

British Terror In Palestine Recalls Scenes Under Hitler

By H. Vallin

Once more the bridges and viaducts in Palestine are being blown up. Bombs are exploding in the British officers' clubs. In retaliation the English army of occupation decrees martial law; curfew is imposed. And in Tel-Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem are repeated the scenes which the workers of Europe remember so well from the days of Hitlerite occupation: passers-by lined up against a wall to be searched for "weapons," military police detachments raiding homes, man hunts to capture members and leaders of the terrorist organizations, "Irgun Zvei Leumi" and "Stern" which are challenging the power and prestige of imperialist occupation.

It goes without saying that all class conscious workers must condemn without reservation the repressions which the British are directing for the moment against the Jewish population of Palestine and which will set the stage for beating down all the more savagely the Arab population at the first signs of revolt. When the apologists of imperialism allege that it is the terrorists who are "attacking" while imperialism is only "defending itself," each class conscious worker must reply:

"But why do the British troops remain in the country? Let England immediately withdraw its army from Palestine, and there will be no more reason for it to 'defend itself' against the Palestinian population!"

ANALYZE ITS AIMS

But in condemning the British repressions, the conscious worker ought not automatically to embrace the cause of the Jewish terrorists. He should, rather, carefully analyze the aims and the social origins of this movement.

The terrorists and their spokesmen abroad, the so-called "Jewish Committee for National Liberation," pretend to fight for an independent Palestine and to drive British imperialism from the country. They employ the vocabulary of the European resistance movements under the Nazi occupation.

But their true, reactionary and anti-labor character appears more clearly when one examines the declarations of the leaders to the effect that they are not in favor of free elections . . . until "the Hebrew people who are in foreign lands will have had the opportunity to re-enter their fatherland." These strange "liberators" and "democrats" in reality wish to impose on Palestine the dictatorship of a minority of the population (at present the Jews constitute only 25% of the Palestinian population) and to deprive the Arab population of its political sovereignty, just as British imperialism does.

The reactionary character of the terrorist movement stands out even more clearly in the recent attacks launched by its members on the locals of the extreme left Zionist workers party,

Hashomir Hatzair. Its aim is to establish BY FORCE a Jewish State in Palestine — an aim likewise pursued by the majority of the Zionist organizations, who however try to achieve it through negotiations with British imperialism.

Both the Jewish Agency, which is a sort of bourgeois government of the Jewish community in Palestine, and the Zionist Congress which recently met at Basle, have come out violently against terrorist methods. But this difference concerns solely the METHODS of their struggle and not the ends pursued.

FEAR ARAB REVOLT

Thanks to a constant inflow of foreign capital, the Jews have constructed in Palestine a closed economy within the Arab economy. This economy affords them a standard of living far higher than that of the Arab population, even though it falls below English or American living standards. But the Jewish population constitutes a tiny island surrounded by an Arab world in ferment. It is in mortal fear of the perspective of an Arab revolt which threatens to drown in blood the Zionist dream of a Jewish State.

It is this fear which drives the Jewish population of Palestine to demand an unlimited Jewish immigration because each new Jewish immigrant is one more soldier and imperceptibly tends to change the relationship of forces between Arabs and Jews to the advantage of the latter. It is likewise with an eye to the future military showdown between the Arabs and Jews, considered inevitable by the Zionists, that they have created a powerful army, the Hagana, in which practically every adult Jew in the country is enrolled.

The Hagana was armed during the war, in great measure with the aid of British imperialism, in case Rommel attacked Palestine and as a safeguard against an Arab uprising. It was the Hagana that first used terrorists for bold military raids behind the German-Italian lines during the war, as strikebreakers against the Arabs, etc.

In return for services rendered to imperialism, the Zionist leaders hoped to obtain at the end of the war rewards in the form of unlimited freedom of immigration, or in any case large scale immigration into Palestine. However, these hopes were cruelly dashed.

UTILIZES ANTAGONISMS

British imperialism knows well how to UTILIZE for its own benefit antagonisms between the Jews and Arabs, and how to EXPLOIT FOR ITS OWN PROFIT the Zionist movement against Arab liberation movements. But it has no interest

whatever in promoting the establishment of Jewish supremacy in Palestine. Quite the contrary.

Immediately after the war it was busy wooing the Arab feudalists, who were being courted at the same time by the American imperialists. In order not to lose the good will of the Arab feudal chiefs, the English government was ready to completely stop Jewish immigration into Palestine.

Such were the conditions under which the protest movement by world Zionism was unleashed. It is easy to see that this movement does not at all wish to drive from Palestine British imperialism, which is regarded as an indispensable ally against an eventual Arab revolt. This movement pursues the sole aim of EXERTING PRESSURE on the British government for concessions on immigration.

In order to demonstrate their "good will" towards imperialism, the Zionist leaders have suddenly abandoned the terrorists, whom they had clandestinely supported in past years. This explains the desperate fury to which the terrorists have been driven.

(This is the first in a series of articles on the Palestine Question by a Belgian Trotskyist. The second will appear next week.)

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