

Palestine Simmers After Martial Law

By ALBERT FINDLEY

After two weeks of terror, the British rulers of Palestine have lifted the "statutory" martial law that had been strangling the economic life of the country.

The total result of this military operation is that it conquered nothing. The British authorities claim to have arrested 78 alleged leaders of terrorist organizations, although the organizations named deny this British claim.

The official government breakdown of the allegiance of the 78, claims 23 members of the Irgun and Stern groups and 50 from "other" organizations. This fact alone makes a mockery of the claims that the martial law was directed against the Irgun and Stern groups. It conclusively proves what LABOR ACTION was the first to point out (issue of Feb. 10)—that the martial law was directed against the Haganah and any form of resistance.

The net result of this Hitler-like operation has been no more than the

Unity Against Stalinists

7. That a fight be conducted for citizenship of alien seamen who sailed during the war on American ships. That a fight be carried on for their right to continue to sail these ships.

8. That the hospitalization facilities for seamen be improved.

9. That all government committees dealing with maritime affairs include seamen's representation.

The Lundeberg statement, after conceding the remarkable achievements of the Washington Conference, proceeded to torpedo the prospect of extending and developing these first fruits of united labor action.

Every trade unionist in maritime should take his stand against this factional position of the AFL maritime leaders. They should demand further meetings of all seamen's unions to decide on joint strategy and action. Only in this way can the seamen defend themselves against the government - shipowner gang. The policy of the AFL piecards can only mean bloody jurisdictional warfare with union seamen pitted against each other while the shipowners look on gleefully.

senseless death of a child at play and killings of innocent passers-by, as well as the infliction of a great economic hardship on the entire population of Palestine.

The hopes of some British Labor Party "real politician" that the economic pressure would result in the emergence of a bourgeois "appeasement" group, did not materialize, despite broad "leaks" from secret sources that the British would negotiate with a new leadership. This hope was frustrated by the firm stand taken by the Palestinian labor movement.

The terrorist groups responded to the martial law with increased activity, leading to a depletion of the arms of the Irgun. This is one reason for the truce declared by that organization. The truce is expected to last at least through the Passover holidays. The Stern group, however, has announced the continuation of its "war" against the British.

A few weeks ago, the Irgun announced a shift in activity from the "military front" to the "immigration front" and "political front." The period of the truce and the expectation of UN action will be utilized for such purposes.

This should not be interpreted as victory for the moderate Haganah leaders, who want to narrow the entire concept of resistance to the smuggling of immigrants.

A NARROW CONCEPT

Victory of such a narrow concept of resistance inside the Haganah will completely destroy any possibility that Haganah and the progressive forces it represents—the organized labor movement—will be able to lead the struggle against the British. It will inevitably result in the shifting of the struggle from a mass basis to that of individual terrorism under the leadership of such reactionary organizations as the Irgun and the fascist Stern group.

The truce of the Irgun will not last long. The only way to prevent revival of Irgun and Stern group warfare is for labor elements to initiate wide-scale mass resistance and activity that will insure the leadership of the resistance movement to the socially progressive class—the workers.

Of the total illegal immigration of 23,700 during 1946, the Haganah organized and financed 23,000, while the American League is credited with 700.