

Israeli Arabs Suffer From Land-Grab Law

In the June 15, 1953 issue, LABOR ACTION carried an article on the legalized robbery of the Israeli Arab's lands by an Act passed in the Knesset (parliament).

At that time, we reported that this action had been widely denounced by liberal opinion in Israel, despite the fact that not a single Jewish deputy voted against the law.

For the information of our readers, we carry below two items from the Israeli press. They give a graphic description of the actual plight of the Arab minority in that country.

Davar is the official organ of the Histadrut (labor organization); and Al-Hamishmar is the paper of the Hashomer Hatzair, a section of the Mapam party.—Ed.

The Robber Law

The land requisition law affecting agricultural property robs Israeli Arabs of about 500,000 dunam land. From the Arabs of Um-el Fachem, Teira and Kalonsva alone it takes about 200,000 dunam. [A dunam is one fourth of an acre.—Ed.]

You read this and perhaps won't get excited. If you really want to understand what it means, come to one of the villages and see with your own eyes. Peasants who from birth are accustomed to work on the land have been driven off. They look at their land but cannot expend their labor on it.

The people have been transformed into proletarians without work, completely dependent on the civilian rulers and military commanders. They need a pass to leave the military district in order to knock on the doors to ask for work. However, the military government has been reducing the numbers permitted to leave. Lately, only

er-Monopoly"

dent farmers, if successful, will soon spill over into the organization of the farm hands on the great corporation-owned farms.

"The Farm Bureau officials' fear that small farmers joining a labor union," he said in a statement issued July 30, "may well bring about the organization of the poorly paid and mistreated farm hands on the corporation farms is in my opinion, fully justified. This is demonstrated by the fact that organization of the strawberry farmers has already led to the formation of a union of 2,000 farm workers employed on the 90 large sugar cane plantations of Louisiana which hire skilled farm workers at wages of \$3 to \$4 a day. The Farm Bureau officials are determined to prevent the development of a new pattern of farm organization of the people who do the work on the land, whether they own a small farm or are wage hands."

Anti-trust enforcement, Mr. Brownell? It's just good old-fashioned union busting.

12 permits were given to the inhabitants of Kalonsva, whose population is 2,000. These landless peasants are mostly unemployed. The others work for extremely low wages in the districts or are forced to lease land on very bad terms. For example, one-third of the crop belongs to the peasant, one-third to the landowner, and one-third to the owner of the water well.

FACE MILITARY COURT

The recipients of exit permits are allowed to be out of the district for 13 days. They are not placed on jobs by the "Brith Paole Israel" [Arab section organized by the Jewish labor federation], but are only granted the privilege of going to town to seek work. If his "pass of freedom" is marked "Jaffa" and he finds no work there and has the nerve to look for a job in Tel Aviv the rules say that he must be returned to his native village to face a military court.

While the law has taken away the Arab's land, the military government, on the other hand, has restricted them so that they cannot go out to earn a living. How then are they to exist?

In Bakrach, Telav, Tira, Un-el Fachem and in other Arab villages, you are surrounded by Arabs deprived of their land, without employment, and hungry. On the one hand you see orphans, on the other Arab fathers looking for their children, all separated from the rest of the country and under the tender mercies of military rulers and governmental "experts." All over, they cry out "you promised an independent country with equality and justice. You said drive out the imperialists. The British imperialists never did anything like this. You said it was possible to realize the goals of Zionism and to preserve the rights of the native Arabs."

When you see this you know how the Arab minority lives in misery, how the rights of a section of the citizens of Israel are being denied them.

Not only that, you will understand how to transform the Israeli Arabs into sworn enemies of the country.

GIDEON GILADI in the Al-Hamishmar of June 16, 1953

"No End to Suffering"

Dear Editor:

The director of food distribution, A. Halevi, in a letter to the tribe of Dolles dated May 12, said that the distribution of food for all the tribes in the Negev has been arranged.

However, as a matter of fact, we have not received one grain and are literally hungry for a piece of bread. The military commander sends us to "Hamashbir" and they in turn send us back to the commander and back and forth again, and there is no end to our suffering.

Since June, 1952, the government has not allocated any flour to us on the theory that we should live on the local produce. But their estimate of local produce was wide of the mark and the last crop has long ago been consumed. Out of 18 tribes, only 5 have received any allotment of flour and they only received five kilograms per person.

Thirteen tribes—and we amongst them—have not received anything for a long time. In the month of Ramadan when we were usually given added rations, we have been forced to end our fast with water alone.

Beer-Sheba

Sheik Hamed-abu Rabia
Sheik Ali-abu Grint Dolles
Sheik G'Avat abu Sirham
Sheik Arad abu Regez
Sheik Monsur Mohamed-Zimaae

Davar—June 1, 1953