

The Revolt in Palestine.

Communiqué by the C. C. of the C. P. of Palestine.

a) The Reasons.

The reasons of the sanguinary August revolt in Palestine are to be found in the entire policy of British imperialism in the Arab countries since the war. In its endeavour to make Palestine a **strategic outpost** on the Eastern bank of the Suez Canal, a stage on the air-route to India, and a military basis for the conquest of the entire Arabian peninsula on the one hand and for a **war against the southern republics of the Soviet Union** on the other, British imperialism elected to pursue a peculiar policy in this area, which is **ethnographically and economically merely a part of the great Arab territory**. The country was wrenched out of the total Arab territory, turned into an independent state, and by the help of British bayonets and British administration turned into a national home for the Jews.

The entire post-war policy of the British imperialists in Palestine, it is true, has shown that they never really had the true realisation of Zionism, i. e. the erection of a national Jewish home, at heart. Not even the most elementary support for a colonisation by Jewish emigrants was afforded by the British Government; on the contrary, it turned the unfortunate immigrants who had been lured to the "national home" by the siren voice of the Zionist organisation and their Social-Democratic advocates (both in the pay of the British imperialist politicians) into poor, hungry "natives", politically quite devoid of rights and economically exploited to the utmost by Anglo-Zionist capital. The Zionists themselves declare that by reason of the British policy the realisation of a national home for Jews in Palestine has become a chimera, an altogether Utopian idea.

On the other hand, however, the Zionist policy inaugurated by a Conservative like Lord Balfour has fully realised the object which the British imperialists really had in view, for it has driven a wedge of 150,000 Jews in between their military and civil apparatus on the one hand and the Arab population on the other. Though themselves persecuted and bullied by Great Britain (always with the exception of a small group of Zionist capitalists and Socialist leaders directly in the service of the imperialists), these 150,000 are yet the most advanced outposts of British imperialism in the Arab countries. Unlike the European colonies in South Africa, China, etc., this small colony has, thanks to the ingenious British policy, been turned into an outpost which, itself unprotected, yet serves to protect the interests of imperialism.

The main elements of this wily British policy lie in the fact that on the one hand the Jewish capitalists, who, with the aid of the Jewish social traitors of the Second International, have taken over the tutelage of the Jewish masses, and on the other hand the feudal Arab landlords and the Mohammedan clerical apparatus, are cleverly played off, the one against the other.

Since the end of the war there has been a systematic expropriation of the poor Arab "fellahs" or small peasants. The establishment of the few agricultural and urban colonies, which Zionism has managed to create within the last ten years at an enormous expense (there is mention of as much as 20 million pounds having been invested in various ways) could only be effected on the basis of an expulsion of the small Arab peasants. The smallness and poverty of the Jewish settlements, which the British only suffered with a view to maintaining the illusion of a Jewish national home as a political card in their hands, is just a proof of the practical impossibility of such a home under British rule. But the manner in which even these few settlements had to be erected on the ruins of the small Arab holdings, sufficed to make the Jewish colonies and the "Jewish danger" into a regular bogey for the poor, semi-nomadic peasants of Palestine and the surrounding countries. The hatred of imperialism, which had established its "civilising" rule in the land by means of an unscrupulous exaction of taxes, of forced labour, illtreatment of the peasants, and measures of terrorism, was united with hatred of the colonisers introduced under the protection of the imperialists; nay, it was even overshadowed by the enmity felt for the intruders who took away not only the money and work of the poor peasants but even what was dearest to them of anything, their small holdings of land.

The agrarian unrest which has set in since the British occupation, has been aggravated particularly within the last two years and has taken on the form of a serious agrarian fermentation. Hundreds of small incidents — Aluleh, Jedro, Caesarea, Wadi, Hwaras, Infiath, etc. — all over the country have borne witness to the great bitterness of the working population in the open country. In the cities the proletarianisation of the petty-bourgeoisie and the pauperisation of the intellectual classes made rapid progress. True to their imperialist mission, the Zionist leaders drew a line of demarcation between "Jewish" and "Arab" Labour, whereby the attention of the workers in the cities was to be diverted from the real reason of their impoverishment — the imperialist policy which hindered the development of productive forces, and the dastardly exploitation by colonial operators and "compradors" — and directed against the Jew. For even the official "Histadruth" trade unions (attached to the Amsterdam International) not only refused to admit Arab workers but set up the rule of "kibush avodah", i. e. the replacement of Arab workers by Jews, which amounted to an expulsion of the Arab workers from their jobs.

The "front" thus erected between the Jews and the Arabs by the imperialists, Zionists (poorly cloaked by a few impudent lies as to the "blessings" which Zionism has conferred on the Arabs in town and country) was on the other hand completed by the Arab big landowners, the clerical apparatus and the bourgeois "compradors". These classes, which have ruled the country for centuries, have taken active part in the exploitation practised by the imperialists and Zionists, for it was big landowners such as Sursuck, Tayan, and many others who sold the land worked by "their" fellah tenants to the Zionist colonisation agencies, thus seconding the expropriation by the colonisers. It is these circles, too (e. g. the heads of the clerical apparatus, "Medjless Islami or Supreme Council of Islam), which administer the real estate of the Mohammedan "Wakf" and collect the heavy taxes from the peasants by means of the Government apparatus. The British have taken good care never to interfere with this clerical apparatus or with the feudal rights, while the interests of the workers were trodden under foot. It is these circles, finally, that constantly exploit the peasantry by means of usurious rates of interest, fraud and barefaced robbery. The bourgeoisie of the towns, meanwhile, is no less avid of profit than are the Zionists and imperialists, though they employ feudal-mediaeval methods alongside the modern capitalist ones used by the latter.

But it was just because this class of Arab parasites (who finds its political utterance in the national-reformist heads of the Arab Congress) saw the growing wrath of the masses and rightly appraised the menacing symptoms of the advancing agrarian movement, that they were determined to maintain control of this movement and not allow it to advance directly against the British imperialists either, since in this latter case it would probably have got beyond their control and they would have been landed in a difficult situation, or they would, at any rate, have had to make too great economic concessions in favour of the people. In collusion with some of the British colonial officials, who, inspired by Colonel Lawrence, desire to make a coalition between British imperialism and Arab clerical feudalism into the dominating factor throughout the Middle East, the national-reformist leaders took all possible steps to prevent the movement rendered inevitable by the radicalisation and revolutionisation of the masses, from turning into an anti-militarist revolt and to deflect it in the direction of an anti-Jewish pogrom.

b) Incentive and Outbreak.

That the excitement had reached its highest point and that the movement was likely to become acute at any moment, could be seen by a series of incidents on the occasion of the Mohammedan festivals of "Nebi Mussa" and "Aual Muharrem", when there were turbulent demonstrations of the masses. Again and again, the Government proclaimed a "state of emergency" with a view to preventing demonstrations. This particularly, when there was some danger of the masses adopting an openly anti-imperialist attitude under the lead of the Communist Party. All the police and military forces were mobilised to prevent this, as on the occasion of August 1st. The British imperialist Government, which continued to follow the old Conservative line even after the MacDonal Government came into office, would at no cost permit an outbreak of popular anger against imperialism and made careful preparations to deflect the struggle into the channels of national feeling.

The question of the Wailing Wall, which finally gave the immediate occasion for the events, had been dragged in "by the hair", so to say. Both the British and the Mohammedan "Medjless" considered such a religious struggle the best safety-valve. The Zionists did their share towards turning the Wailing Wall into a symbol of power; it could no longer be a question of the possession of the wall (the question at issue between the Jewish rabbis and the Medjless) but rather that the victory in this regard was made out by the agitational press on either side, as also by the religious and nationalist notabilities, to be symbolic of the virtual rule over Palestine. On the one hand, the Medjless took advantage of the backwardness and the almost complete illiteracy of the fellahs and bedouins for the purpose of depicting the fight against the Jews in the light of a "holy war" and at the same time making them believe that the imperialist Government would refrain from intervening in the case of a massacre of the Jews (a clever Anglo-clerical trick, whereby the masses were to be prevented from settling

forces with the Government itself, which, they were made to believe, would help them to destroy the Jews). On the other hand, the Zionist Fascists played upon the national chauvinism of the young generation of Jews, educated on imperialist lines, making out the fight for the Wailing Wall to be a "defence of national honour" and so forth. "Judah was born in blood and fire, in blood and fire it will grow", sang the foolish fascist youths who paraded with flags through the Mohammedan quarters, thereby deliberately provoking the Arabs. The Government fanned the flames on either side, desiring to strengthen its own position by this outbreak of a national and religious conflict, acquire an excuse for terrorising the masses of bedouins, fellahs and proletarian workers, and demoralise the national movement. The Government recognised the danger of a revolutionary, anti-imperialist peasant movement led by the working class of the towns and therefore preferred to drive the masses into the arms of the clerical and feudal Medjless and to let them vent their fury on the Jews.

The outbreak really ensued just in the way the representatives of the hyper-pacifist MacDonald, and the Zionist and clerical wirepullers desired it to. After a meeting of 10,000 Mohammedans, mainly representing the smaller peasant class, in the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, a powerful anti-Jewish movement broke out throughout the country with elementary force. In this connection there could be observed the "benign" results of Zionism for the Jews of Palestine itself. Zionism has caused the mob in Palestine to treat the words "Zionist" and "Jew" as synonymous. Much of the blame is due to the non-reformists, who, in response to the repeated appeals of the Communists to the Arabs to differentiate between the rich and corrupt Zionist leaders and the Jewish workers, who have common interests with the Arab working masses, again and again asseverated that the Jewish workers were the "best Zionists". Thus the slogan of the Arabs was not "Death to the Zionists!" but "Death to the Jews!" and this was uttered with all the fanaticism of a "dshehad" or holy war. It now became regarded a sacred duty to slaughter as many Jews as possible, whether guilty or innocent, Zionists or workers. No one was to touch the British or other Christians, for had it not been announced "Dola maana", "the Government with us"? The Jews had to be killed because they were Jews. The savage, senseless mutilations, such as were perpetrated at Hebron, Motza, and Saffed on old men, women, and children (the bedouins singing in religious ecstasy while they slit abdomens and struck off the heads of little children) were the outcome of this splendid political "manoeuvre" by which the Government of progress, civilisation, and the Labour Party, allied with the most reactionary clericalism, drove a subject country into an orgy of blood so as to strengthen its own undermined political position. There is documentary evidence to the effect that in the early stages of the events the British police had orders to allow the Jews to be massacred at will without intervening.

(To be concluded.)