

Palestine Stalinists Net Political Gain In Unification of Arab and Jewish CPs

By ED FINDLEY

Palestinian Stalinism has gained a unique political advantage by merging its Arab League for National Liberation with the Communist Party of Israel. The merger, first announced by the Arab League of National Liberation on October 8, was finally consummated last week in Haifa at a plenary session of the enlarged Central Committee of the CP.

As a result, the Stalinists now possess the only political formation encompassing both Arab and Jewish members. This fact will enable the newly combined CP of Israel to enter Jewish and Arab candidates in the November elections for the Constituent Assembly.

MAPAM VIEW DECISIVE

The absence of any other organized political tendencies among the Arabs in Israel is thus likely to give the CP a near monopoly in the Arab population centers. At the present time, the only other Arab candidates who may be expected to enter the election lists are village heads, community elders, independents or individual Arabs sponsored by various Israeli parties.

The Stalinist position among the Arabs is further strengthened by their domination and control of the only functioning Arab trade union center—the Arab Congress of Trade Unions; and by the past sponsorship of the Arab League of National Liberation by the Israeli Minister of Labor, Beftov, a leader of the Mapam.

It seems likely, however, that the Mapam's (United Workers Party) enthusiasm for and sponsorship of the Arab Stalinists may abate somewhat in face of their joining the Communist Party of Israel, with whose leadership the Zionist-socialists have old and painful accounts to settle.

It is this correspondent's impression that the reluctance or inability of the Mapam leadership—despite its pathological pro-Stalinism—to ignore the past and to form a united front, or, at least, an electoral bloc with the Israel CP, was a decisive factor in the Stalinist decision to merge their Palestine parties.

ESSENTIAL TURN

The memory of the pogromist role of the Palestine Communist Party is too fresh in the minds of the Israel workers and collective farmers. Even the pro-Russian Mapam leadership

could not afford to ignore this. Were they to form an electoral bloc with the CP, they would lose a great deal of popular support among the Israeli masses.

As soon as it became clear to the Stalinist leadership that their dirty record made it impossible even for the willing Mapam leaders to help them pave their way into the Constituent Assembly, they had to turn elsewhere. Hence, the merger of the Arab League for National Liberation with the Communist Party of Israel.

The existing party vacuum among the Arabs offers this Arab-Jewish Stalinist party a heaven-sent opportunity to steal sizable representation in the Constituent Assembly.

This well-laid and ambitious plan of the Stalinists can be thwarted only if the Israel labor movement and its parties abandon—as they must sooner or later—the reactionary and self-defeating exclusive membership policy.

Only if the doors to the Histadruth and the Mapai are thrown open to Arab workers, will these politically homeless masses have an address other than that of the Stalinists to which to turn.