

THE ARAB LEFT

- **British Fear Democratic Movement**
- **Arab Potentates Take Action**

By James S. Allen

EVENTS in Palestine have overshadowed an important development in the Middle East. It is not fully realized that the postwar colonial upsurge is not restricted to Asia.

Among the Arabs of the Middle East there is also a great democratic ferment.

This movement has aroused concern in Britain and among the Arab potentates. The bugaboo of Soviet "expansionism" in the Middle East is intended to obscure imperialist and strategic aims of Britain and also of the United States, and to justify suppression of Arab democratic forces.

While relying chiefly upon Britain to stem the democratic movements, the Arab potentates are themselves taking action. When pro-Nazi Jamal el Husseini returned to Palestine from exile his first efforts were directed against the democratic Arabs. A recent meeting of the Conference of Arab rulers in the Middle East planned a drive against so-called subversive movements.

Before the Egyptian government started negotiations for a new treaty with Britain it arrested labor, Communist and independent-nationalist leaders who are still in jail.

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THESE ARE INDIRECT signs of the Arab democratic upsurge. But recent events give more direct evidence of the growth of democratic forces.

In Palestine, despite the separation of the trade union movement into a Jewish and Arab wing, the recent general strike of government employes was notable for solidarity between the Arab and Jewish employes.

In the Arab general strike called to protest the Anglo-American Commission on Palestine, an independent current came to the surface, demanding opposition to both British and American imperialism and urging a United Nations solution.

An interesting development is reported from Egypt. Labor and other anti-imperialist forces have

adhered to the WAFD, the traditional nationalist party now in opposition to the present pro-British government.

This makes it more difficult for the old nationalist leadership to maneuver from an anti-British to a pro-British position in order to obtain power. The presence of popular forces within the WAFD accounts for its effective opposition to the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations which seek to maintain the old semi-colonial relation.

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SIMILAR DEVELOPMENT are to be noted throughout the Middle East. From the moment Lebanon achieved independence, the unions, spearheaded by the railroad workers, made great strides forward and are now united in a national federation.

In Iraq, five Communist dailies are published, and the Communist Party has great influence among the railroad workers, teachers and government employes.

Even in the recently created "independent" state of Trans-jordan demands are growing for democratic reform and real sovereignty.

Democratic nationalist movements sweeping around the periphery of the Arab world also have a deep influence upon it, as in Iran and the rise of the Kurdish autonomy movement.

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IT IS ONLY natural that these democratic movements should have the highest regard for the Soviet Union, which assures free and equal development of its component nations, some of whom are kinsfolk of Middle Eastern peoples.

Best refutation of the charge that the Soviet Union is expansionist lies in the fact that Soviet prestige is so high among colonial and dependent peoples.

Even **The Economist**, pro-Laborite organ of the British capitalists, admit the new "impulse and drive" among the Arab peoples come "from the changing economic and social structure of the Arab countries and from the amazing growth of political consciousness."