

# Histadrut Takes Partial Step Forward In Opening Its Locals to Arab Workers

By AL FINDLEY

A first step toward a single Arab-Jewish trade-union organization was taken on May 7 by the Executive of the Histadrut, the general labor federation of Israel.

By a unanimous vote, the Executive Council voted to admit all Arabs who are not members of other unions into the Trade Union Division of the Histadrut. The former Histadrut organization for Arabs, the Brit Poale Eretz Israel, was dissolved, but seniority of membership in the Histadrut is to be counted from the date of original membership in the dissolved organization.

The Arabs excluded by the clause barring members of other Arab unions are those organized by the Stalinists in the Congress of Arab Labor. The Mapam and CP representatives tried to amend this provision to give the Congress members the same rights and privileges as are being accorded to members of the Brit. This was defeated. A few weeks later the Congress of Arab Labor was dissolved and its members urged to join the Histadrut unions as individuals.

The months of May, June and July were set aside as a period for recruiting Arabs into the Trade Union Division.

Within the local and national trade-union organizations, the Arabs will have full equality. They will be entitled to all social-welfare benefits of the Histadrut—i.e., Kupaf Cholim, the sick benefit fund, etc. The "labor exchanges" in mixed areas are supposed to register Arab workers and give them jobs.

The number of Arab workers that are eligible to join is estimated at 10-11,000, about a fourth of the Arabs in Israel.

## CHALLENGE

The Executive decision for joint trade-union organization—which still has to be ratified by the Histadrut convention this fall—was hailed by all labor groups in Israel. Many pointed out that this could be considered only a first step in the right direction.

The head of the Arab Affairs Division of the Histadrut correctly pointed out that the action not only posed a challenge to Jewish workers to welcome the Arabs on an equal basis but also laid the groundwork for a better Arab-Jewish relationship both in Israel and the Arab states. The move is therefore also a challenge to Arab working-class organizations in the Arab countries. Better

Jewish-Arab relations can be a potent factor in bringing peace to the Near East.

The Arab representatives at the Executive meeting hailed the decision despite its limited nature and joined in the talk of Jewish-Arab brotherhood. However, from Israeli press reports, it seems that they also placed great stress on another point: now that the Arabs are equal members, Arab workers should no longer be driven off jobs to make way for Jewish workers.

The Mapam representative pointed out that a real basis was laid to free the Arab worker from the political influence of the Arab landlords, who still dominate the local Arab communities both economically and politically. The road was now open for ideological unity of Arab and Jewish workers.

He also rightly emphasized that a resolution, no matter how good it is, will be judged primarily by how it is carried out. A great deal depends on how the new decision is implemented.

## DANGERS

While the Arabs are now eligible to join local and national trade-union organizations of the Histadrut, they are still not accepted into the agricultural sections of the federation, nor are they eligible to join the agricultural marketing cooperative of the Histadrut, the Tnuva. They will not have a voice in the Histadrut itself.

## Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism Holds Influential Conference in London

By DAVID ALEXANDER

LONDON, Sept. 30—At the Beaver Hall headquarters of one of Britain's oldest imperial enterprises, the Hudson Bay Company, the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism held a very successful conference last weekend.

The Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism is a very important socialist organization founded in Paris in 1948. Its secretary is the French socialist journalist Jean Rous; the president of the British center is Fenner Brockway, the Labor MP, well known for his quarter-century of service to the British labor movement.

The Congress is an association consisting of all the important nationalist organization in Africa and many in Asia as well. Its British center is the organ-

The fact that they will not have a say in the Histadrut itself is a very serious shortcoming. The Trade Union Division is subject to the discipline of the general Histadrut organization and must follow its orders. This can have serious results. In 1924 Arabs were organized in the Transport Workers Union of the Histadrut together with their Jewish brothers. But after a while they became dissatisfied with their limited rights and resented the authority of the Histadrut in which they had no representation. As a result, the Stalinists, in alliance with the Mufti, were able to split the organization and form the Palestinian Arab Labor Federation, which adopted an anti-Jewish line.

The importance of Arab-Jewish relations to Israel and to the Arab states cannot be exaggerated. It is next to decisive. For the Israeli labor movement, this means that it must carry out this decision loyally and proceed to further organizational steps for Jewish-Arab unity.

In addition the labor movement must take the lead in the broader political arena to obtain in fact (where it now exists only on paper) full Arab rights with respect to the citizenship law, free travel inside the country, the inviolate right to their ancestral land, civil liberties for their people, and, in a population overwhelmingly peasant in character, support for their economic development such as is given to the Jewish sectors of the economy.

through which anti-imperialist non-Stalinist organizations coordinate their work. It also has centers in the Western European imperialist countries.

In this writer's opinion its importance to progressive elements cannot be exaggerated, and it has already rendered valuable service to anti-imperialism by publicizing the truth about Kenya, Morocco, etc. Its role in the future is expected to be even more important in view of its increasing strength and the likelihood that some of its affiliate parties may form governments in their countries in the foreseeable future.

Furthermore, its democratic activities are carried on in countries where pressure can be brought to bear on reactionary regimes in the colonies. It is well

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