

SOCIALIST COMMENT

SOCIALIST
PARTIES
OF
AUSTRALIA and
NEW ZEALAND

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ONE PENNY

POLITICS IN PALESTINE

"The explosion at the King David Hotel is a grim reminder that with or without 100,000 immigrants, the problem of Palestine will remain as urgent and insoluble as ever" ("The Economist," August 3, 1946).

As the geographical junction of the ancient world of Egypt, Persia and Assyria, Palestine was the scene of many conflicts. Changing their allegiance as often as the power of their neighbors changed, the inhabitants of Palestine often backed the losers, and as a consequence suffered exile, first under the Pharaohs of Egypt and then under the Assyrians and Persians. Undoubtedly, it was only a fraction of the population that was exiled, such as leaders and a number captured as slaves; the vast majority remained at their agricultural pursuits. It was under the Roman rule of Emperor Hadrian that Jerusalem was utterly destroyed in A.D. 135 and the Jews of Palestine were dispersed all over the globe.

Wherever the Jews settled in the Medieval world they became the political scapegoats, persecuted and massacred from time to time and restricted to moneylending and old clothes and rag trading by edicts of Popes and monarchs. The effect of this persecution and ostracism was to force the Jews to cling to the one belief they had in common—their nationalistic religious beliefs. They were the Chosen People, and for the last 2000 years at the Passover Jews have said, "Next year in Jerusalem." This is the germ of Zionism which began to mature at the end of the nineteenth century.

"Political Parties"

The Zionist Movement was founded in 1895 by Dr. Theodore Herzl, and at the first congress held in 1897 at Basle where the policy of "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," was declared, Dr. Herzl tried in vain to interest Turkey, Germany and Britain in the aim of Zionism; Britain, however, offered Uganda in place of Palestine, an offer which was rejected at the Zionist Congress of 1905. A Jewish State in Palestine with the continuance of an Arab minority was considered the only feasible plan by the majority of Zionists, whilst a minority advocated the transfer of the Arabs to the deserts of Arabia.

The Zionist Movement is divided into four main groups: Democratic Zionists, Histadruth, which is the Trade Union wing and the largest faction, and also a religious wing. The fascist wing, the Revisionists, who ape the Nazis in such antics as wearing brown shirts, pouring kerosene over

the agricultural goods of the Arabs, and the maintenance of a private army, broke away from the main organisation in 1934 and formed the New Zionist Organisation.

The Arabs conquered Palestine in the Seventh Century and after four centuries of stagnation under the decaying Turkish Empire an Arab nationalist movement began to rise parallel with the Jewish Nationalist Movement towards the end of the nineteenth century, their aims being to gain their national independence and half the territory of the Turkish Empire.

The largest Arab organisation is the "Palestine Arab Party," often referred to as the Mufti's party because of its leader, Haj Emir Effendi el Hussein, who is the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and also a member of one of the large land owning families. The next in importance is the National Defence Party led by Rasheb Bey Nafshashi, a bitter opponent of the Mufti and Arab terrorism.

"The Too Much Promised Land."

The Arabs, growing restless under

the Turks, sent an emissary to Kitchener in Egypt in February, 1914, to ascertain Britain's attitude in case of a war of independence of Arabs against Turks. Kitchener did not commit Britain to any promises, but when World War I broke out in August of the same year, with Turkey on the German side, British agents were sent to make a deal with the Arabs.

The price of Arab help to the Allies was the formation of an Arab State, the frontiers of which included Arabia proper, Iraq, Syria and Palestine, Britain excluding "certain districts lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Hama, Hama and Aleppo." Later, after the war of course, Britain claimed that Palestine was included amongst the exceptions. The Arabs replied that this could not be defended geographically. The Peel Commission Report (page 42) supports the Arab contention. The Report states "the Arabs understood before and after the outbreak of the Hijaz Revolt in 1915, that in the event of Allied victory Palestine would be included in the sphere of Arab independence." (Bold face ours.)

Britain having completed the deal with the Arabs in 1915, entered into a secret treaty, the Sykes-Picot treaty

WAGES AND PRICES

- Prices are based on the value of goods, and price-fluctuations are due to the law of supply and demand.
- Capitalists are not free to raise prices as they like. They can, however, take advantage of market conditions of short supply and then use the excuse of higher wages to justify higher prices.
- If the capitalises could simply pass on increased wages by raising prices at will—why do they fight tooth and nail against such increases?
- Wage-pegging is a farce. The index of retail prices on which the basic wage is based does not include fresh fish, fruit and vegetables. Furthermore, prices of these goods, which also include furniture and furnishings, have skyrocketed—but, as they are "non-index" goods, the basic wage has not been adjusted accordingly.
- Items which ARE included in the index include rice, tinned salmon, canned fruit, sago, and dried apricots—goods which have been unobtainable for years.
- As for rents, the index assumes that the average house is a 4-5 roomed UNFURNISHED COTTAGE, AT A RENT OF 19/- TO 21!
- According to this lovely "index" prices have only risen by 24 per cent. during and after the war, and the wage has been adjusted accordingly. Your, or your wife's, experience, shows you that this figure is incorrect.
- Latest figures supplied by the Commonwealth Statistician to the Arbitration Court reveal that the total profits of all companies, public and private, but excluding life assurance, after payment of taxes, rose from £73,000,000 in 1938-9 to £85,000,000 in 1944-5. This means an increase in profits OF MORE THAN SIXTEEN PER CENT.
- As for those who argue that workers ought to fight for reduced taxation which "would be a real increase in wages," while an increase in wages "would only lead to higher prices and inflation"—ask them, why, if Higher Wages means Higher Prices AND decreased taxation equals higher wages, decreased taxation doesn't mean higher prices? The argument is nonsense.

REMEMBER THE ABOVE FACTS IN YOUR NEXT ARGUMENT WITH YOUR MATES.

—R.Y.

PALESTINE.—Continued.

of 1916. This treaty divided the Turkish Empire and Persia between Russia, France and Britain, France obtaining Syria, the Vilayet and other territories, while Great Britain got Mesopotamia and Palestine, with the ports of Okka and Haifa, which is considered suitable as a first class naval base.

Palestine, having been promised to both the Arabs and the British, was by 1917 that it had reached a critical stage, and the German Government was trying to gain the support of the Zionists as was done by Lloyd George remarking in a Parliamentary debate, "to secure the sympathy and co-operation of that most remarkable community, the Jews, throughout the world." British won Zionist support for the Allies when the Balfour Declaration was issued, thousands of copies being smuggled into enemy countries. The Balfour Declaration reads:

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status by Jews in any other country."

A very carefully worded document, to say the least: The Jews are promised a National Home, which in a physical impossibility. The area of Palestine is 10,430 square miles, much of which is desert and mountains, and 1,300,000 immigrants were added to the present Jewish population the density would be 1250 to the square mile—more than double that of Great Britain or Germany. The Jewish population of the world is estimated at 16,000,000, so it is evident that Palestine could not accommodate the Jews as a "National Home," at best it could merely be a refuge from anti Semite persecution.

On the other hand, the Arabs are promised specifically a National Home, but are referred to as the "existing non-Jews," and there is no mention of their "political or national right."

And so the atmosphere was set for an intense conflict which has continued for the last 26 years.

"Hitler, Messiah of the Jews."

The British ruling class received in 1922 a League Mandate as prearranged by the Sykes-Picot Treaty and worded in accordance with the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs opposed this arrangement before it was finalized, and in May, 1921, riots broke out in Haifa where a number were killed and wounded, the riots being suppressed by British troops. The Peel report (p. 50) attributed the riots to Arab anger at the nonfulfillment of the wartime promises of independence and the belief that the policy of the Balfour Declaration would lead to their political and economic subjugation. Despite this bad start the treaty to the Promised Land began, supported with special capital supplied by wealthy Zionists such as the Rothschilds, Melchet and others.

For the first years after the war the immigration of Jews to Palestine was kept down to a few thousand a year. However, in 1926 and 1927 over 2000 more Jews left Palestine than entered it. Zionism began to doubt the possibilities of a "Jewish National Home." It is Zionism that saved Zionism. Immigration figures show that in 1928 the migration figures rose to 42,359 in 1934 and 61,854 in 1935.

Cedric Beifrage in "Away from it" (p. 41) writes that "The New Masses" called Hitler the "New Master-fascist" because it was he who had started anti-Semitism going again, had unified the Jews as a race and led the movement of Jews from all over the world back to Palestine." Also the Zionists had no qualms about doing business with Nazi Germany, to quote Beifrage again, "but did not have to do so were giving orders to German firms in connection with the building of their Zion" (p. 42).

This great increase of immigrants led to another Arab outbreak. The outbreaks which have occurred thus far have centered around the question of Jewish immigration. At present the Arabs are in the majority. The figures are 1,050,000 Arabs and 550,000 Jews. Each outbreak follows a regular pattern: If immigration is agreed to by Britain the Arabs protest and when it is stopped the Jews protest and after each outcry a commission is set up to enquire into the matter. Each commission recommends either the partition of Palestine into three States: Arabic, Jewish and British—this solution is rejected by both the Arabs and the Jews—or the suspension of immigration and the setting up of a Legislative Council. This recommendation pacifies the Arabs but starts an uproar from the Jews for at the present time it would be an Arab Legislative Council. The findings of the various Commissions have been shelved without any attempt to put them into practice.

The recent outbreak of Jewish violence is the result of the White Paper issued by the British Government, May 17, 1939. In the paper the British Government opposes either a Jewish State or a Palestine State, and proposes a Palestinian State in ten years time and this State is to be "on such treaty relations with the United Kingdom as will provide satisfactorily for the commercial and strategic requirements of both countries."

The result of the Jewish outbreak was an investigation in 1945 by an Anglo-American Committee, which recommended, among other things, the authorization of 100,000 Jewish immigrants into Palestine immediately and the lifting of restrictions on land sales. This is evidently to appease the Jews, but Britain continues to intern unauthorized Jewish immigrants on Cyprus.

The following quote on this aspect, from the London "Economist," speaks for itself: "One (fact), attested by journalists who visited the 'floating slums' or illegal migrant ships by Egypt. This was hinted at in the 'Sunday Times' of 25/7/37: 'Palestine by reason of its marvellous strategic position, holds the keys of peace and war in the few days' run from the East. Is the greatest reservoir of oil as yet known, and the pipe line from Mosul oil wells terminates at Haifa."

TRIAL FIGHTERS' ("The Economist," August 1, 1944. Captivals ours)

A conference was held in London, in October, 1946, allegedly to settle the question; however, the Jewish Agency would not attend the present circumstances accept the British invitation to attend the Palestine Conference in London ("Herald," 26/9/46). The talks were between the Zionists and the British Government, and Arabs proposed a plan which envisaged the formation by the High Commissioner of a provisional Government, called "Arabs and Jews." Jewish Ministers, the High Commissioner retaining veto power in the transitional period. A constituent Assembly of 60 would be elected on adult male suffrage. REPRESENTING ALL IMPORTANT SECTIONS OF THE POPULATION, but Jews in no case would hold more than 20 per cent of the total seats ("Herald," 4/10/46, capitals ours). The emphasized portion suggests that the working class, whether Jewish or Arab, are to be excluded from political activities.

Fendalism in Decline. Since the Arab Nationalist Movement represents mainly the 250 feudal families who own about 90 per cent of the land, it is concerned about protecting their interests which have been destroyed by the rise of capitalism in Palestine. The landowners expropriated 55 per cent of the products of tenants, and often the land-owner is the moneylender, charging 10 per cent interest. The Arab peasant has been forsaking the oppressive exploitation of the land-owner for exploitation of the capitalist farmer and factory owner, and is becoming a proletarian. Arab wages in Palestine, although only a third of Jewish wages, are much higher than those of the neighboring Arab countries, such as Syria, Iraq, etc., both nominal and real wages. Thus to retain their privileged position the land owners hope to obtain political domination.

The Jews will reject the Arab plan even though the Arabs have made provision for the "important sections" of the Jews. Since the Jews own only about 400,000 acres of land, but own 60 per cent of the industrial capital, as against 6.5 per cent, owned by Arab petty capitalists, they are not likely to allow their capital to be dominated by feudal landlords.

"Benevolent Britain." The British ruling class delights in playing the role of a benevolent old gentlemen whose only concern is trying to keep the peace between two brawny boys who will be given independence when they grow up and have learned to behave themselves. This attitude does not coincide with reality, "and whatever happens Britain will maintain Palestine as a vital Middle East base." ("Herald," 9/3/46).

Experience in the recent war proved that Haifa was more satisfactory than the lifting of restrictions on land sales. This was hinted at in the "Sunday Times" of 25/7/37: "Palestine by reason of its marvellous strategic position, holds the keys of peace and war in the few days' run from the East. Is the greatest reservoir of oil as yet known, and the pipe line from Mosul oil wells terminates at Haifa."

Continued on Page Four.

THE FORUM

WHO IS GOING TO DO THE "DIRTY WORK?"

Mr. W. S. Mildura, writes: "How would people be induced to take on the unpleasant and most laborious jobs under Socialism? Laborious tasks will have in mind the work of sewerage disposal, all laboring work, such as pick and shovel work."

Answer: Socialism will give rise to problems of its own—there will be difficulties and tasks to be done. These problems, however, cannot be "solved" in advance by Socialists to help. We do not know in exactly what form they will arise, nor what the means at hand for their solution will be.

But something more can be said on the particular question raised. First of all, unless the proletariat be gifted with prophetic powers, he is merely assuming that coal-mining and sewerage will exist in their present forms under socialism. Secondly, what is or is not considered "laborious" depends largely on the general social set-up. For instance, while mining is considered a laborious occupation in the construction of the atom bomb, which were at least as dangerous and unpleasant, would not generally be considered so. The end in view also colors the conception of what is "laborious." People who would strongly object to pick and shovel work as "degrading" don't think it equally degrading to spend most of their leisure time in using pick and shovel in constructing rock gardens.

It is possible to determine exactly how much effort a particular job requires, by measuring the amount of calories used by the worker. A correspondent would find that some of the so-called "pleasant" jobs use as much energy as "unpleasant" ones. A socialist society would, with the increased scientific means at its disposal, be able to eliminate most tasks considered unpleasant. For instance, such things as underground gasification of coal are quite possible, and as for sewerage, Bellamy in his novel, "Equality," pictured a society where the "sewers are as clean as our streets. They convey only water which has been chemically purified and deodorized before it enters them by an apparatus connected with every dwelling."

By the same apparatus all solid sewerage is electrically cremated, and removed in the form of ashes" (p. 46). There is nothing fantastic in stating that a rational, i.e., a socialist society would not find it very hard to eliminate most of the "dirty" work.

But we need not turn to Bellamy, we have only to examine Capitalism today—"dirty" work is more expensive to the capitalists than scientific methods, then, and they will be eliminated quickly enough. Years ago your question used to run, "Who is going to sweep the crossings?" Well—the "problem" was solved when the ruling class discovered that mechanical sweepers are more efficient and cheaper to operate than sweeping by men.

A further example occurs in an ad. for a new type of truck for the collection of garbage and trash, "The Sanivan," appearing in "Engineering News Record" of March 21st. "This truck takes garbage and trash from a hopper at a convenient dis-

tance from the ground and compresses it to one-third of its original volume. Transfer of garbage from the hopper to the truck's interior is fully mechanical." It handles all garbage, ashes, etc., which are fully covered in transit, and is rapidly loaded by an automatic mechanism on to the dump or into the incinerator.

Of course, the "Sanivan" won't be sold because it will collect garbage collection less objectionable—it will be sold because it hauls more garbage per trip and increases the number of trips per operator.

The same argument applies to "pick and shovel" work—where mechanical scoops, bulldozers, etc., are profitable they are used, and with production for use instead of profit of the few, we can see no real problem there. However, assuming that tasks will arise considered "laborious" by a socialist society and which cannot be done by machinery and/or volunteers, the obvious solution would be that such tasks will be done by the whole of society, i.e., on a roster system.

—H.H.

CUTTINGS & COMMENTS

No time

"War Neurosis No Problem for Russia"—Headline in "Tribune," 1/11/46. The explanation: The Russians don't have time to worry. They're so busy working."

Benefits of "Independence."

"Police, aided by 1000 Congress Party volunteers, are launching daily attacks against 35,000 strikers here, and have already arrested 94 trade union leaders."—Allied Labor News despatch from Cawnpore, India, in "Guardian," 2/11/46.

Yet the Indian Socialists have backed the Congress Party to the hilt.

Out of the mouths of babes

"One guy talks, but nobody is listening or even looking at him." This comment by 14-year-old Joseph Priola after seeing the United Nations General Assembly in action, seems to sum up the disillusionment of high school children, who have been visiting the Assembly—"Herald," 2/11/46.

Tutti-tutti!

"We hear, with sorrow, that only 10 per cent of the population goes to Church on Sunday."—Mrs. G. Fisher, wife of Archbishop of Canterbury, q. in "Herald," 2/11/46.

We don't.

£300 a year for Dog. "In stylish suburban home in Victoria, British Columbia, a wire-haired terrier will spend its declining years on a 1000 dol. (£313) a year income."

—"Herald," 2/11/46.

Benefits of "Labor Government."

"Mr. Atlee will give the (Trade Union Congress) leaders a preview of the nation's economic budget, and appealing at the same time the use of trade union restrictive practices which limit production. Industrial observers consider Mr. Atlee may propose a radical introduction of the 40-hour week and claims for higher wages."

Here, Mr. Chiffley tells the workers that they must ask for higher wages at the immediate forty-hour week—it would "merely mean higher prices and inflation." In England, Mr.

Atlee tells them they may "decrease production." Any excuse is good enough! (quote from "Age," 4/11/46).

Berlin Elections.

In the recent Berlin Municipal elections the Russian sponsored "Socialist Unity Party" (the "Communist") obtained only one-fifth of the votes. "As the Socialist Unity Party had dominated all municipal bodies in Berlin since the occupation of the city by the Soviet Army, the results amount to a blunt vote of no confidence in the municipal authorities and the Russian Occupation authorities who brought them into being." ("Age," 26/10/46).

Freedom, Freedom, everywhere.

"Members of the Government bloc contended that freedom of the press was for democrats and not for enemies of Poland seeking to stir up internal troubles."—Report on debate on retention of press censorship in Poland, "Age," 4/10/46.

"BECAUSE, LENDING EAR TO THE FALLACIOUS WORDS OF THE ECONOMISTS, THE PROLETARIANS HIT THEMSELVES UP BODY AND SOUL TO THE VICE OF WORK. THEY PRECIPITATE THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY INTO THESE INDUSTRIAL CRISES OF OVER-PRODUCTION WHICH CONVULSE THE SOCIAL ORGANISM."

—Paul Lafargue.

"The pro-Stalinist Daily Express Reporter, Sefton Delmer, says: 'Because they are conducting a revolutionary war the Yugo-Slavs refuse to tolerate opposition or permit strikes. Both are illegal.'—'Direct Action' London, May, '46."

"In Alabama (USA.) next week's general election will include a referendum on a constitutional amendment designed to make it more difficult for negroes to vote. The amendment demands that prospective voters shall be able to read and explain any section of the US constitution and shall be of 'good moral character.'—"Herald," 4/11/46.

—H. H.

Our New Central Branch

Many workers, living out of reach of Melbourne or Sydney, are sympathetic towards the S.P.A., but have felt that there is little use in their joining.

The Executive Committee have now established a Central Branch, which all those agreeing with us and living "in the bush" can join.

Each member will receive a regular monthly "Socialist News Letter" containing news from the S.P.A., and digest of local activities and discussions. The first issue of this is now ready and will be mailed to anyone interested.

Full particulars from: Central Branch, S.P.A., P.O. Box 1440-M, Melbourne.

NEW PAMPHLET

"Is Labour Govt. the Way to Socialism?" 7d., Post Free

PALESTINE.—Continued.

So all this talk of either a Arab, Jewish or Palestinian independent state is simply nonsense. Russia is already wooing the Arabs in an endeavor to offset Palestine's geographical dominance of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Dardanelles. Britain has brought America into the Palestine question by allowing the American capitalists a share in the oil of the Middle and Near East. Whilst President Truman supports the findings of the Anglo-American Committee in regard to the Jewish immigration with an eye to the Jewish vote in forthcoming U.S.A. elections, a section of the American capitalist class with an eye to a market of 50,000,000 Arabs favors the Arab case. In an article, "The Arabs are on the Move" (October, '46, "Readers Digest"), Edwin Muller supports this latter view as follows: "Now the war is over, and although the French and British are trying to stay, the Arabs will have none of it. Both powers are on their way out, leaving a partial vacuum," and he concludes by stating: "For centuries the Arabs were led by foreign nations who came there to fatten themselves. The United States might be a leader who comes there to serve—and thereby serve ourselves and the world."

Thus to the British ruling class the conflict between Arab and Jewish propertied classes becomes of secondary importance when faced with the competition of the other powers and therefore they also woo the Arabs with promises to maintain their imperialist interests. Both Jews and Arabs recognise the myth of Palestinian independence. Ben Gurion (chairman of the Jewish Agency) states "we are already forty years connected with the same political line of collaboration with Britain." A collaboration must be reciprocal and not one-sided." Whilst the Jewish spokesman only hints to Britain of support from other imperialist powers, the Arab spokesman is more outspoken. Jamal Hussein, of the Arab Higher Committee, states: "The Arabs have a long tradition of friendship with Britain and America and if, on the question of Palestine there is no improvement everything is liable to be changed." (Quoted from "Workers International News," August, 1946.) Britain's answer to these comments is to strengthen her armed forces in

Palestine whilst the Jews and Arabs prepare for civil war, the outcome of which, if it occurs, will be decided by the support of British arms unless another imperialist power intervenes, in which case the civil war would be transformed to World War III.

—E. A. WATKINS.
(To be continued.)

S. O. S. !

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S.P.A.

OBJECT.—The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

The Socialist Parties of Australia and New Zealand hold:
1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the

monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. THE SOCIALIST PARTIES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND therefore enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and call upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under their banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment, apply to nearest address.

LECTURES

MELBOURNE.

Dec. 3rd: "Palestine and the Jews"—C. Saunders.
Dec. 17th: "The Starving Wage"—J. Topp.
N.B.—No meeting, 24th and 31st December.

Other Tuesdays: Branch Meetings. Open to Public. All activities at Temperance Hall, Russell Street, 8 p.m.
Lectures advertised "Age," Saturday, "Meetings" Column.

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