

Palestine Jews Uphold Bi-National State

(Daily Worker Foreign Department)

It's a safe bet that most Americans who have been listening to the Congressional debate about a Jewish State in Palestine, and watching the protests of various Arab countries do not realize that a substantial minority of Jewish workers and farmers in Palestine are themselves opposed to a Jewish state.

In all the excitement, a brief dispatch from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency this past week has been overlooked. It reported that at the executive committee of the General Federation of Jewish Labor in Palestine, known as the Histadruth, some 21 members voted against a Jewish state with 24 voting for it.

The Histadruth has organized one out of every four Jews in Palestine—125,000—which is probably one of the highest membership figures based on population of any country in the world.

This fact is of the greatest importance in understanding the present discussion, on the Wright-Compton resolution now before the House and the Wagner-Taft resolution in the Senate. The 21 members of the Histadruth who voted against the Jewish state idea are

practically in agreement that the problem of Palestine must be settled on a bi-national basis, by agreement with the Arabs, which of course, is the official Zionists oppose.

Senate and House resolutions have two aspects: first they propose that the British White Paper's terms which would prevent further immigration into Palestine after March 31st, be abandoned; and second, that Congress reaffirm its support for a Jewish state in Palestine.

FIGHT ON WHITE PAPER

Naturally, all progressive Americans support the first aspect of the Congressional resolutions, namely opposition to the White Paper's ban on immigration into Palestine. There is no use talking about saving the Jews of Europe unless Palestine among many other countries, has its gates open for Jewish refugees.

The difficulty arises with the purely political demand of the official Zionist leadership for a purely Jewish state in Palestine. The War Department has declared itself against this aspect of the matter on grounds of "military necessity," evidently fearing the effect of

dogmatic Arab opinion in regions where American soldiers are stationed.

A number of Arab countries, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan and Yemen have protested to the United States against the Congressional resolutions. While these protests are understandable reflections of the growing Arab unity, they did constitute an unprecedented interference in American affairs, as Senator Robert Wagner stated. Moreover, they showed no sympathy at all for the plight of the Jewish people, either in Palestine or elsewhere.

The chances are that the immigration provisions of the White Paper are not going to be enforced anyway after March 31, and a new statement of British policy is widely expected soon.

Nevertheless, it is a shame that an expression of American support for the Jewish people has been complicated by the dogmatic position of the many Zionists on the one hand, and the one-sided view of the Arab countries on the other.

But the fact is that the General Federation of Jewish Labor in Palestine itself is by no means united on

this issue—substantial minority of its executive, 21 out of 45, favor a bi-national state and some agreement with the Arab population.

The political affiliations of the Jewish trade unionists in Palestine are roughly as follows:

Members or sympathizers of the Palestine Labor Party (affiliated with the Second International)—65 per cent.

Members of the 65 Hatzair, a progressive socialist group most of whom live in communal farms—25 per cent.

Left-wing urban workers—10 per cent.

BEN GURION WEAKENED

Until recently the Labor Party, with its large majority, had no trouble in steamrolling all its policies through the Executive of the Histadruth.

Chief figure in the Labor Party is David ben Gurion, one of the top three or four men in the World Zionist movement, and chief proponent of the Jewish state in the official Zionist organization.

A few months ago, ben Gurion resigned as chairman of the Jewish Agency of Palestine because he considered the policies being carried out

in London by the president of the organization, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, too moderate.

These differences have been made up, however, according to Zionist spokesmen and ben Gurion was slated to leave for London shortly.

The close vote at the Histadruth Executive is a major blow to ben Gurion's leadership and will probably force him to delay his London trip. A special convention of the Palestine Labor Party has been called for next week at which ben Gurion will attempt to get a new mandate for his policies.

The vote signifies a revolt against ben Gurion by an important section of his own party—the Palestine Labor Party. These Laborites—who call themselves Group B as opposed to the majority Group A—have united with the "Hashomer Hatzair" and the small Left parties to oppose the Jewish State resolution.

The official program of the "Hashomer Hatzair" and the Left-wing groups has always a bi-national state of Jews and Arabs in Palestine. It is surmised that Group B of the Labor Party agrees with this program, which is the only just and equitable solution to the Palestine problem.