is of a somewhat complicated nature. The natives concerned inhabit an area which though fertile, productive and healthy, is nevertheless so densely populated that they are constantly exposed to the risk of famine, and furthermore have few local resources from which they can obtain a modicum of cash to purchase the more obviously desirable imports. The motive behind the migration is therefore not only a desire to earn the better wages available in British Territory, but also frequently the hope of securing ampler nourishment than is available in their homes. The obvious and traditional goal of their peregrinations is Uganda, where the local proprietors of the very considerable native plantations are well pleased to employ these wandering strangers, offering them little in the shape of cash, but attractive conditions, easy-going employment and ample food. To such a degree has this established itself that Uganda would be gravely inconvenienced were there any interruption in the normal flow. In Tanganyika the movement has been more recent in origin, and the food factor has hitherto outweighed the desire for cash; there have in the past been serious crises owing to the resources of the Territory being suddenly overstrained by a flood of semi-starving and diseased immigrants. There is, however, a definite tendency of late to endeavor to utilize this source of labor, and the situation is growing rather more like that in Uganda. In Kenya the problem has not so far taken concrete shape."<sup>3</sup>

If it is remembered that 40,000 people starved to death in Ruanda-Urundi in 1944, the above, freely translated into English, could be summed up as follows: the economies of Uganda and Tanganyika are dependent on a state of permanent undernourishment bordering on starvation in Ruanda-Urundi.

where they turn their hands to odd jobs until the crop season, when they return to their farms in the "Protectorate." In other words, they are semi-proletarians, with one foot in the country and the other in the town but with their ideology definitely rooted in rural life. ... Apart from this class of urban toilers there is a small class of skilled artisans. They come closer to the definition of a modern proletariat. They are chiefly employed by the Public Works Department and the trading companies. Boat building for the Gambia River trade is carried on along the Bathurst waterfront by native shipwrights. Some of them are independent builders, others are employed by the companies and by private traders who are mostly Syrian. There is never a shortage of labor in the Colony, for apart from the hundreds of idle-bodied men always available, private employers as well as government hire women and children. They are even cheaper than the unemployed.<sup>4</sup>

To some extent this situation still exists today. It is difficult to generalize about the situation in Tropical Africa, for not all territories developed at the same pace. Certain territories are entering today a stage of economic development reached by other territories twenty years ago. What may no longer be true today in Gambia, is true in French Equatorial Africa or in Mozambique.

In 1949 a sociological survey was undertaken by the University of Natal among the African workers of the Dunlop rubber plant in Durban. Among other things, it showed that 93 per cent of these workers still owned land in the reserves, and that only 4.8 per cent had had their families living with them in an urban area for at least three years.<sup>5</sup> Here too, in one of the most advanced sectors of the continent, we have workers "with one foot in the country and the other in town."

The reliance on a piece of land in the subsistence sector also accounts for the extremely high turnover rate

in industrial jobs. In Durban, an analysis of approximately 7,500 jobs held by 2,200 persons between 1917 and 1942 showed that 50 per cent lasted less than 6 months, 68 per cent less than one year and only 5 per cent more than three years. However, the survey also showed that, at Dunlop's "the longer the African worker's experience of wage employment, the shorter is his absence from it."

WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK of a colonial system developing without meeting any resistance, the impact of the industrial revolution was far more destructive in terms of social values and human lives in Tropical Africa than it had been anywhere else. Nowhere else was the working class so defenseless. (\*) China, Japan, or India, North Africa and the Middle East, all had a large class of artisans, organized in guilds that would often foreshadow trade unions. In Tropical Africa, no such class existed except, to some extent, in West Africa. (\*\*) There was no industry comparable to the foundries or textile works that existed, for instance, in India before the British conquest.

\*Not only against mistreatment, low wages, etc., but also against massive lay-offs or dismissals as occurred during the depressions. Mining and plantation farming, the two underpinnings of the colonial economy, are particularly sensitive to depressions. Padmore reports that in Northern Rhodesia, due to the crisis in agriculture and the rationalization and speed-up in the copper mines, employment in mining and on the plantations dropped from 79,000 in 1931 to 40,000 in 1932. At the same time, production rose:

| Year | Employment | Production | Value in £  |
|------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 1930 | 25,700     | 6,269      |             |
| 1931 | 19,104     | 8,927      |             |
| 1932 | 7,608      | 67,887     | 2.1 million |
| 1933 | 7,350      | 104,204    | 3.4 million |

In South West Africa, the employment in mining dropped from 1,750 in 1930 to 1,719 in 1932. At that time, the 1,719 Africans were paid £141,487, while the 393 Europeans, also employed in the mines, were paid £125,765. The situation has changed little in this respect. In Southern Rhodesia, employment in mining did not decrease from 1931 to 1932, but increased from 35,000 to 36,000. The payroll for the mineworkers, however, decreased from £624,000 to £571,000. In the Belgian Congo, the mineworkers employed by the Union Minière du Haut Katanga were 17,257 in 1929 and 3,758 in 1932. 6

\*\*A. W. Pim writes that West African societies before

Towards the end of the 1930's, the African working-class was composed of a tiny nucleus of transport workers and miners, most of the miners being migratory; of a mass of peasants doing forced labor on plantations or public works, or producing cash-crops for trading companies under conditions of peonage; finally a mass of landless, migrating peasants. All but a tiny minority were unskilled.

The coming of World War II changed this picture in the more advanced regions. First of all, it lifted

|                          | Coal   |        | Electricity |          | Minerals |      |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|-------------|----------|----------|------|
|                          | 1937   | 1949   | 1937        | 1949     | 1937     | 1949 |
| Belgian Congo .....      | 36     | 152    | 27.3        | 453.1    | 31       | 116  |
| Nigeria .....            | 369    | 559    | —           | —        | —        | —    |
| Southern Rhodesia .....  | 1,029  | 1,919  | 79.5        | 330.0    | 11       | 21   |
| Tanganyika .....         | —      | —      | 8.4         | 39.0     | —        | —    |
| Liberia .....            | —      | —      | 1.0         | 9.9      | —        | —    |
| French West Africa ..... | —      | —      | 8.4         | 24.0     | —        | —    |
| Angola .....             | —      | —      | 7.1         | 19.8     | —        | —    |
| Gold Coast .....         | —      | —      | —           | —        | 8        | 22   |
| Union of S. A. ....      | 15,491 | 25,352 | 5,336.0     | 10,000.0 | 31       | 78   |

Thus the second world war extended a process to Tropical Africa that had only begun in the Union of South Africa during the first world war. A rapid industrial growth transformed the social structure of the Belgian

the colonial economy out of the depression. Strategical raw materials boomed; industry had to be built in certain sectors after the loss of European industry and the difficulty of communicating with the rest of the world. (\*) East Africa and the Sudan became war bases. Here are examples of the jump that occurred in the production of coal, electricity and minerals in certain African territories (the figures for coal are in 1000 t., for electricity in 1000 kw.-hrs. and the minerals are exports other than gold in million U. S. dollars.):

Congo, of the Rhodesias and, to a lesser extent, of the British territories in East and West Africa. A working class, about twice the size of the pre-war working class, developed.†<sup>10</sup>

|                          | 1936                                     | 1948                   |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
|                          | Estimated Number of African Wage-Earners | Percentage of Increase |
| Belgian Congo .....      | 491,500                                  | 820,012                |
| French West Africa ..... | 178,908                                  | 232,000                |
| Kenya .....              | 213,743                                  | 394,918                |
| Nigeria .....            | 227,451                                  | 272,400                |
| North Rhodesia .....     | 76,672                                   | 127,500                |
| South Rhodesia .....     | 254,297                                  | 376,868                |
| Tanganyika .....         | 243,429                                  | 395,500                |

the colonial conquest were "military in type but all had established industries, some showing a considerable artistic development, and possessed substantial internal commerce." In East Africa, the only comparable society was the Kingdom of Buganda in Uganda. 7

\*Internal trade in Africa amounted to 7.7 per cent of the total volume of exports in 1938; by 1948 it had risen to 13.0 per cent as a result of the war. (Naville, "Structure de l'industrie et du commerce," *Présence Africaine*, 13.)

But even more important than the

†The increase of the urban African population is another striking indication of the simultaneous development of industry and of an urban proletariat. In 1940 Leopoldville, the capital of the Belgian Congo had about 45,000 African inhabitants; in 1954 it had nearly 250,000. The African population of Elizabethville grew from 8,301 in 1940 to 33,496 in 1948. 9 Brazzaville, Dakar and other cities grew at the same rate.

numerical growth was the qualitative change that took place in the new working class.

Industry and mining on a large scale could not be pursued profitably with a migrating and unstable labor force, by definition incapable of sustained work or of acquiring skills. Even the plantations found that cash crops could not be exploited efficiently with migrant labor.

Moreover, tribal life had been disorganized to such an extent by the migrations that certain regions were in danger of being depopulated to the point of seriously diminishing food production. This in turn drove more people out of the subsistence economy, forcing them to try to make a living elsewhere. In Nyasaland, for instance, the extent of seasonal migration became so large that the government had to introduce legislation in 1948 creating a closed season for emigration between November and February, in order to ensure that crops for local consumption and for export would be planted.

So, the large companies in Tropical Africa began to settle their labor force near the place of employment by providing certain facilities that had not existed before (relatively decent housing, easier access to skilled jobs, etc.) This is a policy that has been followed by Firestone in Liberia, by Unilever in West Africa and especially by the Union Minière du Haut Katanga in the Belgian Congo. In 1925, when migrant labor was still prevalent in the Belgian Congo, the Union Minière employed 13,849 African workers who had with them 2,507 women and 779 children. By 1952, the company had built mining villages which housed 18,465 men, 14,647 women and about 28,000 children. As Basil Davidson puts it, "while rural populations in the central basin of the Congo

dwindle and threaten to disappear, here in the arid Katanga modern industry has created an entirely new urban population."<sup>11</sup>

In 1952 it was found that over half of the 20,000 Africans employed by the Union Minière had been steadily employed by this company for ten years, and that 3,566 had worked for it over sixteen years.<sup>12</sup>

Employing migrant labor on a large scale for mining today only subsists on the South African Rand. In the copper mines of Southern Rhodesia an intermediary system exists. There, a large portion of the African mineworkers is settled within bicycling distance of the mines, while others still migrate from Nyasaland and Mozambique.

Orde Browne remarked in 1946: "In all cases, however, it will be observed that the employer is a large mining concern; the great numbers usually required, and the considerable capital available, no doubt account for the more advanced and experienced policy of these important undertakings."<sup>13</sup>

These are the basic factors which shaped the African economy, the African society and the African working class. The economy consists of three sectors in uneasy balance: a primitive tribal sector of subsistence farming; the African cash-crop sector, composed of small peasants who produce for the market; thirdly, the European commercial sector. In 1950, 60 per cent of the total adult male population was engaged in production for subsistence, 18 per cent were peasants producing for the market and 13 per cent were wage workers employed outside of the framework of indigenous rural economy. The trend, however, is towards the last two sectors growing at the expense of the first. Numerous people give up

subsistence farming in order to acquire consumers goods and also because subsistence farming can't keep up with the increase in population. In the African cash-crop sector, many peasants also leave in order to escape the exactions and the state of bondage that are imposed upon them by the authorities or the companies, and become migrant laborers.<sup>14</sup>

The proportion of people producing for the market is strongest in the Belgian Congo, where industry has developed, and in the Gold Coast, where cocoa growing dominates agriculture. It is weakest in French West Africa. Within the wage-earning population, agriculture occupies one third of the total. Large masses of migrant labor, instability of the African urban population, a high rate of turnover remain characteristic of a large part of the African working class.

Southern Rhodesia, the Belgian Congo and the Union of South Africa are the only territories south of the Sahara where heavy industry exists to a significant extent, and consequently where an industrial working class, *other* than miners and railwaymen, exists.\*

If one applies to African society the image of the pyramid, we have the three sectors described above superimposed, with subsistence farming

\*In 1948, the Southern Rhodesian government built a steel mill at Que Que which produced 36,000 tons of pig iron and 25,000 tons of steel in 1953. In 1954 a small blast furnace and an open hearth furnace were added; pig iron production is expected to rise to 80,000 tons annually and steel production to 65,000 tons. A small manufacturing industry has also arisen: steel tubes at Que Que, machine-tools at Salisbury, etc. The relative degree of industrial development of the main areas of Tropical Africa can be measured to a large extent by the consumption of crude steel (thousands of metric tons) and of energy (equivalent of thousands of metric tons of coal per capita). The following figures apply to 1953: 15

|                             | Steel | Energy |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
| Union of South Africa ..... | 1,689 | 2.05   |
| Belgian Congo .....         | 192   | 0.12   |
| N. and S. Rhodesia .....    | 165   | 0.68   |
| British East Africa .....   | 159   | 0.07   |
| British West Africa .....   | 142   | 0.06   |
| French West Africa .....    | 71    | 0.03   |

forming the base; on top, a small point of permanent wage workers, with an even smaller top composed of permanent industrial workers. An African bourgeoisie hardly exists, except in the Gold Coast, in Nigeria and in the Ivory Coast (F.W.A.), where it has developed from the top layers of the native peasantry.

## The Working Class

IT IS TIME NOW to turn to statistics for a closer look at the African working class, its numerical strength, its nature and its composition.

Before going any further, however, a remark is in order about statistics in Africa. Practically all vital statistics including labor statistics are unreliable, and can be considered at best as approximations, at worst as deliberate attempts to hide reality. Contrary to export-import statistics, which are always plentiful and accurate, census figures and vital statistics are often highly conjectural, being usually based on sampling or on even more approximate methods. Labor statistics have begun to appear only in recent years, under the pressure of the trade union movement in Africa and, to some extent, of democratic opinion abroad: so far the reports of the colonial powers to the United Nations remain the most complete data available.

Each territory publishes its own estimates and establishes categories according to its own criteria, often at variance with criteria used by other governments. The French government, for instance, in an attempt to mask its failure to develop the colonies, has inflated the category "industry" by adding workers employed in construction and public works to those employed in manufacturing. According to one estimate, out of a

total of 140,000 workers classified under "industry" for the whole of French Africa (excluding Madagascar) in 1951, no more than 30,000 were employed in "manufacturing," i.e. industry proper. (16) The difference is all the more important as the vast majority of "public works" and "construction" workers are common laborers, and often employed only temporarily.

Some governments classify processing of agricultural products (cotton ginning, oil pressing, etc.) under "agricultural," others classify it under "industry," again inflating the latter category, even though much of the processing is done on plantations and is closely related to rural life. Here, as in other respects, British statistics seem to be more reliable than the others.

Another misleading habit of the French government is to classify under "government service" people who are compelled by the local administrations to perform what amounts to forced labor (road building and repairs, etc.). In a 1951 statistic the French government included 145,000 workers under "administration and public services" for all of French Africa, out of which it is estimated that two thirds represent forced labor.<sup>17</sup>

In our tables, we have not separated construction, public works and manufacturing for the sake of expediency. Generally speaking, "construction and public works" is much more important in French Equatorial Africa, Nyasaland, Uganda, Gold Coast. The reverse is true only in the Belgian Congo, in Southern Rhodesia and in Madagascar, although in the latter case the statistics are questionable. Here are three examples:

|                                      | Belgian<br>Congo (54) | French<br>E.A. (53) | Gold<br>Coast (52) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Manufacturing ....                   | 167,312               | 12,188              | 11,800             |
| Construction and<br>public works ... | 128,915               | 22,089              | 44,700             |

We have tried to isolate civil-servants only under "government service." When this was not possible, they are classified under "other." Only the figure for the French Cameroons has been left unchanged: it is a safe assumption that at the most one fourth of the 35,400 are civil servants.

The category "agriculture" includes fishing, cattle breeding and, in the case of the British territories, agricultural processing industries. "Mining" also includes quarrying. "Other" is a catch-all category including everybody who can't be classified elsewhere: white collar workers in private industry and commerce, salespeople in shops, teachers, domestic servants, waiters, etc. plus other categories which couldn't be isolated otherwise (Southern Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, French West Africa). The statistics for Somaliland, Sierra Leone and the British Cameroons are incomplete but still include the majority of the wage earners of these territories.

The high proportion of wage earners in the Rhodesias reflects the relatively high degree of industrialization of these territories, as we have seen earlier.

Gambia has been left out, because no data other than the total number of wage-workers could be obtained. In 1952 this total was 3,062, or 1.1 per cent of a total population of 291,593.<sup>19</sup>

Certain other countries had to be left out altogether because no data could be obtained that were anywhere near complete. This is the case in particular for Ethiopia, which publishes numerous export-import

statistics, but hardly anything on its population. To find a complete estimate of the country's working class, we would have to go back to the fascist statistics of the Italian occupation period, which gives 54,400 as the figure for the total non-Italian working class in 1937 and 89,000 in 1939.<sup>20</sup> The only contemporary figure available is the number of workers employed in manufacturing, i.e. in canneries, sawmills, repair shops, printing plants, brick factories, etc. This figure is 8,552 for 1951. The largest industry appears to be the lumber industry, with 12 enterprises and 1,215 workers; the largest single concentration of workers is a cotton mill in Dire-Dawa with 1,070 workers.<sup>21</sup> The personnel employed by the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad, which includes workers in French Somaliland and in Ethiopia, numbered 4,077 in 1952. The Ethiopian Air Lines, a subsidiary of TWA, employed 241 people in 1950. (Guide Book of Ethiopia, Chamber of Commerce, Addis Ababa, 1954.)

Aside from these industrial workers, there is a large number of agricultural workers on coffee and cotton plantations, about which no data are available. Finally, there are probably a few oil workers in the Ogaden province, where American companies have started drilling recently, and a number of longshoremen in Massawa and Assab. The official propaganda sheet *New Times and Ethiopia News* tells us nothing except that "there are ample resources available at wages far below existing rates in Europe and the United States. The Ethiopian worker is intelligent, affable, willing to learn, and is a hard worker." (March 26, 1955.)

Figures about Liberia are almost equally difficult to obtain. The largest enterprise by far is the Firestone rub-

ber plantation (1,240 square miles) which employs between 25,000 and 30,000 workers. The main concentrations of workers other than Firestone's seem to be about 400 in the new Boomi-Hills iron mine, which is owned by US Steel, and the Monrovia harbor.<sup>22</sup>

The Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea publish statistics but they are few and fragmentary.

For Angola, reliable estimates vary between a total figure of approximately 400,000 (300,000 "free" workers and 100,000 forced laborers) and a total figure of 779,000<sup>23</sup> (400,000 "free" and 379,000 forced.) Official sources admit to 101,994 forced labors in 1949<sup>24</sup>. According to Basil Davidson, little difference exists between forced and "free" labor in the interior, while some differentiation has begun to appear on the coast. We also know that 17,402 workers were employed in mining in 1949.<sup>25</sup>

Of Mozambique, even less is known. A rough idea is conveyed by the figures for the native, economically active population for 1940.<sup>26</sup> The total native population is about 5 million. Out of these, 2,280,555 live "on the land," i.e. are peasants. Then, 104,415 people leave the colony to work abroad (Union of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia)—this figure probably fell short of reality by about 50,000 already in 1940. The rest is divided as follows:

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Agriculture .....              | 129,726 |
| Industry .....                 | 21,479  |
| Mining .....                   | 1,020   |
| Construction, public works.... | 20,983  |
| Government .....               | 33,780  |
| Others .....                   | 72,156  |
| TOTAL .....                    | 279,144 |
| % of total population .....    | 7.7     |

This figure includes employers as

well as workers, but it is reasonable to assume that the latter constitute a great majority, especially among the native population. This may, however, not be true in commerce, included under "others." For 1952, we have the following figures for wage earners:<sup>27</sup>

|                                      |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Agriculture (1951) .....             | 95,188 |
| Agricultural processing (1951) ..... | 22,724 |
| Manufacturing .....                  | 20,103 |
| Mining .....                         | 5,925  |

"Manufacturing" means building materials, food, textile, leather, chemical industries and electrical power. The overwhelming majority of the above workers is composed of Africans, with a small handful of Europeans and Asians.

There are also railroadworkers and longshoremen in Beira and Lourenco Marques, the two outlets of Rhodesia to the sea. No data are available concerning their number. As to forced labor, nothing has been published since 1928. The figure was 143,128 in 1927 and 207,233 in 1928.<sup>28</sup>

tions; in terms of working class organization and consciousness, the civil servants carry weight in the territories under French rule, the shop and distributive workers in the British territories.

The vast majority of these workers is unskilled. Here is the ratio for four territories: (29)

|              | Tanganyika (1950) | Nyasaland (1945) | Gambia (1950) | Fr. W.A. (1947) |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| White collar | 10,826            | 7,695            | 559           | 24,100          |
| Skilled      | 62,893            | 8,838            | 253           | 33,520          |
| Unskilled    | 263,569           | 72,347           | 2,899         | 154,344         |
| TOTAL        | 473,988           | 88,880           | 3,711         | 211,964         |

workers, out of which 270 are white collar workers and engineers, 450 riveters and 2,215 unskilled.<sup>31</sup>

It should be added that many of the "skilled" workers are actually semi-skilled, and some of the "semi-skilled" barely specialized unskilled workers, at least in the French statistics.

Women and children are still employed on a large scale, often at heavy work. Characteristically, the number of children employed is often higher than the number of women. In Tanganyika (1949) 22,775 women were employed—11,150 in agriculture

#### INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION OF WAGE-WORKERS IN THE PRINCIPAL

| Country                           | Total Population        | Agriculture | Mining  | Industry and Construction |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Kenya .....                       | 5,760,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 202,688     | 5,871   | 53,831                    |
| Uganda .....                      | 5,262,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 43,657      | 7,442   | 47,849                    |
| Tanganyika .....                  | 7,944,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 232,481     | 18,329  | 71,056                    |
| Somaliland .....                  | 1,268,624 <sup>4</sup>  | 25,000      | .....   | 10,003                    |
| Madagascar .....                  | 4,540,344 <sup>5</sup>  | 93,230      | 12,920  | 36,450                    |
| Belgian Congo .....               | 12,410,491 <sup>7</sup> | 265,931     | 103,518 | 296,227                   |
| Ruanda Urundi .....               | 4,152,427 <sup>8</sup>  | 23,643      | 22,991  | 22,641                    |
| French Equatorial .....           | 4,558,740 <sup>7</sup>  | 38,740      | 20,333  | 34,277                    |
| Northern Rhodesia .....           | 1,960,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 56,300      | 45,200  | 28,400                    |
| Southern Rhodesia .....           | 2,190,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 181,400     | 62,400  | 97,700                    |
| Nyasaland .....                   | 2,464,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 66,792      | .....   | 5,707                     |
| French W. Af. <sup>13</sup> ..... | 10,006,000 <sup>1</sup> | 57,980      | 2,736   | 37,347                    |
| Cameroons (Fr.) .....             | 3,120,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 37,041      | 4,500   | 27,394                    |
| Togoland (Fr.) .....              | 1,031,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 2,339       | 301     | 1,385                     |
| Sierra Leone .....                | 2,005,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 2,089       | 7,600   | 18,000                    |
| Gold Coast .....                  | 3,999,000 <sup>1</sup>  | 25,100      | 41,000  | 60,700                    |
| Nigeria .....                     | 29,600,000 <sup>1</sup> | 54,200      | 54,900  | 57,500                    |
| Cameroons (Br.) .....             | 1,430,100 <sup>3</sup>  | 27,300      | .....   | .....                     |
| Togoland (Br.) .....              | 382,000 <sup>16</sup>   | 20,000      | .....   | .....                     |
| TOTAL <sup>19</sup> .....         | 91,596,000              | 1,383,611   | 410,041 | 901,464                   |
| Percentages .....                 |                         | 30.6        | 9.1     | 19.9                      |

\*References for this table are given separately at the end of this installment.

#### TERRITORIES OF TROPICAL AFRICA (African Workers Only)\*

| Transport | Government Service | Other     | Total                  | Percentage of Total Population |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 31,527    | 77,916             | 57,706    | 434,539 <sup>2</sup>   | 7.5                            |
| 7,201     | 84,065             | 11,831    | 202,045 <sup>2</sup>   | 3.8                            |
| 24,120    | 31,212             | 71,433    | 448,631 <sup>3</sup>   | 5.7                            |
| .....     | .....              | .....     | 35,000 <sup>4</sup>    | 2.8                            |
| 13,279    | 17,553             | 86,428    | 259,860 <sup>6</sup>   | 5.7                            |
| 84,468    | .....              | 396,140   | 1,146,284 <sup>7</sup> | 9.2                            |
| 18,074    | .....              | 38,287    | 125,636 <sup>8</sup>   | 3.0                            |
| 14,292    | 5,200              | 39,555    | 152,397 <sup>9</sup>   | 3.3                            |
| 7,600     | 20,400             | 76,400    | 234,300 <sup>10</sup>  | 12.0                           |
| .....     | .....              | 146,500   | 488,000 <sup>11</sup>  | 22.3                           |
| 5,765     | 19,077             | 4,994     | 102,333 <sup>12</sup>  | 4.2                            |
| 15,032    | .....              | 98,865    | 211,960 <sup>14</sup>  | 2.1                            |
| 7,738     | 35,400             | 29,335    | 141,408 <sup>18</sup>  | 4.5                            |
| 2,979     | 6,479              | 7,446     | 20,929 <sup>17</sup>   | 2.0                            |
| 11,400    | .....              | .....     | 39,089 <sup>2</sup>    | 2.0                            |
| 18,500    | 33,400             | 77,600    | 216,300 <sup>10</sup>  | 5.4                            |
| 34,500    | 63,700             | 38,700    | 303,500 <sup>15</sup>  | 1.0                            |
| .....     | .....              | 9,700     | 37,000 <sup>3</sup>    | 2.5                            |
| .....     | 1,900              | .....     | 21,900 <sup>16</sup>   | 5.7                            |
| 283,110   | .....              | 1,548,987 | 4,527,213              |                                |
| 6.2       | .....              | 34.2      | 100.0                  | 4.9                            |

The territories included in the above table have a population of 91,596,000, that is, approximately 80 per cent of the total population of Tropical Africa. The wage workers represent about 5 per cent of this population, or 4.5 million.

Out of these, about a quarter is composed of workers in manufactur-

ing, mining and railway transport. As we have seen, manufacturing means almost always light industry: there is no heavy industry to speak of except in Southern Rhodesia and in the Belgian Congo.

About a third are agricultural workers: the largest single group The rest is scattered among various occupa-

On the Firestone plantations in Liberia the ratio in 1947 was 22,000 common laborers to 2,500 skilled and semi-skilled workers.<sup>30</sup> Even in modern, highly mechanized industrial enterprises, unskilled workers often predominate. The "Chaniers navals et industriels du Congo Belge" in Leopoldville employs a total of 3,284

—as against 39,362 children and 411,851 men. In Nyasaland, the proportion was 4,826 women to 17,519 children and 72,347 male common laborers. In Togoland under French rule 1,441 women, 2,160 children and 17,468 men were employed in 1954.<sup>32</sup>

Numerically, this working class may seem very weak but its role is



out of proportion to its numbers, due to its organization and because of its strategic position in the economy.

For purposes of comparison, let us recall that in China there were only two million industrial workers in 1937, that is 0.5 per cent of the total population.<sup>33</sup> In Russia, only 10 per cent of the population earned their living from industry, mining and transport in 1913.<sup>34\*</sup>

Furthermore, the extent of proletarianization goes far beyond the actual core of wage-workers. In French West Africa, in British East Africa, in Central Africa and in the Portuguese

\*In 1930, three years after the Chinese revolution, there were only 800,000 industrial workers in China (excluding miners and railroad workers, but including some artisans in the cities.)<sup>33</sup>

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- 1952 (Source: as (7).)
- Includes Senegal, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, French Sudan. No data could be obtained for Dahomey, Niger Colony, Mauritania and Upper Volta, which have a total population of 7,430,000. However, the majority of wage-earners in FWA are included in our figure: according to an official statistic quoted in "Le développement de l'économie de marché en Afrique tropicale" (United Nations, 1954), the total number of wage earners for French West Africa was 244,300 in 1947.
- 1947 (Pierre Naville: "Données statistiques sur la structure de la main d'oeuvre salariée et de l'industrie en

colonies the old forms of tribal and peasant life are collapsing very rapidly as the destruction of the subsistence economy continues. Pierre Naville quotes an authority who states that in French West Africa the immense majority of peasants "no longer remain within the framework of the old social institutions of the peasantry which protected them. On the contrary, they are exposed, in the villages themselves, to powerful factors tending towards proletarianization, such as labor requirements they cannot possibly fulfill, carrier duties, the emigration of young people. . . ."<sup>35</sup>

#### A. GIACOMETTI

(In the next installment Comrade Giacometti analyzes the trade union movement of Tropical Africa.—ED.)

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## Moscow in Lenin's Days: 1920-21

1921

### Chapter II

#### The Kronstadt Uprising

The discussion was prolonged. The Party Congress was about to meet when the Kronstadt uprising broke out. The news was terrifying and, at first, unbelievable. Was it possible that Kronstadt, the most flaming hearth of the October Revolution, had risen against the Soviet Republic?

Even the leaders of the Party were taken by surprise. We were dismayed. As was always the case, when difficulties and dangerous circumstances arose, the Central Committee sent Trotsky to Petrograd, ready to charge him with responsibilities for what was not of his doing.\*

It was necessary to study and learn the exact character of the movement, especially of its causes—some of them were obvious. Kronstadt of 1921 was no longer the Kronstadt of 1917. The re-

\*Trotsky knew Kronstadt and its militants very well. In his *History of the Russian Revolution*, he speaks of them in these words: "In spite of the ruthless vengeance, the flame of rebellion never went out in Kronstadt. It flared up threateningly after the revolution. . . . On May 13, 1917, the Soviet resolved: 'The sole power in Kronstadt is the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.' Model order was maintained; all brothels were closed. . . . The Kronstadt sailors became a kind of fighting crusaders of the revolution. . . . It was decided up above . . . to give the Kronstadters a lesson. . . . The prosecutor of course was Tseretelli. . . . Appearing in their defense (was) Trotsky." (Vol. I, pp. 43 Off.)

moval of the Soviet government to Moscow had drawn off a large number of militants and the civil war many others. The working class quarters had filled their quotas. Petrograd of the October insurrection, Petrograd which had lived through every stage of the Revolution seemed to be a capital without spirit and had fallen from its position of eminence.

Zinoviev was in charge here. But he was completely incapable of efficient administration. Besides, he was now engrossed in the work of the Communist International and its sections. The city and the surrounding region were adrift while the condition of the workers and the organization of production were neglected to the point where strikes had broken out. Petrograd's location at the extremity of the country was the greatest obstacle to supplying it with food when Russia was cut off from the outside world. Its position, advantageous in peacetime, left it completely exposed in war.

It was normal for counter-revolutionary elements to take advantage of the situation. Their role was to stir up discontent, exacerbate grievances, and influence the movement. It is not easy to give the exact origin of the slogan "Soviets without Bolsheviks" but it was effective in rallying everybody around it. All the enemies of the regime, especially the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Cadets, the Mensheviks, were so eager to take

revenge that we may be pardoned for believing that they were the source of the slogan.

The propaganda they carried on around this demand influenced the sailors and soldiers, most of them young recruits from the countryside who were deeply moved by the bitter complaints in letters from their families angered by the party leaders. Writing a year later "on the anniversary" of the event, Andres Nin, who the whole of the preceding year was in Soviet Russia and had the opportunity to make inquiries and corroborate what he learned, arrived at the same explanations and reached the same conclusions.

The opponents of bolshevism have explained their thesis in several brochures, usually by anarchists. We find it again in what I believe is the latest published in 1948 by Ida Mett, Editions Spartacus, under the title *The Kronstadt Commune, Bloody Twilight of the Soviets*. The title clearly reveals the author's conclusions but he states that his only purpose in writing this work was to establish the historic truth of the tragic event. Did he succeed? He recognizes that elements are still lacking for a definitive analysis, short of access to the archives of the Soviet government and the Red Army. However, he reprints and comments on many important documents; but there are many contradictions in the evidence and evaluations to which he refers, the source of which is primarily partisan and clearly hostile to the Bolsheviks.

The origin and cause of the uprising, according to one of its leaders, Petrichenko, writing in 1926, was the continuance of the regime of war communism even though the civil war had ended. This irritated the workers and drove them into rebellion against the Soviet government which was as anxious to shift from a war regime to that of peace. Did it wait too long? Could it have introduced earlier the NEP which had been the subject of intense concern for months? It was the object of study and research. The great discussion on trade unions was set in the framework of these investigations. Only a very rash person could presume to answer these questions, while it is difficult if not impossible to reconstruct exactly the general situation prevalent at the time.

Even if we admit the uprising sprang

from the independent action of the workers and sailors, from their own initiative without ties to counter-revolutionaries, we must recognize that as soon as the uprising broke out all the enemies of Bolshevism came out of their shell, the Social Revolutionaries of the Left and the Right, the anarchists, the Mensheviks. The foreign press was filled with joy. It didn't even wait for the active phase of the struggle to begin before hailing it. The press was not interested in the rebels' program, but understood that their revolt could achieve what the allied bourgeoisie had been unable to: the overthrow of a hated regime whose fall it had been awaiting for years in vain.

Among the leaflets distributed at Kronstadt, the one signed by a group of Mensheviks ended with the following words: "Where are the real counter-revolutionaries?" "They are the Bolsheviks, the commissars. Long live the revolution! Long live the Constituent Assembly!" According to the *Socialist Messenger*, the official organ of the Russian Social Democrats published abroad, "The slogans of Kronstadt are those of the Mensheviks"; while Martov denies the Mensheviks or Social-Revolutionists participated in the movement. For him, the initiative came from the sailors who broke from the Communist Party over organizational questions, not principles.

The facts referred to in the brochure demonstrate that it was the Provisional Revolutionary Committee that took the initiative in military measures. Acting on false rumors, it hurriedly carried out the occupation of strategic points, seized state buildings, etc. These operations took place on March 2 and only on the 7th, after exhausting all attempts at conciliation, was the government compelled to order the attack. The S.R.s had been preoccupied with preventing a peaceful solution to the struggle. One of their leaders, Chernov, a former minister in the coalition cabinets which led the revolution from February to Kornilov and Kerensky shouted: "Don't allow yourselves to be deceived into entering negotiations with the Bolshevik power which it will use to gain time." The government reluctantly joined battle which had become inevitable. This was confirmed by the testimony of Lutvinov, one of the leaders of the "Workers Op-

position." On his arrival in Berlin, March 21, he stated: "The news published by the foreign press about the Kronstadt events is greatly exaggerated. The Soviet government is strong enough to destroy the rebels; the operations are moving slowly because they want to spare the population of the city."

Lutvinov had been sent to Berlin in disfavor and his membership in the "Workers' Opposition" gives special value to his statement.

If it is possible that the Soviet government made mistakes, what shall we say of the role of a man like Chernov for whom this event was only an opportunity for vengeance on the Bolsheviks who had dethroned him from his presidential seat when they dissolved the Constituent Assembly. Even though aware that the insurrection was doomed to failure he did everything possible to inflame the sailors. His contribution only made the useless sacrifice of human lives greater. Under the circumstances the struggle, once joined, had to be ruthless. Both sides, the rebels as well as the cadets of the Red Army, suffered heavy losses.

On several occasions the Kronstadt sailors revealed a certain impatience. Under the Provisional Government on May 13, they had declared that: "The only power in Kronstadt is the Soviet." Trotsky then defended them against the Menshevik minister Tseretelli. Two months later, during the great turmoil known as the "July Days," just after the

hapless offensive launched by Kerensky under allied pressure, the Kronstadt sailors marched en masse on Petrograd. After demonstrating all through the city, they moved upon the Tauride Palace where the Soviet was in session. In demanding tones they asked the Socialist Ministers to face them with an explanation. Chernov was the first to appear. Immediately a shout arose from all around: "Search him." "Make sure that he has no arms!" The welcome was not very cordial. "This being the case," he shouted, "I have nothing to say."

With this he turned his back on the crowd in order to return to the Palace. However, the roar died down. He made a short speech in an attempt to appease the dissidents. When he finished some stalwart sailors seized him, pushed him into an auto and took him hostage. This unexpected act created great confusion. There were shouts of approval and disapproval. While the discussion was raging, workers rushed into the Palace shouting that Chernov had been arrested by fanatics and had to be saved. Martov, Kamenev and Trotsky hurriedly left the meeting. Trotsky succeeded with difficulty in having Chernov released and led him by the arm back to the Soviet. In 1921, Chernov had completely forgotten this incident, now four years old. His only thought was criminally to stir up the brothers of those sailors who had treated him more harshly than the Bolsheviks.

ALFRED ROSMER

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

THE REVOLUTION IN WORLD TRADE, by *Samuel Lubell*. Harpers.

This is a hodge-podge of ideas on how to resolve the grave problems that face the United States in the present world struggle. It deals with the difficulties of the American economic position in the world by at-

tacking the better known programs emanating from Washington on how to alienate friends and lose allies in this world struggle. Lubell thinks it can be done by some drastic "reforms" in character of foreign trade and the accommodation of the United States to needs of its friends abroad.

We doubt that it will seriously influence future events or help to resolve any of the basic problems of the present imperialist struggle.

A. G.

AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, by Edgar S. Furniss, Jr., and Richard C. Snyder. Rinehart, 252 pp. \$4.00.

In concluding their study of American foreign policy, the authors, both university professors, look for solutions in the realm of personnel, organization, and relationships between the State Department and other departments of government. Despite this limited outlook, readers will be interested in their peculiarly academic manner of portraying the shift in emphasis from politics and social policy toward military force. "A second type of change," they write, "has occurred in the older agencies charged with foreign policy determination and execution. It has reflected shifts in priorities assigned to various foreign-policy determination and exe-

cution. It has reflected shifts in priorities assigned to various foreign-policy techniques and can be illustrated by comparing the fortunes of the State Department (diplomatic) with those of the Defense Department (military). The former has suffered from a variety of disadvantages, some related to disputes over its role in the policy-making process as just mentioned, others over doubts concerning the loyalty of its personnel, still others reflecting the desire to find a scapegoat for a deteriorating international situation. There still remains the fact, however, that confidence in the diplomatic technique as such has waned as the technique has failed to remove the Russian menace or to create by itself alone the necessary strength in the free world. . . . As the State Department declined in effectiveness, that of the Defense Department rose."

M. A.

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