"We Saw Israel:"
American and Israeli Workers in the Middle East and Africa, 1948-1968

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
(History)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
2017

Date of final oral examination: 09/07/2016

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Abstract

"We Saw Israel": American and Israeli Workers in the Middle East and Africa, 1948-68" examines how a broad array of state and non-state actors in the U.S. and around the globe came to believe that Israel presented a model for state-building and labor organization. Within a decade of its independence, Israel and its labor federation, the Histadrut, captured the attention and admiration of trade unions and socialist leaders in Western Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the U.S. Based on archival research in English and Hebrew, in the U.S. and Israel, *"We Saw Israel"* is the story of this model's pervasiveness, how it circulated, and the ways it shaped not only U.S.-Israeli relations, but also much of the Afro-Asian world.

Non-state actors stand at the center of this story. U.S. labor unions played a crucial role in spreading "the good news" of Israel's labor and development models within trade union and government circles. U.S. trade unionists argued that Israel was a "bastion of democracy" – a model worth supporting and exporting – first in the Middle East and then in the rest of the Third World. They helped convince a skeptical U.S. government that Israel was an asset rather than a liability in fighting the Cold War and securing Western interests in the Middle East.

"We Saw Israel" is also a transnational story. To many African labor and political leaders, Israel's development model promised a rapid "third way" approach to state-building and labor organization; it was attached neither to capitalism nor to communism. The Israeli development model's African adherents believed it was more applicable to their societies than Western models. They believed it had "made the dessert bloom" and wondered how much more such a model could accomplish in the more fertile areas of sub-Saharan Africa. *"We Saw Israel"* analyzes the rise and subsequent decline of this model and its influence, as well as its continuing

legacies in U.S.-Israeli relations, international history, and ideas about development and state-building.

Acknowledgements

The list of people, organizations, and institutions to whom I owe thanks is long and ever-growing. Brenda Gayle Plummer has been an outstanding advisor. This project is in large part thanks to her continued urging that I table my Master's Thesis, at least for a time, and keep an open mind for a new topic. As this project developed and found its legs, Dr. Plummer has been one of its most insightful readers and encouraging supporters. In addition to a great advisor, the UW History Department has provided me with a vibrant community of scholars and colleagues who continually challenged me, offered encouragement, and sharpened my work. Other mentors who bear mentioning include: Tony Michels, William Jones, Nan Enstad, Sean Dinces, Giuliana Chamedes, and John Hall. They too offered insightful comments and questions, and pushed me in significant ways to sharpen and expand this story.

I would be remiss if I discussed mentors and advisors without mentioning Carol Anderson. I first met Dr. Anderson as a University of Missouri undergraduate, in search of direction and a major. She immediately took me under her wing, and has been my mentor ever since. Her energy, enthusiasm, generosity, and loyalty are inspiring. I hope that one day a young historian can say half the good things about me that I could describe of her.

I have been especially fortunate to be part of two great graduate student cohorts—first as an M.A. student at the University of Missouri and then as a PhD student at UW. At MU, William Mountz and Kristin Henze served as my original academic siblings. Their examples and Will's continued and timely advice have played a vital role in my growth as a scholar. At UW, the "Coalition of the Writing" deserves special recognition. Brad Baranowski, Dan Hummel, Greg Jones-Katz, Nick Strohl, and Kevin Walters have not only been great friends but read this dissertation almost in its entirely, if not multiple times. Other UW colleagues have offered

valuable intellectual support and community at various times: Simon Balto, Athan Biss, and Rivka Maizlich.

I want to thank the George L. Mosse Program for generously supporting much of my project. The Mosse program enabled me to live in Israel for a year, conduct research, and begin writing this dissertation. During my time in Israel, I was fortunate to meet several scholars and friends who made life in Jerusalem an unforgettable experience: Jennifer and Ofer Ashkenazi, Saleh Abdeen, Marty and Angela Zimmann, Jonathan Wiley, and John Tortorice. Thanks to Michael Pfann for translating much of the archival material I gathered while in Israel. I would also like to thank the UW's Center for Jewish Studies, the UW Graduate School, and the UW History Department for funding various aspects of this project.

Many of the scholars who appear in this project's footnotes have played much larger roles in its formulation through various academic conferences, campus visits, phone calls and email correspondences. I want to thank Dana Frank, Peter Hahn, Dan Katz, Michelle Mart, Yevette Richards, and John Stoner for comments and critiques that enriched this project. I owe special thanks to Zach Levey. Zach's work on Israel and Africa served as one of this project's initial inspirations. He read various portions of this project and their iterations in conference papers, and Zach has served as an invaluable resource on Israeli foreign policy history.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their sustaining love, support, and encouragement throughout this journey. My parents' lifetime of hard work and support has made my path possible. Their pride is one of my truest rewards. My greatest thanks, however, are owed to my wife, Libby. Her support has been unwavering. For my career and intellectual aspirations, she was willing to pick up and move to Madison, WI. And then to Jerusalem. Yet she has never complained and instead made our journeys a pleasure. I am incredibly lucky to

have her as my partner. Most recently, we have welcomed our daughter into the world. Her

curiosity about the world around her is inspiring, and she has brought more joy to our lives than

we ever could have imagined. To our little family, Libby and Aliza, I dedicate this project.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AALC	African American Labor Center
AAPC	All-African People's Conference
AATUF	All-African Trade Union Federation (Africa)
AFL	American Federation of Labor (U.S.)
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (U.S.)
AFRO	African Regional Organization, ICFTU (Africa)
ASC	Asian Socialist Conference
ATUC	American Trade Union Council for the Histadrut (U.S.)
AWCA	Amalgamated Clothing Workers Association (U.S.)
BLP	British Labor Party
BTUC	British Trade Union Congress
CGTA	General Confederation of African Workers (West Africa)
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations (U.S.)
FTUC	Free Trade Union Committee (U.S.)
GTUC	Ghana Trades Union Congress (Gold Coast/Ghana)
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILGWU	International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (U.S.)
IBT	International Brotherhood of Teamsters (U.S.)
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KFL	Kenya Federation of Labor
KTUC	Kenya Trade Union Congress
MASHAV	Agency for International Development Cooperation (Israel)
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NALC	Negro American Labor Council
NCLI	National Committee for Labor-Israel (U.S.)
NCLP	National Committee for Labor-Palestine (U.S.)
NTUC	Nigerian Trade Union Congress
NUTA	National Union of Tanganyikan Workers
PLL	Palestinian Labor League
SI	Socialist International
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TFL	Tanganyika Federation of Labor
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
UAR	United Arab Republic
UAW	United Autoworkers of America (U.S.)
UGTAN	General Union of Negro African Workers (West Africa)
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
UTUC	Uganda Trade Union Congress
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

Introduction: "We Saw Israel"

In the fall of 1954, three high-level American Federation of Labor (AFL) leaders embarked on a "life-seeing" trip to the Middle East.[1] The International Brotherhood of Teamsters' vice president William Griffin, the Ohio State Federation of Labor's secretary-treasurer Phil Hannah, and P.L. Siemiller, vice president of the International Association of Machinists, traveled to Israel as part of a seven-man, combined delegation with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). It was a whirlwind journey. The three AFL officials "saw the Israeli people at work, at play, and sick in hospitals." They met with top Israeli government and labor officials, including Prime Minister Moshe Sharrett, Foreign Minister Golda Meir, and the General Secretary of the Israeli labor federation (the Histadrut), Mordechai Namir. They toured automobile and refrigerator plants, inspected irrigation projects and dams, and met with "rank-and-file" Jewish Israeli and Arab workers alike. Although these AFL labor leaders did not want to suggest that Israel was "a utopia," they reported home to their unions' millions of members that "a rich, new civilization was being built on the sands of the Middle East."

In their subsequent report, "We Saw Israel," the AFL delegates claimed that their visit "gave us a glimpse of the great future that may be in store" for a broad range of issues: international labor organization, modernization for "underdevelopment areas" around the globe, and U.S.-Israeli labor relations.[2] For instance, they were impressed by the Histadrut's size, scope, and democratic nature. It not only engaged in the "more traditional trade union activities" like collective bargaining for wages and working conditions, but also provided "more fringe benefits than is common in the U.S. [trade union movement]," like healthcare, unemployment

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[1] "We Saw Israel: A Report of a Visit by American Trade Unionists," AFL, 1954, Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives (hereafter, KCA), Record Group (RG) 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel.
[2] Ibid.

compensation, social security, and job training. The Histadrut also drove much of the Israeli state's economy and development, through its building and contracting firm (*Solel Boneh*), its workers' banking system (*Bank Hapoalim*), its consumers' and producers' co-operatives (*Hamashbir*), and its international shipping line (*Zim*). "For the first time in our experience, we came in contact with a labor organization which had been a primary force in building a country," the AFL delegates wrote. They hoped it was a sign of things to come.

Israel's AFL visitors believed the Histadrut was worthy of not only support but also export to other newly independent and developing nations. Thanks to its democratic system and vibrant labor movement, Israel's nation-building and modernization model appeared to be progressing at "a tremendous pace." Some Afro-Asian states already saw promise in this model. The Burmese government, AFL delegates noted, had already sent "several missions" to Israel to study the Histadrut as well as Israel's government and military organization. AFL delegates believed visitors from Asia, Africa, and other parts of the non-Western world would find in Israel "modern cities and rugged pioneering country," "old traditions and 20th century progress," and a physical and proverbial bridge between the developed and underdeveloped world.

The delegates' visit and report gives historians a glimpse of the direction in which U.S.-Israeli labor relations had been traveling, and, ultimately, previewed the future of U.S.-Israeli state relations. The 1954 AFL delegation followed in the footsteps of several major U.S. trade union exchanges with the Histadrut, including CIO junkets in 1949 and 1953. Although the erstwhile rival unions had not agreed on much during the 1940s and 1950s, Israeli labor provided the AFL and CIO one rare area for agreement and cooperation. Like their AFL counterparts, CIO delegations saw Israel and the Histadrut as "bastions of democracy in the Middle East."[3] They

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[3] *Swords into Plowshares: 1953 Report on Israel*, CIO, 1953, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel; *Report on Israel*, CIO, April 1949, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel.

too spoke of the "vigor, intelligence, and democratic spirit" in both Israeli labor and government. And U.S. trade unionists across the political spectrum believed Washington's relations with Israel and U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East failed to sufficiently value Israel's worth.

Together, these two erstwhile rivals within the U.S. labor movement worked to translate their fraternal ties with Israeli labor into a state-to-state "special relationship." U.S. trade unions during the 1940s-1960s experienced an intimate relationship with Israeli labor that starkly contrasted with the ambivalent, even cool relations between their governments. The 1954 AFL delegation's report, "We Saw Israel," expressed concern for this bilateral divergence and concluded with the urgent appeal that U.S. trade unionists exert their domestic influence on Israel and the Histadrut's behalf. "We are not foreign policy experts," they wrote, "but what we saw of Israel and its problems convinced us that American policy in the Middle East should be at least as concerned with the development of democratic institutions…as it is with the rich oil resources of this whole area." Inspired by what they "saw" firsthand or heard through their trade union brothers and sisters, U.S. labor leaders such as the AFL's Griffin, Hannah, and Siemiller began an ambitious mission: they endeavored to support the Histadrut and assist Israel's development, export its labor development model throughout the Third World, and change the very nature of U.S.-Israeli relations.

"We Saw Israel": American and Israeli Workers in the Middle East and Africa, 1948-1968, is the story of this U.S.-Israeli labor partnership and the labor development model they partnered to create, consolidate, and export. It examines this "special relationship's" origins, pervasiveness, and surrounding rhetoric and imagery. *"We Saw Israel,"* named after the AFL's landmark 1954 report, traces how U.S.-Israeli labor allies circulated their shared model and the

ways in which it affected Israel's development, Afro-Asian politics and labor, and, ultimately, U.S.-Israeli state relations.

Non-state actors, particularly U.S. and Israeli trade unionists, stand at the center of this story. From the 1930s to 1960s, hundreds of American trade unionists toured Palestine (and then Israel) and were impressed by its state-building project and labor federation.[4] They returned home from pilgrimages to Israel determined to serve as "goodwill ambassadors" not only within their own labor movements, but also within the American political system.[5] Leaders from several of the U.S.'s largest and most influential labor federations and unions—the AFL, CIO, the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), and United Autoworkers (UAW)— raised and contributed tens of millions of dollars to Histadrut projects in Israel and the Afro-Asian world. They consistently lobbied on behalf of the Israeli government and labor and, eventually, they helped convince a skeptical U.S. government that Israel was an asset rather than a liability in fighting the Cold War and securing Western interests in the Middle East.[6] Long before President John F. Kennedy announced the "Decade of Development" and spoke of a U.S.-Israeli "special relationship," American trade unions and their Israeli counterparts were engaged in both.

"We Saw Israel" is also a transnational story. Like the subjects and ideas it examines, this project takes a "transnational turn" to examine a broad array of actors' participation in this global nexus.[7] Israel's model appealed to state and non-state admirers and emulators in the U.S.,

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[4] *Report on Israel*, CIO, April 1949.

[5] Ibid.

[6] *Ten Years of Progress: A Report on Israel*, AFL-CIO, September 1958, George Mean Memorial AFL-CIO Archive, University of Maryland (hereafter, GMA), RG 18-001, Country Files: Israel—Including Histadrut, Box 10, Folder 10.

[7] Historians have described the "transnational turn" as a 21st century development in which scholars abandon the assumption that the nation is the basic unit of analysis. Instead, transnational histories follow the movement or reach of peoples, ideas, and/or things across national or other defined borders. Transnational studies also involve empirical research in more than one nation's archives and often include research in non-governmental documents and

the Socialist International, the Asian Socialist Conference (ASC), the International

Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU), and various political and labor movements in the Afro-

Asian world, to name a few. For its Western adherents, it proved the benefits of labor, capital,

and state cooperation. In Israel, labor partnered with the state and private capitalists to build

infrastructure, educational systems, and welfare organizations. The Histadrut was a "free trade

union," democratic in its structure and functioning and free from state control. From the

American and Western European perspective, Israel's model presented a way to bridge the

developmental gap between the Third World and the West and prevent the spread of

communism.

     Israel's labor-development model appealed particularly to political parties and labor

movements in Africa. African political leaders and trade unionists believed Israel's development

model was more applicable to their societies than U.S. or European models, and they believed it

already had proved its utility, "making the desert bloom." How much more could such a model

accomplish, they wondered, in the more fertile areas of sub-Saharan Africa? Many African labor

leaders and politicians in nations such as Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania eagerly embraced

this vision and became self-proclaimed "goodwill ambassadors" for Israel and the Histadrut. By

the late 1950s and 1960s, hundreds of political and labor leaders had traveled to Israel, not only

from the U.S. but also from around the globe.

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collections. It is my intention to present *"We Saw Israel"* as both an international and transnational study, de-centering but not dismissing the state. Instead, I offer an examination of state and non-state actors along parallel and sometimes overlapping planes. Examples of historiographic debates and discussions on the "transnational turn" include: Ian Tyrell, "Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice, *Journal of Global History* 4 (3), November 2009, 453-474; Brenda Gayle Plummer, "The Changing Face of Diplomatic History: A Literature Review," *The History Teacher* 38 (3), May 2005, 385-400; Leon Fink, ed., *Workers Across the Americas: the Transnational Turn in Labor History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Akira Iriye, "The Transnational Turn," *Diplomatic History* 31 (1), January 2007, 373-375; Mae Ngai, "Promises and Perils of Transnational History," *Perspectives on History*, December 2012.

While *"We Saw Israel"* traces the ascendance of U.S. and Israeli labor's special relationship and the development model they promoted, it also demonstrates each phenomenon's decline. As U.S. and Israeli trade unions laid foundations for their nations' bilateral relations and partnered to export a labor-development model to Africa, they inadvertently planted seeds for their own demise. The ways in which they prioritized economic growth and nation-building and enlisted labor unions in these causes granted primacy to the nation-state rather than workers' organizations. The model they promoted in Africa supported changes in labor and politics that ultimately facilitated labor's decline from power and influence and the state's ascendance. And finally, by inviting their governments into labor's international initiatives, or simply becoming more reliant on state resources, U.S. and Israeli labor encouraged their states to take over. Once at the forefront of U.S.-Israeli relations and Western influence in Africa, U.S. and Israeli trade unions were eclipsed by the states in both arenas by the late 1960s.

Still another shared undercurrent ultimately weakened labor's "special relationship" and led to states' ascendance. There were limits to U.S. and Israeli labor unions' ideological inclusivity and solidarity. For example, from its origins the Histadrut was riddled with contradictions between rhetoric and practices, particularly toward *Mizrahim* and Palestinian workers.[8] Mizrahim largely were funneled into low-paying, manual labor and industrial jobs and transported to factory towns on the fringes of Israeli society. Over time, a generation of Mizrahi workers saw the Histadrut less as an organization fighting for workers' interests and more as an institution that protected *Ashkenazi* power and privilege.[9] Most Palestinian workers viewed the Histadrut even less favorably. In the eyes of many Palestinians, it was always the "General Confederation of *Hebrew* Labor" (the organization's original name). The Histadrut's initial

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[8] I use the term *Mizrahim* to refer to Jewish Israelis of Middle Eastern or North African descent.
[9] I use the term *Ashkenazim* to refer to Jewish Israelis of European descent.

purpose was to build a *Jewish* state in Palestine. Palestinian workers never felt fully accepted or represented by the Histadrut, and for good reason; they were not allowed to become full members of the labor federation until 1959.

American trade unions were plagued by their own racial and ethnic divides. The history of racism in the U.S. labor movement is long and well-documented.[10] During the 1940s-1960s, however, a troubling gap emerged between the rhetoric and reality of Israel's closest U.S. labor allies, including the UAW and ILGWU. On one hand, they celebrated Israel's labor-liberal, progressive values and advocated anti-colonialism and democratic development for Africa. They championed civil rights and racial equality at home. On the other hand, they were increasingly, and justly, accused of institutional discrimination. By the 1960s, trade unions on the U.S. side of the "special relationship" were criticized from without and torn from within by racism among some of their rank-and-file members.

These limits to U.S. and Israeli labor unions' solidarity were inherently intertwined with their embrace and promotion of modernization and development ideology. Seeing Israel as an "oasis" of trade union activity, democracy, and development necessitated a foil. Modernization required replacing that which was deemed "backwards" or "traditional." U.S. and Israeli labor partnered in "developing" Israel, but, during the late 1940s and 1950s, they also participated in the displacement of communities, cultures, and practices that did not fit their prescribed model. As Dipesh Chakrabarty has aptly written, emphasizing development as a "catching-up-with"

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[10] Examples of scholarly works on this topic include: Judson Jeffries, ed., *Black Power: In the Belly of the Beast* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Eric Arnesen, ed., *The Black Worker: Race, Labor, and Civil Rights Since Emancipation* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Paul Moreno, *Black Americans and Organized Labor: A New History* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006); Herbert Hill, "The Problem of Race in American Labor History," *Reviews in American History* 24 (2), 1996; William Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Ronald Kent, et al, *Culture, Gender, Race, and U.S. Labor History* (New York: Praeger, 1993); David Roediger, "Labor in White Skin: Race and Working-Class History," in Roediger's *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History* (New York: Verso, 1994).

process "produced a particular split that marked both the relationship between elite nations and their subaltern counterparts as well as that between elites and subalterns within national boundaries."[11] The divides created by development ideology and labor solidarity's limits would eventually come home to roost.

By the late 1960s, a number of factors combined to dislodge U.S. and Israeli labor's "special relationship" from bilateral primacy and from the forefront of their nations' Africa relations. In addition to labor's inner turmoil and external criticisms, development ideology became discredited and distrusted. In Africa, promoting the Israeli labor model as an engine for state-building and development contributed unintended consequences. Governments could justify restricting labor's autonomy and subsuming it under state control by appealing to political stability and economic growth.

Additionally, even those African nations that most diligently emulated Israel's labor-development model were at an inherent, perhaps insurmountable set of disadvantages if they were to follow Israel's path. The state of Israel came into being with a population that was much more educated and technically and professionally skilled than that of any African nation. Through foreign aid, investment, and private fundraising campaigns, Israel was able to obtain financial, material, and human resources no African nation could ever realistically acquire. The development model so many African political leaders and trade unionists thought most suitable for their specific circumstances was not reproducible. Things seemed to fall apart almost as quickly as the trade unions had come together. By the end of the "Decade of Development," labor unions in the U.S., Israel, and Africa were on the decline. Well before the 1970s, including

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[11] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture," in Christopher Lee, ed., *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 53.

the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the subsequent Arab oil embargo, Israel's image as a pioneering, "Innovation Nation"— a reputation that U.S. labor unions helped to build—entered a period of recess and reformulation.

Despite these disillusioning trends, U.S. and Israeli labor allies took solace in having accomplished one of their primary missions; they were able to witness the "bond between wage earners" translate into the state-centered, bilateral relationship that has lasted for decades since. Although trade unions did not unilaterally usher in this state-to-state relationship, they did serve as a midwife. They built many of the foundations upon which state-to-state ties later came to fruition. They helped create and popularize ideas and images of Israel and Israeli labor that framed the ways in which the American public, academics, writers, and politicians saw Israel. They lobbied tirelessly for U.S. political, economic, and military aid to Israel in the Middle East and beyond. They even helped to physically build many of the things in Israel that non-labor visitors—citizens and government official alike—observed, admired, supported, and even sought to emulate.

Historiography and Scholarly Interventions

By tracing the rise and decline of U.S.-Israeli labor relations and the model they cultivated, supported, and exported, *"We Saw Israel"* alters current historical narratives of the so-called "special relationship" between the U.S. and Israel. The depth, breadth, and fervency of American-Israeli labor ties starkly contrasted with their governments' relations during this period. State relations during the 1940s and 1950s, and even the early 1960s, were cordial, if not periodically chilly. The U.S. government nearly opposed Palestine's partition and the creation of Israel. Even after supporting Israel's statehood, the Truman administration refused to sell Israel arms or grant the state the security guarantees it so desired. President Dwight Eisenhower went

even further. After Israel's invasion of the Sinai Peninsula in 1956, the president refused to communicate with Israeli officials and threatened international sanctions. It was not until 1964 that the White House invited an Israeli Prime Minister for an official visit.

Although *"We Saw Israel"* focuses particularly on labor's role in cultivating U.S.-Israeli state relations, it does not offer their partnership as a mono-causal argument. American labor unions were not the only element of U.S. society and politics that was closer to Israel than the White House. The Democratic party's liberal wing, liberal magazines and political commentators, various Christian denominations and organizations, and the Jewish American community were all strong supporters of Israel. However, from the 1940s to mid-1960s, the U.S. labor movement was peerless in its combination of size, influence, resources, and devotion to Israel and Israeli labor. Labor unions such as the UAW, the ILGWU, and the AFL-CIO had significant financial and political resources to offer Israel and the Histadrut. They were also highly active and well-organized to exert international influence. These unions established their own international or foreign affairs departments for such a purpose. And if Israeli society, politics, and its economy were initially dominated by its Labor Party (Mapai) and labor federation (the Histadrut), who better to serve as their primary U.S. emissaries and allies than American trade unions? In order to understand the evolution of U.S.-Israeli relations, scholars must pay close attention to labor and incorporate primary materials from additional non-state actors and archives, such as those of the AFL-CIO, the ILGWU, and the Histadrut.

By focusing on labor unions, this project demonstrates diplomatic historians' obligation to continue broadening their conceptions of "foreign relations." Historians must continue to heed suggestions like those from Kristin Hoganson, Brenda Gayle Plummer and Jessica C.E. Gienow-

Hecht, who have argued that power and foreign relations operate "in multiple registers."[12]
Influential ideas circulate and activities occur "outside the state framework."[13] In this story's
case, labor unions served as transnational vehicles through which ideas about development, state-
building, and U.S.-Israeli relations traversed. Focusing too narrowly on state actors and state-to-
state relations obscures the ways in which ideas and influence travel in and from multiple
directions.

"We Saw Israel" also offers new avenues for examining the history of development
ideology, decolonization and state-building. Largely absent from extant scholarship are analyses
of organized labor's role in formulating and disseminating ideas about development and state-
building. Many of these works also continue to perpetuate the narrative of a strictly bipolar Cold
War competition between American and Soviet development models.[14] They often argue that
while different "developing" states may have crafted their own syntheses, utilizing the best from

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[12] Hoganson quoted in Brenda Gayle Plummer's *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956-1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012),12; Gienow-Hecht, "What Bandwagon? Diplomatic History Today," *Journal of American History* 95 (4), 2009, 1083-1086; Other examples include: Lauren Frances Turek, "To Support a 'Brother in Christ': Evangelical Groups and U.S. Guatemalan Relations during the Rios Montt Regime," *Diplomatic History* 39 (4), 2015, 689-719; Michael J. Hogan, "The 'Next Big Thing:' The Future of Diplomatic History in a Global Age," *Diplomatic History* 28 (1), 2004, 1-21.
[13] Plummer, *In Search of Power,* 13.
[14] Examples include: David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); David Engerman, "The Romance of Economic Development and New Histories of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 28 (1), January 2004, 23-54; Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark Haefele, and Michael Latham, eds., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation-Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009). There are a few exceptions to these trends, as well. Examples include: Daniel Maul, *Human Rights, Development and Decolonization: The International Labour Organization, 1940-1970* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Nicole Sackley, "Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 37 (4), Spring 2013, 749-778; G. Thomas Burgess, "Mao in Zanzibar: Nationalism, Discipline, and the (De)Construction of Afro-Asian Solidarities," in *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*. Sackley argues that development projects in India "were meeting points of many actors and multiple ambitions (749) and situates the story of Etawah "into a larger global history of modernization (751). Sackely and Burgess both argue, as does *"We Saw Israel,"* that ideas and models for development "moved around the world…from India and China to the Middle East and the Caribbean" (751).

the West and the East, they were still only pulling from two dichotomous options. *"We Saw Israel"* demonstrates the existence of alternative options, such as Israel's labor-development model. Israeli, American, and African workers and politicians participated in promoting, supporting, and emulating this alternative. Israelis believed there existed at least one "third way" approach to development and nation-building, and their U.S. and African allies agreed.

Finally, "*We Saw Israel*" is an important departure from existing studies of labor and international relations post-World War II. U.S. labor historians studying the phenomenon of "labor diplomacy" have focused particularly on postwar Europe and Latin America from the 1940s to 1960s.[15] The dominant narrative argues that because U.S. unions received substantial funding from various government sources and were "cold warriors," their role as independent union representatives was compromised. These works argue that a small group of labor elites served government and business interests instead of the desires and interests of workers.[16]

This project offers an alternate narrative. In the case of "labor diplomacy" between the U.S. and Israel, American workers were not trying to influence foreign labor movements and

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[15] When using the phrase "labor diplomacy," I am specifically gesturing to an article by Hugh Wilford, in which he examined the relationship between the U.S. government and American trade unions in postwar Europe [Wilford, "American Labour Diplomacy and Cold War Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 37 (1), January 2002, 45-65].

[16] Examples include, but are not limited to: Paul Buhle, *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland, and the Tragedy of American Unionism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999); Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1969); Kim Scipes, *AFL-CIO's Secret War against Developing Country Workers: Solidarity or Sabotage* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010); Beth Sims, *Workers of the World Undermined: American Labor's Role in US Foreign Policy* (Boston: South End Press, 1992). There are a few recent exceptions to this rule, which argue that U.S. labor leaders were launching their own "cold war" within international labor prior to a similar U.S. foreign policy. Examples of this include Wilford's "American Labour Diplomacy and Cold War Britain," and Ted Morgan's *A Covert Life: Jay Lovestone, Communist, Anti-Communist, and Spymaster* (New York: Random House, 1999). Additionally, a few recent works focus on unions other than the AFL-CIO or on smaller units and individual unionists who tried to exercise a foreign policy more nuanced than or outside of the cold war dichotomy. See works such as: Yevette Richards, *Maida Springer: Pan-Africanist and International Labor Leader* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004); Michael J. Murphy, "Developing Communities: The UAW and Community Unions in Los Angeles, 1965-1974," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 6, Winter 2009; Branden Kirk Williams, "Labor's Cold War Missionaries: IFPCW's Transnational Missions for the Third World's Petroleum and Chemical Workers, 1954-1975," *Labor* 7 (4), December 2010.

governments. As detailed particularly in Chapter 2, they were instead trying to capitalize on their political clout and alter policy *within* the U.S. In the context of U.S. and Israeli labor's engagement with Africa, this project challenges another scholarly portrayal of U.S. labor foreign policy.[17] Works by Paul Buhle, Beth Sims, Kim Scipes and others have argued that U.S. trade unions partnered with the State Department and CIA, undermined workers' movements, and supported neocolonialism and U.S. Cold War imperatives across the developing world. While this was the case in some contexts, this project demonstrates that U.S. and Israeli trade unionists also made significant efforts to champion Africans' anti-colonialist struggles and support their attempts at state-building and development. *"We Saw Israel"* therefore challenges labor and international relations scholars to rethink the ways they have portrayed the history of the Cold War and international trade unions.

Clarifying Terms and Categories

In this project I use the terms "development" and "modernization" somewhat loosely. I believe this reflects the ways in which the terms became shorthand for a number of corresponding ideas and images. Rather than referring to modernization and ideology as specific fields of study and academic theory, I employ the terms more along the lines in which scholars such as Michael Latham have recently used them. Modernization, Latham argues, did not always function in ways that reflected the intentions of specific theorists and policymakers. Instead, it

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[17] Zach Levey is perhaps the most prolific writer on Israel's relations with Africa. His primary focus, however, is state-to-state relations, mainly utilizing documents from Israeli and U.S. government archives. While Levey discusses Israel's technical and civilian aid to Africa, his works do not specifically engage the relationship between Israeli and African trade union movements or the partnership between American and Israeli labor. Levey's works on Israel and Africa include: *Israel in Africa, 1956-1976* (Leiden, Netherlands: Martinus Nifhoff Publishers, 2012); "Israel's Entry to Africa, 1956-61," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 12 (3), September 2001, 87-114; "Israel's Involvement in the Congo, 1958-1968: Civilian and Military Dimensions*." Civil Wars* 6 (4), Winter 2003: 14-36; "Israel's Strategy in Africa, 1961-67," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, 2004, 71-87; "The Rise and Decline of a Special Relationship: Israel and Ghana, 1957-1966," *African Studies Review* 46 (1), April 2003, 155-177.

became an ideology, a worldview.[18] Here, I borrow from Michael Hunt's definition of "ideology."[19] In the minds of Israeli and U.S. labor leaders and trade unionists, modernization and development offered "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality." With this in mind, *"We Saw Israel"* employs the terms modernization and development as an ideology or particular way of thinking, often shared by U.S. and Israeli labor and political leaders, as well as some of their African counterparts. Modernization and development ideology was one of the pillars upon which U.S. and Israeli labor's "special relationship" was built, and it was at the core of the labor-development model they endeavored to share with the Middle East and Afro-Asian world.

 "We Saw Israel" also uses the terms "U.S. labor" and "American labor" as shorthand for the particular trade union leaders and movements most active in this transnational labor network. Virtually every major U.S. trade union supported Israel and the Histadrut, though some were more active and generous in their support than others. As outlined in Chapter 1, the initial core of Israeli labor's U.S. allies came from predominantly Jewish American unions in Northeastern urban centers such as New York and Philadelphia. The ILGWU and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA) were the most active participants in this early partnership, and they worked alongside the labor-based organizations, the American Trade Union Council for the Histadrut (ATUC) and National Committee for Labor-Palestine (NCLP). By the mid-1950s, however, Israeli labor's U.S. allies spread well beyond these initial organizations and constituencies, reaching the highest leadership levels as well as the grassroots rank-and-file of the U.S.'s largest trade unions—the AFL-CIO, the UAW, the United Steelworkers (USW), and

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[18] Latham, *Modernization as Ideology,* 4.
[19] Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), xi.

even the more conservative International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), among others. Those trade unions most active in and organized for international relations—such as the ILGWU and UAW, whose heads formed the AFL-CIO's central leadership—were also the core participants in U.S. labor's relations with Israel and the Histadrut. Most often, when I discuss "U.S. labor" or "American labor," I am referring to these unions.

Organization of the Dissertation

"We Saw Israel" is conceptualized in three parts. Part I examines the foundations and originators of U.S. and Israeli labor's "special relationship." It demonstrates some of the initial ways in which this partnership influenced ideas, events, and politics in both the U.S. and the Middle East. Chapter 1, "'Pioneers' in the 'Feudal Near East': Ideology, Modernization, and Early U.S.-Israeli Labor Relations," traces the growth of U.S.-Israeli labor relations from the 1920s to the late 1940s. It reconstructs and examines three ideological pillars that formed in these early years of contact and brought the two movements into a close-knit alliance: liberal labor values, modernization and development ideology, and colonial-settler frontier imagery. It begins in the 1920s, with the creation of the General Confederation of Hebrew Labor (the Histadrut), then examines the first connections between Jewish workers in Palestine and their early, small core of American supporters. The chapter concludes by illustrating some of the ways these early labor allies influenced U.S. foreign policy as well as conditions in Palestine for both Jewish workers and Palestine's Arab population.

Chapter 2, "American Labor Ambassadors and the 'Workshop of the Eastern Mediterranean,'" demonstrates the ways in which U.S. labor's admiration of and support for the Histadrut and Israel spread well beyond its initial core. It expanded to a broad base of labor leaders and workers who varied in terms of geography, political ideology, religious beliefs, and

trades. Israel and the Histadrut's widespread appeal was shaped by the contexts of the nascent Cold War and the rise of modernization and development ideology. Beginning in the late 1940s, dozens of U.S. trade unionists toured Israel or learned about it from those who did. Many became inspired to serve as "goodwill ambassadors," carrying "the good news" to their fellow trade unionists. As admiration and support of the Histadrut spread to all corners of American labor, these allies flexed their financial and political muscles. This chapter demonstrates the influence these U.S. labor leaders and trade unionists continued to bear on the U.S. government and development in the Middle East.

After the first two chapters, the story transitions to Part II. In the late 1950s, U.S. and Israeli labor leaders shifted their focus from the U.S. and Middle East to the international arena and the Afro-Asian world. The chapters comprising Part II explore the ways in which U.S.-Israeli labor allies took their partnership and the labor-development model they championed from bilateral to transnational affairs. These chapters also reveal how national governments began to more actively participate in and utilize the projects and partnerships that labor built.

During the mid-1950s, the state of Israel experienced a period of frigid relations with its Afro-Asian counterparts, culminating in Israel being uninvited to the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung. After invading the Sinai Peninsula in 1956, Israel's relations with the Eisenhower administration quickly deteriorated as well. By late 1956, Israeli leaders—both government and Histadrut officials—realized that traditional, state-based diplomatic channels were failing them globally. Chapter 3, "Beyond the Middle East," demonstrates how Israel utilized its labor-development model and labor federation to create an alternative, non-government avenue for cultivating bilateral relations. It also reveals the complicated relationship between state and labor as Israel and the Histadrut endeavored to make inroads in the Afro-Asian

bloc. Chapter 3 illustrates how this "all-hands-on-deck" approach operated on the ground in Africa, and how it opened unprecedented doors for Israeli relations with the Afro-Asian world. The chapter closes by highlighting some of the challenges latent in or quickly arising from Israel's alternative diplomacy in Africa. In particular, Israel ran up against budgetary constraints and the political minefield that African labor and politics sometimes presented. On both issues, they once again turned to their foremost allies and supporters, U.S. labor unions. By the late 1950s, the "special relationship" was moving to Africa.

In Chapter 4, "The 'Special Relationship' at Work in Africa," I examine U.S. labor's entry into Africa—the ideas, interests, and missions they brought to the continent from 1957-61. Driven by a combination of anti-colonialism and anti-communism, U.S. trade unionists were determined to bring democracy, development, and strong "free trade unions" to the region. As U.S. labor's "Africanists" tried to carry out their mission, they became highly disillusioned with the foot-dragging and half-hearted efforts of their European counterparts and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). A combination of shared ideals and frustrating circumstances brought U.S. and Israeli labor together once again, this time in Africa. Chapter 5 closes by detailing the ways in which the "special relationship" began to take place in this new setting. The culmination was U.S. labor's sponsorship of the Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute in 1960-61, which became a mecca for emerging leaders across Africa and put Israel on the map as an exemplar for labor organization and state-building in the Afro-Asian world. By 1961, it appeared possible that U.S. and Israeli labor's partnership, previously a Middle Eastern affair, could become a global phenomenon.

The final two chapters comprise Part III of *"We Saw Israel."* They trace the declining influence of U.S. and Israeli labor's partnership, in Africa, the U.S., and Israel. They also

demonstrate the ways in which states ascended to take on labor's mantle in African politics and society, in Israel's domestic affairs, and in U.S.-Israeli bilateral relations.

Chapter 5, "On a Razor's Edge," reads much like its title. While the U.S. government vacillated over its position toward Israel's Afro-Asian initiatives, American labor unions doubled-down in their support of and partnership with the Histadrut in Africa. The ICFTU and, to a degree, U.S. labor were falling out of favor in many African nations, including Ghana and Tanzania. At the same time, U.S. trade union leaders like AFL-CIO president George Meany believed Israel and the Histadrut enjoyed a "special status" in Africa. Chapter 6 examines the ways in which U.S. labor unions tried to adapt to the shifting landscape of African labor and politics. They mulled how to "go it alone," apart from European labor and the ICFTU. In their attempts to act unilaterally, they looked again to Israel. Meanwhile, Chapter 5 reveals cracks developing underneath the surface of Israeli labor's "special status" in Africa. As Israeli officials on the ground in Africa observed, by 1962-63, even the Histadrut was precariously balanced "on a razor's edge."

Finally, Chapter 6, "Things Fall Apart, States Come Together," outlines the developments that unraveled much of what the U.S. and Israeli labor partnership had built in the U.S., the Middle East, and Africa. Mapai, the Histadrut, and U.S. trade unions had been embattled at home and abroad for myriad reasons since the 1950s. They were torn from within by racial and ethnic tensions, a growing divide between unions' bureaucratic elite and rank-and-file members, and charges against some leaders for corruption and self-enrichment. They were battered from without, too. Labor's critics on the political spectrum's right and left disparaged them for these issues and more, portraying unions as self-interested and top-heavy "Big Labor" in some cases and conservative, collaborationist, preservers of the status quo in other cases. A

tipping point arrived in 1965-66, when labor movements fractured in the U.S. and Israel, as well as in Africa. Africa's "Decade of Development" changed dramatically into an era of military coups, one-party rule, and the overall deterioration of African democracy and displacement of labor. U.S. and Israeli labor, which had been at the forefront of their nations' African outreach, now too were forced to the sidelines. Chapter 6 demonstrates how states ultimately ascended and eclipsed labor in U.S.-Israeli-African relations and the bilateral U.S.-Israeli "special relationship." The "bond between wage earners" finally translated into a state-centered "special relationship" that was different from what its original participants had envisioned.

As these chapters demonstrate, non-state actors—labor unions—built many of the foundations upon which state-to-state ties later came to fruition. U.S. and Israeli labor's partnership did not unilaterally usher in the "special relationship," single-handedly create lasting images of Israel as the "Startup Nation," or cultivate their nations' relations with African states alone.[20] They did, however, often serve as a precursor. And they certainly laid much of the groundwork that their governments and other entities later utilized. In uncovering this story, *"We Saw Israel"* helps map new directions for understanding non-state actors' influence in a number of diverse topics: U.S.-Israeli relations, anti-colonialism and decolonization, development and nation-building, international labor history, and the Cold War era.

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[20] This phrase was most famously coined in 2011 by the *New York Times* Bestseller, *Startup Nation*; Dan Senor and Saul Singer, *Startup Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* (New York: Twelve, 2011).

Chapter 1

"Pioneers" in the "Feudal Near East":
Ideology, Modernization, and Early U.S.-Israeli Labor Relations

During late fall of 1949, Charles Zimmerman, vice president of the International Ladies

Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), was one of the first American labor leaders to tour Israel.

Zimmerman left on November 24, authorized by the union's General Executive Board "in

response to a growing interest among the ILGWU membership in the affairs of the new state of

Israel," and, particularly, the role of the Jewish Federation of Labor (the Histadrut) in shaping

and influencing economic and political institutions there.[21] Following his return, Zimmerman

conveyed his admiration of and support for the Histadrut and Israel in terms easily relatable to

the particularities of American politics and labor. More importantly, the various ways

Zimmerman talked about Israel and the Histadrut embodied the key ideological emphases that

underpinned four decades of U.S. and Israeli labor's relationship.

First, Zimmerman emphasized the Histadrut's anti-communist, democratic nature. In a

report to American union executives on his experience in Israel, he compared the Histadrut to

something "along the lines of the Knights of Labor in our own country some generations ago."[22]

He likened Israel's governing labor party, Mapai, to "our people in the [mainstream, non-

communist, AFL and CIO] labor movement" while the further-left, Marxist and pro-Soviet party

Mapam was akin "politically with the Wallaceites."[23] This distinction was a useful short-hand for

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[21] "Zimmerman Leaves to Survey Activity of Labor in Israel," 1949 press clipping, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 34, Folder 5.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Mapai was a social democratic labor party. Mapam was a pro-Soviet, though non-communist, labor party of committed Marxists. Zimmerman's designation of Mapam as comparable to the Wallaceites illustrates how closely American labor supporters of the Histadrut and Israel aligned with Mapai and were suspicious of Mapam and other leftists in Israel. This distinction held political significance, because during 1948 and 1949, the AFL and CIO expelled affiliated unions that supported the Wallace presidential campaign. They were deemed to have become

U.S. labor leaders, because the U.S. labor movement was then riven with internal conflict between ardent anti-communist leadership and affiliates and the renegade unions and members who supported Henry Wallace's presidential campaign. The "Wallaceites," according to some U.S. labor leaders, were communist dupes and saboteurs of the American labor movement. Zimmerman thus described Mapai in easily comparable and attractive terms. They were organizing along lines reminiscent of a high point in American labor history (the 1880s and the Knights of Labor) and their dominant political party was parallel to labor's most favored movements in the U.S.

The ILGWU vice president also described Israel and the Histadrut as markedly more developed and modern than the region's Arab societies. Speaking at the 7th National Convention of the Mapai Party in 1950, Zimmerman again reflected on his first trip to the region. "The Arab countries of the Near East," he stated, "are socially and politically among the most backward in the world." He continued, "Economic life and living standards are primitive and the entire spirit is still that of the Middle Ages." In this, Zimmerman echoed the ascendant ideology of modernization—which, by the late 1940s, appealed to a variety of political views, from capitalists and conservatives to socialists and Marxists. Zimmerman was himself a former-Communist-turned-vehement-anticommunist after being expelled by the party in 1929. He worried that Arab backwardness was "just the kind of situation which Communism can exploit, because Communism thrives on backwardness and misery and social injustices." The "feudal Near East" was in need of modernizing—someone to teach Arabs how to progress toward proper, democratic civilization. Zimmerman believed that Israeli pioneers were able and willing to take up this burden.

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political "prostitutes" for the Communist Party, in the words of United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther [Robert Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 270].

Zimmerman therefore extolled the development of Israel as an inoculation against instability, backwardness and, more recently, communism in the Middle East. He argued, "You cannot fight Communism or reaction simply with words…you've got to show them. What Israel is doing is to show that there is a constructive democratic alternative to reaction and Communism." Many U.S. labor leaders and workers, spanning a broad political spectrum, agreed with this anti-communist tack. They were, in fact, among the first Americans to advocate this strategy, extolling the benefits of this constructivist or "productivist" approach to inoculating and aiding the underdeveloped world. In the eyes of the Histadrut's early U.S. allies, Israel's development would not only benefit the Jewish State itself, but was "bound to have a tremendous effect in raising standards and stimulating the modernization of the entire region."[24]

Finally, Zimmerman, like many American labor leaders and workers who both predated and followed him, believed Israel's development model had much to teach Americans. The "constructive democracy" that Israel was building, he claimed, "has its lessons for [the U.S.] as well." While major U.S. social and economic initiatives, particularly those of the New Deal and Truman's Fair Deal, were losing steam, Israel seemed to not only be carrying the torch of social democratic and liberal values, but moving it forward. Zimmerman and others admired Israel's mixed economy which contained "elements of capitalism and socialism alike, while avoiding the excesses of either." Most appealing was the Histadrut's all-encompassing labor model. In Israel, Zimmerman saw "a country where not the government and not private monopoly but organized labor is the big wheel in the economic machine—there is a lot we in America can learn from this experiment."[25] In 1948 the ILGWU's vice president saw Israel and its labor movement as

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[24] "Excerpt of Remarks of Charles Zimmerman," 7th National Convention of Mapai, 9 October 1950, KCA, RG 5780.014, Folder 2.
[25] Ibid.

modern, democratic, civilized, and progressive. Over the course of the next few years, these views would be confirmed and amplified by a procession of labor leaders and union members who traveled to the young state.

Zimmerman's tour marked the beginning of a period in which dozens of U.S. labor leaders and trade unionists toured the newly declared Jewish State, under the auspices of the Histadrut. But the ILGWU vice president's visit did not mark the beginning of the U.S.-Israeli labor alliance or the origins of this alliance's undergirding ideology. The earliest American supporters of Jewish labor in Palestine (and later Israel) were present at the establishment of the Histadrut in 1920, and the ideological roots of U.S. labor's support can be traced even further back. Zimmerman's tour and subsequent reports were instead a watershed moment, one from which it is possible to reflect back and then move forward.

The year Zimmerman went to Israel, 1949, was one in which a number of the U.S.-Israeli labor alliance's ideological bases reached high water marks. That year, modernizationist thinking was ascendant, becoming official U.S. foreign policy in President Truman's "Point Four" speech. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) began its 11-affiliate, one-million-member-purge of communist and suspected communist members. Also in 1949, the AFL and CIO helped found the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), formally announcing their commitment to supporting democratic, "free" trade unions throughout the world. And finally, 1949 was the year in which Israel and neighboring Arab nations signed a series of armistice agreements that ended the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. This allowed the Israeli government, as well as the Histadrut, to shift their efforts toward consolidating and developing their newly declared state. These events, in themselves, did not cause American labor leaders and workers to support the Israeli state and its labor movement. They had been doing so, on an increasingly broad and

official basis, for decades. The year 1949 was instead a period of acceleration, expansion, and consolidation in U.S.-Israeli labor ties and American trade unions' long efforts to bolster Israeli labor and help develop the state of Israel.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the foundational pillars of the U.S.-Israeli labor relationship leading up to 1949 and demonstrate how, during these early years, U.S. trade unionists endeavored to support their Israeli labor allies in the Middle East and in U.S. politics and society. Why, by the time of Zimmerman's tour in 1949, was the broader U.S. labor movement already a staunch ally of Israel and the Histadrut? From where did this relationship come, and what were its foundations? This chapter focuses on a few core components of the U.S.-Israeli labor alliance's overlapping ideology to explain this phenomena: modernizationist thinking, social democratic and liberal political ideology, dedication to promoting anti-communism and free trade unions, and a Western, frontiersman mentality. Different individual trade unionists and labor organizations might have held more tightly to one or several of these pillars than others. But the centrality of these ideas and values was evident in the way all of Israel's U.S. labor allies viewed, described, and advocated their Middle Eastern counterparts. This chapter, "'Pioneers' in the 'Feudal Near East,'" reconstructs this ideology that formed in the 1920s-1940s and examines the common frameworks U.S. unionists brought to bear when traveling to or speaking about Israel and the Middle East. It also traces the deeper political, cultural, and ideological contexts from which these ideas and values came.

From a very early period, U.S. labor leaders and workers responded to their perceptions of Jewish workers in Palestine (and later Israel) and their assumed role as a pioneering force in the wider Middle East. U.S. trade unionists supported the Histadrut and pressured the U.S. government to aid the Zionist project in Palestine. From the 1920s to late 1940s, a small, core

group of Histadrut supporters in the U.S., along with their counterparts in Palestine (and later Israel), began to spread their message to a much broader U.S. labor audience. They were very successful. Explanations for their influence and successes, the language and imagery they used in these efforts, and the particular ideological and cultural traditions their images and language resonated with are the basis of this chapter.

Ideological Context: Modernization, U.S. Labor Ideology, & Colonial/Frontier Heritage

At the time of Truman's famous "Point Four" speech, and the year of Zimmerman's trip to Israel, modernizationist thinking was ascending to the heights of U.S. Cold War ideology. Though Americans did not yet use the term, in 1949 Truman's Point Four proposal tapped into the core elements of a comprehensive theory that quickly became known in shorthand as "modernization."[26] This ideology's core concepts rested on a few overlapping assumptions. The first assumption is an existing dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" societies. Western societies were typically viewed as modern and "up to date," because they contained the most advanced technology, scientific knowledge, and efficient institutions and economies. "Traditional" societies comprised the foil: backward, feudal, primitive, or medieval, with supposedly passive, fatalistic, or lazy populations arrested in development.[27] Modernization thinking's second assumption was that economic, political, and social changes are integrated and interdependent. Changing a society's structures can purportedly affect its inhabitants' mental outlooks and culture.[28] The third assumption was that development (the process of becoming "modern") proceeds along a common, linear path. Modernization theorists placed Western, industrial, capitalist democracies at the forefront of this historical continuum, with all other

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[26] Michael Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011) 2, 11.
[27] Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission,* 12.
[28] Ibid., 19.

systems and societies lagging somewhere behind.[29] A society's proximity to the West

determined the degree of its relative backwardness. Finally, modernization ideology postulated

that "developing" societies' progress could be dramatically accelerated through contact with and

tutelage from developed societies.[30] This type of intervention was supposedly benign and even

altruistic, and ultimately one of Western society's major responsibilities.

Modernization ideology's core elements had much older foundations than the 1940s,

even predating the twentieth century. Ideas about and hierarchies of modern versus traditional,

developed versus backward, and civilized versus primitive can be traced back at least to the

European Enlightenment. Ideas of modernizing or civilizing primitive peoples and lands were

also latent in the Anglo-American settlement of North America.[31] During the early colonial era,

the language of modernizing and developing colored impassioned calls to settle the North

American continent and justified the displacement of its indigenous population. The New World

was painted as either "a paradise populated by pliable natives or a howling wilderness where

brutish savages roamed." In both portrayals, it was a land ripe with potential that was wasted on

its primitive inhabitants. By example and through proper educational uplift, the colonizers

justified their dominance over indigenous populations—this dominance would supposedly confer

benefits on these "benighted" peoples.[32]

For colonial (and twentieth century) modernizers, making "proper" use of land and

resources was imperative, and the ability to do so separated the primitives from the civilized. It

also justified the latter's rights to land. Many European colonial authorities rationalized land

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[29] Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, 4.
[30] Ibid., 4.
[31] In order to avoid being anachronistic, I will refer to pre-20th Century proponents of this form of thinking as modernizers and 20th century figures as modernizationists. I will refer to the ideology pre-20th century as modernist, modernizing and developing.
[32] Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 31-35, 65.

appropriation by invoking the concept of *res nullius*, which held that "empty" or "waste" lands

belonged to humanity as a whole until they had been cultivated or put to other "productive"

use.[33] Native Americans had allegedly squandered their opportunity to exploit the continent's

resources, and, therefore, they had no rights to the land.

Acceptance of this logic went far beyond the level of colonial officials. It also was

prevalent among intellectuals, religious leaders, and common North American settlers. For

instance, John Winthrop, the Puritan minister most famous for his "City on a Hill" sermon,

asserted that, before the coming of Europeans, the "whole continent, as fruitful and convenient

[as it might be] for the use of man," had lain in "waste without any improvement." English

settlers, however, plowed fields, built fences, and raised livestock in proper pastures. They

cleared forests and cultivated the land. These actions advanced civil society and caused the

retreat of the forces of savagery, bringing civilization and prosperity to the continent—even to its

natives. Winthrop, like many modernizers, argued that further English settlement would render

the lands so productive that natives would "find benefit…by our neighborhood and learn of us to

improve part [of their lands] to more use than before they could do the whole."[34]

Twentieth century forms of modernization ideology also resonated strongly with

nineteenth century arguments for American expansion. U.S. expansionists perpetuated

allegations that Indians failed to "improve" the lands they occupied. Early 1830s advocates of

Indian "removal," including President Andrew Jackson, argued that Native American tribes'

failure to develop their territories justified forcefully relocating them. Jackson rationalized this

violent policy of removal by contrasting the "country covered with forests and ranged by a few

thousands savages" with America's "extensive Republic studded with cities, towns, and

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[33] Ibid., 44.
[34] Ibid., 40.

prosperous farms with all of the improvements which [technology] can devise or industry

execute." It was therefore justifiable and inevitable that the Indians yield their "unused" land.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, U.S. apologists for Manifest Destiny and

continental expansion argued that their mission was benevolent and inevitable—they were

spreading "progress," economic growth, and "civilized" ways of life.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, development thinking

reverberated in American projects to "reconstruct" societies abroad.[35] Americans judged

indigenous societies in North America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific to be technologically

primitive, materially impoverished, and backward in cultural and societal organization.[36] In the

early twentieth century, U.S. colonial administrators in the Philippines made the islands'

"development" their central mission. They attempted to do this through major infrastructure and

engineering projects that built railways, roads, harbors, and sewer systems. They initiated

agricultural projects that introduced fertilizers, mechanized equipment, and experiment

stations.[37] And, perhaps most importantly to them, U.S. colonial administrators tried to educate

Filipinos and change the "backward" culture and society that was apparently keeping them from

being "fit" for self-government.

Americans were not alone in their civilizing and modernizing missions. From World War

I through the 1930s, ideas about development and modernizing were in international circulation

and spanned a broad political spectrum. In Turkey, authoritarian president Mustapha Kemal

Ataturk sought to rectify the Ottoman Empire's humiliating defeat in World War I. He believed

the Republic of Turkey needed to emulate its former enemies and become "a progressive

[35] Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, 4.
[36] Adas, *Dominance by Design*, 20.
[37] Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution*, 15.

member of the civilized world." Ataturk organized a larger and more "modern" Turkish army. He established state-owned factories and created a national railroad. He also sought to fundamentally modernize Turkish society. Ataturk sent the sultan into exile, and abolished the caliphate, Islamic schools, and religious courts. He Romanized the alphabet, instituted new legal code modeled off those of Switzerland and Italy, and banned wearing fezzes.[38]

This process, which Ataturk himself described as "modernization," drew visitors from all over the globe to the Soviet Union, as well. American modernizers flocked there during the 1920s and 1930s to look for ideas they could apply to the U.S.[39] U.S. diplomat George F. Kennan wrote at the time of "the romance of economic development"—leftists and economic planners became "pilgrims of planning," enamored with the Soviet Union's rapid industrialization and methods of central planning.[40] Many of the Soviet Union's U.S. admirers were American trade unionists. AFL president Samuel Gompers may have denounced the Bolsheviks and their "fellow travelers" before Congress, but a number of U.S. laborites who served as the Histadrut's earliest supporters cheered the Russian revolutionaries.

The ILGWU and its leadership, in particular, expressed admiration for the Soviet Union, the "first great working class republic."[41] Walter and Victor Reuther, the future president and education director of the UAW, respectively, left the U.S. in February 1933 and spent 15 months working in the Soviet Union's Gorki automobile plant. They were both impressed by Soviet efforts to build a workers' state. Upon their return, Victor spoke glowingly of "the thrill and satisfaction of participating in genuine working class democracy."[42] Future U.S. labor leaders

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[38] Ibid., 22, 19.
[39] Ibid., 46.
[40] Engerman, "The Romance of Economic Development and New Histories of the Cold War," 28.
[41] Jennifer Luff, *Commonsense Anticommunism: Labor and Civil Liberties between the World Wars* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 2012), 73.
[42] Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 20.

and forerunners of the U.S.-Israeli labor alliance were already enamored with the idea of modernization and development in the early twentieth century. For some, the Soviet Union served as a first and, ultimately, fatally flawed model.

The Soviet modernization project and the rhetoric of its American admirers previewed the ways U.S. trade unionists would view and discuss Jewish labor in Palestine (and later Israel). This phenomenon also demonstrated how modernizationist thinking—even in the minds of communists, socialists, and labor liberals—lent itself to the formulation of hierarchies and expressions of paternalism. Many U.S. admirers of the Soviet development project frequently discussed the supposed backwardness and primitive nature of Slavic peoples and Russian peasants. They described them as passive, lacking proper hygiene, lethargic, and impulsive.[43] They portrayed Russian peasants as "naïve and simple," held back by the "ancient working habits of the East."[44] The Bolsheviks, by contrast, were forward-looking, self-sacrificial modernizers who were turning backward-Russia into a developed, industrial workers' state. According to David Engerman, U.S. admirers of the Soviets' modernizing project found the brutal sacrifices Russian peasants were forced to make worthy, because they found the people sacrificed so unworthy.[45] This tendency among modernizers to overlook or underplay the coercion or displacement of backwards peoples and cultures continued throughout the century.

U.S. labor ultimately became the one of the Soviet Union's chief antagonists, but most U.S. trade unionists continued to champion modernization and development. They just found new models. During this "romance of economic development," U.S. liberals formulated their own, American plan for development. The crisis of American capitalism during the Great

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[43] Thomas Haskell, "Modernization on Trial," *Modern Intellectual History* 2 (2), 2005, 249.
[44] Engerman, "The Romance of Economic Development and New Histories of the Cold War," 164.
[45] Ibid., 242.

Depression opened the door to new ideas and a new iteration of U.S. modernizationist thinking. Free market capitalism and laissez-faires policies lost credibility as the surest means to progress.[46] The U.S. stock market crashed, unemployment sky-rocketed, and millions of Americans found themselves short on food. Consequently, faith in the liberal capitalist policies of the 1920s proved to be in equally short supply.

American modernizers formulated a coherent development model to champion and hoped it would help stamp out competing forms at home and abroad. This American version of modernization was most famously manifest in policies of the New Deal and, more specifically, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). The TVA gave American modernizers and New Dealers a concrete example for integrated, large-scale, planned development that was simultaneously a non-radical alternative. The TVA was a regional program to build dams for flood control and electricity, to facilitate irrigation and agricultural support programs, to promote public health, to enact educational programs, to combat soil erosion and deforestation, and to dig an inland waterway on the Tennessee River.[47] The TVA's promoters portrayed it as a partnership between federal government and grassroots community planning that would utilize science and technology to reform and modernize a region both physically and culturally. In short, it was a dream project for New Deal liberals and American modernizers.

In addition to changing the South physically, the TVA would ostensibly modernize Southerners culturally. President Franklin Roosevelt believed the South was America's "number one economic problem," and many American development experts dubbed the region as 100 years behind the rest of the country. The TVA would improve the southern labor pool through

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[46] Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission*, 43.
[47] Ibid., 4, 62, 49.

vocation training and adult education.[48] Left untouched, however, were the region's race relations. If they cared at all, planners and TVA supporters assumed that bringing development and prosperity to the region would trickle-down and ameliorate the second-class status and lifestyle of the South's African Americans. Once again, development thinking demonstrated racial blind spots or, even worse, latent racial hierarchies.

Thanks to the New Deal and the TVA, President Truman had a rich ideological and political reservoir from which to draw when he delivered his "Point Four" speech. Speaking to Congress in 1949, Truman promised to "embark on a bold new program for making benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of the underdeveloped areas." Americans presumably thought of the TVA and New Deal construction programs. They believed these programs had not only pulled them out of the Great Depression, but proved the superiority of the U.S. system and its rightful position at the helm of the post-WWII order.[49] Modernization thinking, as exemplified in Point Four, quickly became the American salve to the global epidemic of Communism. In the eyes of many Americans and U.S. foreign policymakers, their efforts would improve the postcolonial world and those within it.

When Zimmerman spoke to his fellow American labor leaders and workers about Israel and the Histadrut in 1949, he was also tapping into this deeply historical and increasingly influential ideology. Zimmerman's descriptions of Israel as a "constructive democratic alternative to Communism" that would stimulate "the modernization of the entire region" played directly into the contemporary promotion of Western-style development as an inoculation against Soviet communism. Along these lines, Zimmerman found himself among liberals, moderates, and social democrats alike. Prominent U.S. politicians and intellectuals, like Herbert Hoover,

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[48] Ibid., 55.
[49] Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution*, 10.

Henry Wallace, and TVA director David Lilienthal began to envision Israel initiating its own TVA-like modernization of the Middle East, one that would lift its populations out of poverty, make them immune to the attractions of communism, and even alleviate the conflict between Arabs and Jews.

Meanwhile, the ways in which Zimmerman contrasted the Middle East's Arab countries—socially and politically "among the most backward in the world"—with Israel's pioneering farmers and intrepid soldiers resonated with America's cultural heritage. It paralleled the idea of American colonial-frontiersmen carrying the banner of civilization across the continent. U.S. labor's appeals to support the Histadrut often recalled centuries-old rhetoric about "pliable" and "primitive" natives, "a howling wilderness" and wasted lands. This time though, the "City on a Hill" was a different Zion, and the pioneers were Jewish socialists in the Middle East. But the imagery and rationale were the same. Winthrop's words about "proper" development, organization, and land use echoed over the centuries, moving across continents and over oceans, from North America to the Middle East.

Zimmerman was therefore not an anomaly in the way he viewed Israel as a modern, developing outpost of democracy and civilization. Instead, he was representative of a deeper ideological heritage and a longer historical relationship. He was just one among the first of hundreds of U.S. workers and labor leaders who traveled to the newly established Jewish state. The late 1940s began an important era in American-Israeli labor relations, something that could very well be termed a "special relationship." But this period of relations, much like its underlying ideological bases, was a culmination from the previous decades. Not coincidentally, U.S. and Israeli labor relations rose along with and tapped into the ascension of modernization ideology and development rhetoric.

<u>Early Ties between American Labor and Jewish Labor in Palestine</u>

The first U.S. supporters of Jewish labor in Palestine were mainly Zionist, Jewish American workers. From the late nineteenth century, Jewish Americans made up a powerful and influential component of the American labor movement. From 1880 to 1925, nearly three million European Jews immigrated to the U.S.[50] Many found themselves living in crowded ghettos, working in sweatshops, and mired in poverty. In response, they established a network of extensive social-service institutions and fraternal orders, an impressive array of Yiddish newspapers and book publishing houses, and an influential Jewish trade union movement. Jewish American labor became a significant factor in the growth of both the socialist and labor movements in early twentieth-century America.[51]

The Zionist movement itself originated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Basil, Switzerland, in 1897, Theodor Herzl chaired the first Zionist Congress of the Zionist Organization. Herzl was author of the influential book *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State) in 1896, in which he promoted the idea of creating a Jewish state. Through his writings, his political connections and intellectual influence, Herzl was the one of the political Zionists movement's founders and leaders.[52] His ideas and the Zionist movement itself were in large part a reaction to the history of European anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish pogroms. The 1881-1882 pogroms in Russia inspired the notion that only the end of Diaspora and the foundation of an independent state could save the Jewish people.[53] The pogroms convinced another prominent

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[50] Jacob Katzman, *Commitment: The Labor Zionist Lifestyle in America* (New York: Shulsinger Brothers, Inc., 1975), 22.

[51] Daniel Katz, *Altogether Difference: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism* (New York University Press, 2011).

[52] Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 30.

[53] Mitchell Cohen, *Zion and State: Nation, Class, and the Shaping of Modern Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 53.

political activist, the Jewish-Russian physician Leon Pinsker, to formulate one of the earliest iterations of political and labor Zionism. Pinsker made his case in November 1884, at the Kattowitz Conference, a meeting for Russian Zionist groups to organize and coordinate their activism. Pinsker argued that Jews needed their own state. They needed a place in which they would no longer serve as stereotypical middlemen and traders, but be allowed to return to and work the land. "Everyone realizes," he argued, "[that this] is the proper basis of society."[54] Pinsker's "back to the land" exhortations became a staple of Labor Zionism.

In addition to anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish pogroms, European political Zionists formulated their ideology within the historical contexts of European colonialism and nationalism. Early non-socialist Zionists, like Herzl, articulated their ideological and political programs in the same milieu as Western leaders who justified colonialism according to civilizing missions and modernization. During this period, Europeans took their civilization's supposed superiority for granted, as well as their right to rule over (and settle among as a privileged caste) non-European peoples deemed less advanced. In *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl explicitly employed this logic to justify the Zionist project in Palestine. He wrote that the future Jewish state would form "a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism."[55] In another work, his futuristic novel *Alteneuland*, Herzl further outlined this vision of a "reborn" Palestine. He imagined a Jewish homeland whose Arab residents were perfectly content being the minority. One of the book's central, fictitious Palestinian Arab characters, Reschid Bey, expressed that Arabs were grateful for the material benefits Jewish immigrants brought. In one passage, Bey tells an inquisitive visitor, "You speak strangely, Christian. Would you call a man a robber who

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[54] Ibid., 61.
[55] Ibid., 28, 34.

takes nothing from you, but brings you something instead? The Jews have enriched us."[56] Thus,

much like Western modernizers and colonialists before him, Herzl believed that bringing

civilization and progress to native populations was a benevolent undertaking. He sought to

justify it in terms of material gains and societal "progress."

Moses Hess, another Central European, Jewish intellectual, also exhibited this outlook on

the role Zionism would play in Palestine. Hess was a socialist, labor-oriented "proto-Zionist,"

who actually predated and influenced Herzl. He became a prominent proto-Zionist intellectual

after writing *Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question* in 1862. Hess believed that

Zionist settlers would "be the bearers of civilization to peoples who are still inexperienced."

Jewish Zionists would comprise "the moral stay of the East" with their industriousness replacing

the "idleness and robbery" of the Arabs.[57] Hess was not only a socialist but also a personal friend

of both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. His iteration of paternalism and development thinking

stemmed more from Marxist philosophy than European colonialism and bourgeois milieus. But

Hess's example, paired with that of Herzl, demonstrates how Western paternalism and

development thinking influenced a broad spectrum of Zionist thinkers.

The Zionist movement itself spanned a wide political range, with varying strategies for

how to accomplish the Zionist project and what its outcome should look like. These variations

were posited by groups such as socialist (Labor) Zionists, revisionist Zionists, and general

Zionists. Labor Zionists shared the universal Zionist view that the Jewish people would solve

their problems and fulfill their destiny only in a state of their own, to be established in Palestine.

However, they sought to combine the philosophies of socialism and Zionism into a

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[56] Rafael Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs: An American Jewish Dilemma, 1898-1948* (New York: Praeger, 1997), 15.
[57] Ibid., 16.

comprehensive ideology. It was a conglomeration of Jewish ethics, elements of Marxist dialectic materialism, ideals of Biblical prophecy, utopianism, and the vision of a better world for all mankind. The labor element of the global Zionist movement sought to serve as a colonizing, workers' vanguard for a sovereign, socialist Jewish state. Their goal was to create a "working life" and a workers' state, or *am oved*.[58]

Zionism was born during Europe's era of nationalism, but it also originated amidst the emergence of Marxism and socialism. The Labor Zionist movement was in large part shaped by its geographical origins in Eastern Europe. In 1897, a group called *Poale Zion* (Workers of Zion) was founded in Minsk, and within the next five years, *Poale Zion* groups formed in other parts of Europe and the U.S. Marxism and the Russian Revolution of 1905 inspired members of the early socialist/Labor Zionist camp. They strove to create a Jewish working class in Palestine, one that would work the land by the sweat of its own brow and not exploit workers but empower them. Many socialist Zionists extolled the village commune as the foundation for a future socialist and nationalist life.[59]

However, Labor Zionists' rhetoric and policies show they too were influenced by broader Western ideas of development and modernization. For instance, they believed that land belonged to those who made it "productive."[60] Labor Zionists leaders, such as David Ben-Gurion, argued that Jews were settling a land left barren land by its Arab inhabitants. In 1915, he wrote, "The source of true rights to a land—like everything else—is not in political or legal authority, but in the rights of labor. The true, actual owners of the land are its workers."[61] By extension, this meant that Jewish settlers, not current or previous Arab inhabitants, were the rightful heirs to

[58] Cohen, *Zion and State*, 6.
[59] Ibid., 88, 94.
[60] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 45.
[61] Cohen, *Zion and State,* 94.

Palestine's land. This logic of Labor Zionists presented an awkward confluence of Marxist and colonialist thinking. On one hand, Labor Zionists often used this argument to promote workers' rights over bourgeois interests and claims to the land. Wealthy landowners, they argued, had no right to their holdings, since they did not do any physical work. On the other hand, however, Labor Zionists also invoked this logic to claim and justify Palestinian Arabs' lands.

Ben-Gurion and many other Labor Zionists repeatedly argued that they had "the right to build and be built in Palestine." In the 1920s, Ben-Gurion claimed it was "immoral to deny a dynamic people the opportunity to better the country through its own labors."[62] He continued, "The land still awaits a cultured and energetic people…armed with modern science and technology; a people to exploit the earth's natural wealth and the country's favorable climate, to irrigate the wasteland, to cause the barren hills to yield fruit, to enrich the abused soil, and to forest the empty sands." Similarly, while Labor Zionists reaffirmed they did not intend "to push the Arabs aside, to take their land, or to disinherit them," leaders like Ben-Gurion forcefully argued that Arabs, incapable of developing the country, had no right to stand in the way of Jewish pioneers. In 1924 he wrote, "We do not recognize the right of Arabs to rule the country, since Palestine is still undeveloped and awaiting its builders." Six years later, he repeated, "The Arabs have no right to the Jordan River…They have a right only to that which they have created and to their own homes."[63]

These words parallel those of North American settlers decades prior. They too justified colonization because a "fruitful and convenient" land had lain, at the hands of its indigenous population, in "waste without any improvement."[64] Ben-Gurion, a prominent leader of the

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[62] Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Arabs: From Peace to War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 5.
[63] Ibid., 38.
[64] Adas, *Dominance by Design*, 40.

socialist, Labor Zionist movement and future Prime Minister of Israel, thus carried into the

twentieth century many of the same ideological tenets of modernization and civilization that

supported American expansion and Manifest Destiny. Zionist colonization of Palestine was

justified, because Jewish pioneers were working and improving the land.

Building the Workers' State and a U.S.-Palestinian Jewish Workers' Alliance

The Jewish Federation of Labor in Palestine (the Histadrut) was the vehicle through

which labor Zionists sought to build and be built and which would, in turn, justify their

settlement in Palestine. Through the Histadrut, Jewish workers in Palestine labored to create a

worker-based, Jewish economy and state-in-the-making. In 1920, while the Red Scare and

infamous Palmer raids were devastating organized labor (particularly the more radical, leftist

elements) in the U.S., Jewish workers in Palestine experienced a new and exciting beginning.

That year, they founded the Histadrut in the port city of Haifa. It was a united project of Jewish

Palestine's political parties *Ahdut Ha'Avodah*, *Ha'Poel Ha'Tzair*, and other, smaller leftist

groups.[65] At its inception, the Histadrut was composed of 4,500 members of various workers'

groups, with agricultural workers comprising the majority.

The two main Labor Zionist parties that made up the Histadrut, *Ahdut Ha'avoda* and

Ha'Poel Ha'Tzair, envisioned a labor federation different from the European union model. They

wanted a labor movement that functioned as an instrument for settling Palestine and building a

Jewish workers' commonwealth.[66] The Histadrut's initial purview reflected these aims:

developing collective farms (kibbutzim); organizing labor co-operatives for farm and industrial

work; organizing trade unions on a non-political party basis; improving working conditions;

establishing consumers' co-operatives; mutual aid societies to supply sick and general insurance;

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[65] Mitchell Cohen, *Zion and* State, 109.
[66] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 65.

a loan fund; establishing centers for educational and cultural work; converting immigrants into a body of free, skilled and productive workers.[67] In these ways, the Histadrut was a socialist-inspired, all-encompassing institution for a workers' society.

At the same time, the Histadrut's primary function was state-building. Creating a Jewish workers' state in Palestine required a highly centralized apparatus. The Histadrut encouraged workers' self-sacrifice, hard work and discipline, and enlisted Jewish Palestinian labor in construction and institution-building.[68] Labor Zionists saw themselves as a vanguard for the developing Jewish state. In the words of Golda Meir, who joined its Executive Committee in 1928, the Histadrut "wasn't just a trade union organization. It was a great colonizing enterprise."[69] In the 1920s and 1930s, these twin initiatives—representing and supporting Jewish Palestinian workers and constructing a Jewish state—seemed to Labor Zionists a perfect marriage.

The Histadrut's centrality in Jewish Palestine's economy and politics put Labor Zionists at the helm of the state-building project. Within the Labor Zionist movement, Mapai rose to dominance in the 1930s. Mapai then began to hold sway over the entire international Zionist movement, signaled by Ben-Gurion's ascendance to chairman of the Jewish Agency in 1935.[70] Standing atop the Jewish Palestinian labor federation, Labor Zionism, and the Zionist movement itself, Mapai leaders were at the forefront of relations with Jewish American trade unionists.

In the early twentieth century, Jewish American labor was divided on Zionism. Jacob Katzman, an American Jew who later became an American Labor Zionist leader, wrote in his

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[67] Melech Noy, "Growth of the Histadrut," *Jewish Frontier*, June 1955, Volume 22 (6), 14.
[68] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 55.
[69] Uri Davis, *Israel: Utopia Incorporated—a Study of Class, State, and Corporate Kin Control* (London: Zed Books, 1977), 142.
[70] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 56.

memoirs that the movement "was regarded with hostility, or at least something of an anomaly, by a large part of the American Jewish labor leadership" prior to the Histadrut's establishment. Many were instead members of the Jewish Labor Bund, a socialist, secular movement founded in Eastern Europe in 1897. Bundists did not seek a separate, Jewish nation in the Middle East. They accused the Zionist movement of escapism and separatism, diverting workers' attention away from the material realities of the present and filling their minds with distracting dreams of a return to Zion.[71] Bundists sought to organize Jewish workers within their respective nations, working as part of the wider international socialist movement.

Though they were in the minority, there were still a number of staunch Labor Zionist allies in U.S. labor pre-1920. Joseph Schlossberg, was a prominent example. Schlossberg was one of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union's (ACWU) founding members. Born in Russia in 1876, Schlossberg emigrated with his family to New York in 1889. He went to work in New York's needle-trade industry and joined the United Tailors Brotherhood before helping found the ACWU in 1914. Schlossberg was an early ally of the Labor Zionist party *Poale Zion*. So too were his ACW colleague Abe Miller and Max Zuckerman of the Millinery Workers' Union. Both the ILGWU and the ACWU, two heavily Jewish trade unions, adopted resolutions favorable to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine at conventions they held shortly after the Balfour Declaration in 1917.[72] Schlossberg helped promulgate a call for the first Congress for Labor Palestine in New York in 1918, and he was later a charter member of the National Labor Committee for Labor-Palestine (NCLP) in 1918.[73] For Jewish American labor leaders, socialists, and democratic socialists like Schlossberg, Miller, and Zuckerman, the Labor

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[71] Katzman, *Commitment*, 159-160.
[72] Ibid.
[73] "Joseph Schlossberg, Pioneer Labor Leader, Long-time Zionist Leader, Dies at 95," 18 January 1971, Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Zionist movement offered a potential solution to the Jewish Diaspora's needs and aspirations, both material and spiritual, combining class and nation.

The real breakthrough for Labor Zionism in the U.S., however, came after the Histadrut's establishment.[74] Decades later, ILGWU president Sol Chaikin reflected that the Histadrut's creation offered an appealing model and a flicker of hope during a dark hour for organized labor in the U.S. In 1920, the Histadrut provided an example of a vibrant, "pioneering" labor organization that utilized central planning, cooperative methods, and advanced scientific methods in agriculture, while still maintaining a commitment to a democracy.[75] It was an exciting experiment in labor organization, workers' autonomy, and progressive development.

The late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries were heady times for U.S. labor. By the end of World War I the size of organized U.S. labor had tripled. This was tied in part to progressive era politics and polices, the rise of international socialism, and in part to wartime U.S. worker and industrial mobilization. Progressive-era organized labor, in contrast to their Knights of Labor-era forebears, had come to terms with wage labor and industrial society.[76] What they wanted in the late 1910s and 1920s was a "living wage," regular employment, decent working conditions, some system of social insurance, and a voice in the workplace and in American politics.[77]

During the Progressive Era, U.S. labor achieved several of these goals. Labor had a sympathetic audience in the Progressive Movement. Progressives believed society was an organic whole, and that government regulation in the industrial system and labor market was

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[74] Katzman, *Commitment,* 160.
[75] Sol Chaikin, "Historic Relations between American Labor and Histadrut," 30 May 1978, KCA, RG 5780.083, Box 47, Folder 48.
[76] Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5.
[77] Ibid., 6.

essential for the sake of a larger, public interest. U.S. trade unions also experienced something of a working partnership with the federal government during World War I. During the war, unions participated in government boards and arbitration committees, created work councils and employer representation plans, initiated producer cooperatives, and contributed to nationalization schemes for industry. Many unionists, managers, and government experts who participated in wartime collaboration, like Sidney Hillman and his Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA) or David Dubinsky and the ILGWU, later played decisive roles during the 1930s New Deal programs.[78]

After the end of WWI, however, U.S. workers engaged the largest strike wave in the nation's history and this apparent heyday of U.S. labor came to a crashing halt.[79] In the immediate postwar years, many of U.S. labor's more militant or leftwing unions believed the time for dramatic changes in worker-employer relations and the U.S. economy had come. This was particularly true of more industrially based unions like the ACWA, the ILGWU, and the International Workers of the World (IWW). They wanted to build on wartime labor-state collaborations and were inspired by the rise of socialism in Europe. U.S. trade unions were also bolstered by thousands of new members from Central and Eastern Europe, themselves often avid socialists and admirers of the Russian Revolution. The ACWA's 1918 convention passed resolutions recognizing the new Soviet government in Russia and called for public control of U.S. industries. The leftwing American Labor Party proposed socializing not only U.S. railroads but also mass communications, most major natural resources, and vital basic industries.[80] Many American workers were more than willing to flex their muscles in attempts to either achieve

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[78] Ibid., 6-9.

[79] Steven Fraser, *Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 114.

[80] Ibid., 141, 149.

greater gains or protect what they had attained during the war. Between 1916 and 1922, nearly

10% of U.S. workers were involved in strikes each year. In 1919 alone, the year of the "Great

Strike," four million workers participated in 3,600 different strikes. Over one-fifth of all workers

took part.[81]

For U.S. government and business leaders, this wave of worker militancy and U.S.

labor's increasingly ambitious demands were took much to tolerate. Domestic unrest coupled

with President Wilson's fears of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and its perceived threat to

his postwar international order. The state responded. The first Red Scare served as a cover for the

federal government's major crackdown on labor activists. In 1918, Attorney General A. Mitchell

Palmer asked Congress for $500,000 to carry out a number of raids in cities with large numbers

of radicals and for a law allowing the automatic deportation of aliens belonging to "Red"

organizations.[82] On January 2, 1920, Palmer's agents struck in five American cities, arresting

around 2,600 and signifying a major postwar repression of organized labor and political leftists.

Employers' organizations, like Associated Industries and the National Association of

Manufacturers, launched "open shop" campaigns to dislodge union control over specific

businesses and industries, and they hired armies of spies, provocateurs, private police, and

"scabs."[83] Once working in a tenuous partnership, U.S. labor now found itself losing a pitched

battle with business and state.

Many of the U.S.'s most militant and leftwing industrial unions were decimated. The

United Mine Workers lost 80% of its membership.[84] The IWW, which had passed an antiwar

resolution in 1916, came under the heaviest fire. In 1918, the federal government convicted 101

[81] Zieger, *The CIO,* 9.
[82] Ted Morgan, *A Cover Life,* 19.
[83] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule,* 161.
[84] Zieger, *The CIO*, 10.

IWW leaders of violating the Espionage Act, and the union's leader, Bill Haywood, fled to Russia. Meanwhile, employers utilized the Red Scare and the government's repressive actions to wipe out labor's WWI-era gains in textile, meatpacking, metalworking, and paper-making industries. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover proudly announced the end of the "labor problem." The size and influence of U.S. labor unions declined precipitously.

During the same period, Jewish American trade unionists first viewed and reached out to the Histadrut. The two phenomena were largely related. Some of the unions at the forefront of industrial labor's postwar struggles and American socialist politics were also the leaders in initiating U.S.-Jewish Palestine labor relations. This included the ILGWU, the ACWA, and the United Hebrew Trades (UHT).[85] The ACWA's Jacob Potofsky and Joseph Schlossberg were among the first of these labor ambassadors. Potosfky, like Schlossberg, was an eastern-European-born Jew who emigrated to the U.S. at a young age.[86] He joined the ACWA at its founding in 1914 and became a protégé of its president, Sidney Hillman. Potofsky and Schlossberg were both active socialists and rising leaders in the U.S.'s northeastern industrial unions. They were also prominent voices for Labor Zionism. In their minds, the struggle of Jewish workers in Palestine was inherently linked to championing socialism, industrial democracy, and progress around the globe. Because of their political ideology, ethnic and national backgrounds, and deep familiarity or sympathy for Labor Zionism, Jewish American trade unions, labor leaders, and socialists served as the primary bridge between U.S. workers and the Histadrut.

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[85] The UHT was a Jewish labor group affiliated with the AFL. It was based primarily in the northeastern industrial trades, like the garment making industry. Its members were politically to the left of the mainline AFL.
[86] Eric Pace, "Jacob Potofsky, Longtime Head of Clothing Workers, Dies at 84," *New York Times*, 6 August 1979.

From "almost from the very first day" of the Histadrut's founding, the ILGWU's Sol Chaikin later reflected, "there was a complete and open line of communication between the Jewish Trade Unions here in America and the Israeli Trade Unions in Israel."[87] During the summer of 1922, the Histadrut sent three officials, Berl Katznelson, Manya Shochat, and Yosef Baratz, to the U.S. to sell shares of *Bank Hapoalim*, the Jewish worker's bank in Palestine. They also shared a vision of the Histadrut's mission and how Jewish American workers, socialists, and progressives could help them make this vision reality. Histadrut officials appealed not just to the converted but also their non-Zionist skeptics. UHT Secretary Max Pine was one. Pine was a particularly influential Jewish American figure. He was one of the *Jewish Daily Forward's* founders (a popular Jewish American periodical) and an active leader and erstwhile candidate for the Socialist Party. Pine was also a non-Zionist. In 1922, Histadrut leaders invited him to investigate Jewish Palestine and the Histadrut firsthand. They encouraged him to bring a labor delegation to Palestine. Pine skeptically accepted the invitation.[88]

During his trip Pine was converted. The UHT secretary was inspired after seeing the Histadrut and Labor Zionism's socialist vision in action. He quickly became an influential Labor Zionist and Histadrut ally. In 1924, Pine and the UHT created the Histadrut Campaign. Later known officially as the National Labor Committee for Palestine (NLCP), it was created "for the purpose of supporting the economic, welfare, and cultural enterprises of Jewish labor in Palestine."[89] The movement rapidly mobilized and grew, particularly in northeastern cities like New York and Boston. Jacob Katzman, an early participant and later Campaign official, said this

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[87] Chaikin, "Historic Relations between American Labor and Histadrut," KCA.
[88] "Max Pine, Noted Jewish Labor Leader, Dies at 62," 5 March 1928, Jewish Telegraphic Agency.
[89] Invitation letter written by Isaac Hamlin and Joseph Schlossberg on behalf of the National Labor Committee for Palestine, 25 October 1934, KCA, Record Group 5780.014, Box 27, Folder 1.

happened through a grassroots mobilization of supporters who held street-corner meetings, "tag-days," solicited house-to-house and organized shop collections.[90]

The Histadrut Campaign was of "inestimable," in Katzman's words, value in mobilizing support for the Zionist struggle. The campaign quickly claimed a membership of 250,000 American workers. Large U.S. unions' joint boards and small locals' executive committees joined its ranks. In its first year, the NLCP raised $51,165 for the fledgling workers' movement in Palestine.[91] Long before the non-labor-based United Jewish Appeal and Israel Bond campaigns," Katzman argued, "the [Histadrut] Campaign was reaching out to the Jewish [workers] and rallying them to the cause of Jewish national rebirth."[92] "From the first," he reflected, "American labor was to be a staunch ally."

Unlike non-labor-based campaigns, American labor's support and fundraising campaigns focused their efforts and framed their rhetoric around the Histadrut. They downplayed the Zionist movement as a political, nationalist entity in favor of promoting Labor Zionism and the Histadrut as a pioneering, democratic, workers' movement. During the early twentieth century, political Zionism was still controversial, particularly amongst a Jewish American population that was still greatly influenced by anti-Zionist Bundists and other factions of Jewish socialists.

The Histadrut offered something more than Zionism itself.[93] In order to widen the Histadrut's appeal and extend its support-base to non-Jewish American labor audience, the Histadrut, Mapai, and their earliest U.S. allies employed language and imagery that reflected this. They launched appeals that described Jewish settlers and workers in Palestine in ways that

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[90] Katzman, *Commitment*, 163.
[91] Isaac Hamlin, National Secretary of the National Committee for Labor Israel, to the Manufacturers Trust Company, New York, 25 November 1951, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 27, Folder 1.
[92] Katzman, *Commitment*, 163.
[93] Ibid., 168.

tapped into the growing appeal of emergent development thinking and the labor-friendly political milieu of the New Deal. They would also couch their descriptions in well-established liberal trade unionist ideology and America's colonial-frontier cultural heritage. In a few short years, this strategy produced tangible results in the forms of funding, political capital, and moral support from U.S. workers.

Modernizing and Pioneering Imagery, and U.S.-Histadrut Labor Relations

The Histadrut Campaign's early materials contain some of the first references to the British Mandate in Palestine as a "frontier" with its respective Jewish "pioneers." The NCLP published invitations for its 1934 convention calling progressive and labor organizations to come and hear "important reports of the progress made by the Pioneers of Palestine." It also asked U.S. labor unions to consider ways they could aid and support "the great enterprise" of Jewish settlement.[94] The following year, the NCLP again applied pioneering rhetoric in attempt to appeal outside its immediate labor and progressive base. The organization issued a call for help "to assist in a noble purpose for the benefit of our pioneers in Palestine and for thousands of Jewish immigrants."[95] The Histadrut and its U.S. allies hoped that pioneering the imagery of Jewish labor in Palestine would blaze new trails for U.S.-Palestinian Jewish relations.

The Histadrut Campaign's appeals on behalf of these Pioneers of Palestine yielded fruit. Ten years after its creation, the NCLP had collected over $1 million for Israeli labor, with donations from 1,000 organizations and 50,000 individual contributors.[96] In 1934, an NCLP invitation to its tenth anniversary celebration and convention boasted that 500 national and local

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[94] Isaac Hamlin, "Invitation to All Progressive and Labor Organizations," 1934, KCA, Record Group 5780.014, Box 27, Folder 1.

[95] Invitation, 25 October 1934, KCA.

[96] Ibid. (According to *U.S. Inflation Calculator*, that $1 million in 1934 equals $18.5 million in 2016, adjusted for inflation).

organizations would be present. By then the NCLP also had its own monthly magazine, *Jewish Frontier*, which was created to support the Labor Zionist movement. The magazine commemorated the NCLP's tenth anniversary with a special addition. As expected the magazine was laden with imagery and rhetoric invoking pioneers, frontiers, and productive Jewish settlers.

During the early 1940s, the influence of the Histadrut Campaign was evident in much broader U.S. labor circles. By this point, the Histadrut had also garnered significant support from leaders, members, and affiliates of the CIO. Given the CIO's ideological, political, and industrial base, its support for the Histadrut was not surprising. The CIO formed in the aftermath of an actual fistfight at the AFL's 1935 annual convention. The fiery United Mineworkers of America (UMW) president John L. Lewis picked a fight with his Carpenters' Union counterpart, William Hutcheson.[97] Lewis and Hutchinson came to blows over personal and ideological differences. Lewis represented a strain of the AFL and U.S. labor in general that wanted to aggressively expand the organization of industrial workers. The AFL's "old guard" clung to the Federation's tradition of representing only craft-based, skilled workers. Three weeks after Lewis and Hutcheson's fisticuffs, the UMW, ILGWU, and ACWA spearheaded a group of labor leaders who created the Committee for Industrial Organization.

In 1938, the Committee fully broke with the AFL and changed its name to the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The CIO's leaders and their unions were markedly more militant and generally to the political left of the AFL. Many of the CIO's affiliates and leaders participated with socialists and communists in the 1930s "Popular Front" against fascism. For a time, the CIO tolerated the presence of communists within its ranks—they provided a strong base for its activism and organizing. The CIO's vision for the U.S. labor movement was much more

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[97] Zieger, *The CIO*, 22.

expansive in size and scope than that of the AFL. While the CIO's ideological foundations and vision contrasted markedly with the AFL, they also made it a likely ally for Jewish labor in Palestine. Among the CIO's initial leaders were three Jewish Americans from the New York garment trades: Hillman, Dubinsky, and Max Zaritsky. Hillman was not an outspoken advocate for Labor Zionism or the Histadrut, but Dubinsky and Zaritsky were. Non-Jewish CIO leaders soon became admirers of the "Pioneers of Palestine," as well. By the late 1930s prominent CIO figures like Walter and Victor Reuther of the UAW were on board and, by the early 1940s, so too was CIO President Philip Murray.

The CIO and AFL engaged in bitter political and organizational battles during the early 1940s, but they found at least one area of common ground: support for Jewish labor in Palestine. In 1941, AFL President William Green echoed the NCLP's early language in a speech before the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC) at Carnegie Hall. Speaking on the broader topic of the Second World War, Green drew a comparison between the Jewish refugees settling in Palestine and the European pilgrims who first settled in North America. He stated, "Members of the AFL still remember that the early settlers of our great country were those who sought refuge from oppression and established homes in this land where they could worship in accordance with the dictates of conscience."[98] Jewish refugees settling in Palestine, he argued, were a new iteration of this pilgrimage. Green and many of the AFL's old guard leaders were certainly not socialists or even progressives. Yet they too had joined the cause. Images of pioneering Jewish settlers tapped into something that ran deep and broad enough to capture of imagination of U.S. trade unionists on the right and left, Jew and Gentile.

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[98] "American Labor to the Rescue," Carnegie Hall, 17 January 1941, KCA, Cleveland Joint Board Records, Box 3, Folder 14.

As the Histadrut and Labor Zionism's U.S. support base grew, they began to receive more than just American unions' money. In the late 1940s, the Histadrut's U.S. supporters began to mobilize politically. As the horrors of the Holocaust came to light, Labor Zionists and the Histadrut's U.S. allies operated with a heightened sense of urgency. In February, 1946, the NCLP issued a call "to all trade unions," warning that it would be a "decisive" year for the Jewish people and would determine "whether the survivors from the Nazi murder chambers will be permitted to reach the shores of Palestine peacefully… the homeland which was promised to the Jewish people by 52 nations." The Histadrut, the NCLP argued, "stands at the forefront of this fight," making "super-human efforts" to assist "the homeless inmates of the Displaced Persons' camps."[99] The NCLP established a goal of $3 million for relief work and assistance, asking unions to contribute generously from their treasuries and general relief funds. The NCLP asked workers to organize and conduct joint drives in their own industries. Finally, the call announced a "Mass Conference of all Trade Unions" that would demand the immediate implementation of the American-British Commission on Palestine's recommendations.[100]

U.S. trade unions responded. They mobilized in an effort to bring pressure on the Truman administration and the U.S. State Department. AFL President Green personally issued a circular telegram urging AFL locals and state leaders to contact the State Department and demand that it support the immediate entry of 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine. Green wrote that union members should also demand the President take humanitarian action. The immediate rescue of "these 100,000 homeless Jews," Green wrote, "[should] be independent of

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[99] "A Call to All Trade Unions!" National Committee for Labor Palestine, 28 February 1946, KCA, RG 5780.022, Box 1, Folder 16.
[100] "To All Trade Unions: How Much Longer Will They Have to Wait?" NCLP, 28 May 1946, KCA, RG 5780.022, Box 1, Folder 16.

consultations on long range recommendations contained in [the] report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine."[101]

By 1948, the debate over Palestinian partition reached a fever pitch both on the ground in Palestine and in the international arena. The UN General Assembly adopted a partition resolution on November 29, 1947, and violence erupted shortly thereafter. Irregular bands of Palestinian Arabs, attached to local units of the Arab Liberation Army, attacked Jewish cities, settlements, and armed forces.[102] Jewish forces, composed of the Haganah, the Irgun, and Lehi, also mobilized, hoping to repel the Arab forces and gain control of areas that would be part of the future Jewish State. At this point, the U.S. government withdrew its support for the UN Partition Plan, outraging U.S. labor.

The AFL and CIO's New York affiliates, along with the NCLP, again rapidly responded. They called for a "1 million trade unionist work stoppage" in support of partition. The organizations planned a coordinated work stoppage on April 14 at 2pm and a massive rally at Yankee Stadium shortly thereafter.[103] Flyers for the events decried the Truman administration's "Palestine Betrayal" and called on U.S. labor to demand that its government back the UN and help establish a Jewish State in Palestine.[104] American workers across multiple trade unions organizations and from a wide political spectrum were willing to risk their jobs to support their Jewish counterparts in Palestine.

The event's promoters help demonstrate how U.S.-Jewish Palestinian labor solidarity was in large part attributable to U.S. labor's ideological and cultural outlook. Organizers utilized a

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[101] Circular telegram, William Green, 5 June 1946, KCA, President's Records, Box 252, Folder 2.
[102] "The Arab-Israeli War," Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State, accessed at http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/arab-israeli-war.
[103] Press release, Friday, 9 April 1948, KCA, President's Records, 1932-1966, Box 121, Folder 1.
[104] Flyer: "General Work Stoppage to Protest Palestine Betrayal," April 1949, KCA, President's Records, 1932-1966, Box 121, Folder 1.

pattern of rhetoric and images they believed would attract the largest, broadest base of American workers to participate in this massive work stoppage. Flyers spoke about Palestinian Jews as "brave fighters," "trade unionists," and "pioneers in an old land." The Histadrut exemplified "the hopes and aspirations of mankind." The phraseology was both apocalyptic and quasi-religious, describing Jewish workers in Palestine as "a signal part of the world labor movement" who "have been elected by history and the exigencies of time" to carry a two-fold burden: the "ceaseless struggle for mankind" and the struggle for a Jewish national homeland. According to event promoters, including AFL and CIO presidents William Green and Philip Murray, the Histadrut's "forward-looking social ideals set the pace for workers the world over."[105]

The rally at Yankee Stadium, attended by 50,000 trade unionists, exuded fervent support for Jewish workers in Palestine as well as scathing criticism of President Truman and the State Department. Israel Feinberg, the ILGWU's vice president, was one of several labor leaders who addressed the packed audience. He disparaged Washington's "wishy-washy" attitude and speculated that there was a "clique of politicians in high office in our government who have deliberately sought to undermine partition." Feinberg argued that the onus for U.S.'s "reprehensible" diplomacy rested at the feet of Defense Secretary James Forrestal and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Loy Henderson. Against the wishes of American workers and many liberals, the U.S.'s foreign policy was apparently being shaped by "cheap opportunism and expediency." "Sabotage," Feinberg stated, "is the only characteristic we can give to this disgraceful conduct, let the chips fall where they may!"[106] For over 20 years, the Histadrut had inspired U.S. labor leaders and workers. Feinberg and those gathered at Yankee

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Speech by Israel Feinberg, Yankee Stadium, 14 April 1948, KCA, New York Cloak Joint Board Records, 5780.020, Box 18, Folder 3.

Stadium feared this workers' state and progressive force for the Middle East was in jeopardy. It was incumbent upon the U.S. government to follow labor's example and support the Jewish pioneers, who, like their early American counterparts, had been elected by history to carry the burden of civilization across a new frontier.

White House and State Department officials were not so sure. The Truman administration was, according to Warren Bass, "a house divided against itself" regarding the Palestine question. Several of Truman's prominent foreign policy advisers—like Forrestal, Henderson, Dean Acheson, Robert Lovett, George Kennan, and Secretary of State George Marshall—believed that backing a Jewish state was a strategic disaster. They though it would endanger oil supplies crucial to the postwar European recovery, drive Arab states toward the Soviet camp in the nascent Cold War, and potentially risk requiring U.S. troops to enforce partition. Forrestal famously argued, "Forty million Arabs are going to push 400,000 Jews into the sea. And that's all there is to it. Oil—that is the side we ought to be on."[107] On May 14th, the same day Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion read Israel's statehood proclamation, the U.S. recognized the Jewish State. More quietly, however, the Truman administration placed an arms embargo against all belligerents in the region.[108] It was ambivalent support.

U.S. labor unions responded to Truman's actions with corresponding ambivalence. They issued immediate calls for political and military assistance to the fledgling nation. One local ILGWU manager, Louis Stulberg, wrote to Truman, "Following upon your splendid action in recognizing the State of Israel we urge immediate lifting of the embargo on Israel to make effective [the] traditions of American democracy."[109] Just before and during the 1948 Arab-

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[107] Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 25.

[108] "Arab-Israeli War," United States Department of State.

[109] Louis Stulberg to President Truman, May 1948, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 17, Folder 7.

Israeli War, U.S. trade unions and labor leaders continued to press the White House. For instance, ILGWU vice president Zimmerman coordinated efforts with the Committee to Arm the Jewish State (CAJS). CAJS was a public-political committee led by Senator Robert Wagner (D-NY) and Dean Alfange, a recent gubernatorial candidate for the American Labor Party. Herbert Moore, CAJS's treasurer, wrote Zimmerman specific instructions on how he could help CAJS pressure the White House. Moore instructed Zimmerman not to solicit funds for the committee, but to induce the U.S. government "through channels of public opinion and persuasion to provide the Jewish people with the means to defend themselves."[110] Zimmerman was happy to oblige.

The justness of the Israeli cause was more than clear to most U.S. workers, and they were again ready to respond. Israel was a democratic state with a Western culture, they believed. It was created in the U.S.'s own image, with hardy pioneers carrying civilization and modernity to the frontiers. To the U.S. labor movement, there should have been no question about supplying arms to these freedom fighters against "sniping, bomb-throwing" Arabs who were "pouring" into the region.[111] While they were unable to change the U.S. government's position on its Middle East arms embargo, one of Israel's earliest and staunchest American support blocs—U.S. labor unions—made their presence felt.

The End of a War and the Beginning of a Special Relationship

The much larger, but less coordinated, Arab nations and their armies failed to defeat the fledgling Israeli State. By the winter of 1949, shortly after Israel and its neighboring states signed the Armistice Agreements, a vanguard of U.S. labor leaders began touring the new nation. First, Zimmerman visited and was inspired by Israel and its labor movement. Less than a year after his visit, a delegation of top-ranking CIO officials followed in his footsteps and described

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[110] Herbert Moore to Charles Zimmerman, 13 February 1948, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 17, Folder 1.
[111] Speech by Israel Feinberg, Yankee Stadium, 14 April 1948, KCA.

Israel as "on its way to becoming the workshop of the eastern Mediterranean."[112] Eventually, delegations comprised of mid- and local-level U.S. labor officials embarked on these visits. Yet their perspectives and reflections largely remained the same. They all generally viewed Israel and its labor movement through the same lenses, and they generally responded in the same ways.

Beginning in 1949 and continuing throughout the early 1950s, U.S.-Israeli labor relations would solidify into something of a "special relationship." American labor leaders and trade unionists saw Israel through some combination of modernizationist thinking, colonial frontiersman imagery, social democratic and liberal political ideology, and a dedication to anti-communism and free trade unions. The fluid and familiar nature of this imagery enabled Labor Zionists and their American allies to broaden their movement across the U.S. and among a geographically and politically diverse array of unions. After Israeli statehood, this expanding and strengthening relationship would, to borrow from modernization rhetoric, reach its point of take-off. Dozens of U.S. labor leaders and trade unionists began to make pilgrimages to Israel and see what those like Max Pine and Charles Zimmerman had first hand. They were inspired to carry back to the U.S. what some later dubbed "gospel" and motivated to become "goodwill ambassadors" for Israel. Not only that, but as the next chapter demonstrates, the intensification of U.S.-Israeli labor relations had a significant influence outside the house of labor. By the early 1950s, what began as a connection between Jewish American trade unionists, socialists, and progressives in northeast U.S. and Palestine soon held the potential to influence international politics, U.S.-Israeli state relations, and developments on the ground in the Middle East.

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[112] *Report on Israel*, published by the Congress of Industrial Organizations, April 1949, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder "Israel."

Chapter 2

Labor Ambassadors & "The Workshop of the Eastern Mediterranean"

During the summer of 1957, Sam Turk became something of a celebrity in Polk County,

Iowa. That July and August, he sat down for a number of interviews with the *Des Moines*

Register and the *Iowa Federationist*. Turk was president of the Polk County Labor Council of the

American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), but that was not

the particular reason for his newfound local celebrity. That summer, Turk was selected as one of

six U.S. labor and civic officials to tour Israel. He was an international labor ambassador.

In Turk's first column of a multi-week long series in the *Iowa Federationist* he wrote, "I

am going to try each week to give you a little story on the different places and things concerning

Israel." Turk told readers that Israel and its labor federation, the Histadrut, were an impressive

example of capital and labor working toward a common goal—developing and modernizing their

country. In the *Des Moines Register*, Turk observed that the Israelis "have got the most ideal

labor movement going that I ever expected to see." "All they've done here is join hands," he

said. "They recognize the same as we do that there has to be capital and there has to be labor."[113]

Because of the strength of labor and its influence on politics and the economy, Israel was able to

hasten development without exploiting its workers. On the contrary, Turk argued, labor's

strength in Israel ensured many benefits—medical care, good pay, and excellent living

conditions. Israel, according to Turk, was a model case that illustrated organized labor's crucial

and positive role in modernization and development.

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[113] "Turk Finds Israel Labor in Key Role," *Des Moines Register*, August 12, 1957, The Pinchas Lavon Institute for
Labor Movement Research, Tel Aviv, Israel (hereafter, PLI), IV 219A 22.

While Sam Turk may have been something of a celebrity in Iowa, he was just one of dozens of local, regional, and national American labor leaders who visited Israel from the late 1940s through the 1960s. U.S. labor delegates to Israel—from local leaders like Turk to national figures like CIO president Walter Reuther and AFL president George Meany—all spoke glowingly of Israeli labor's accomplishments in modernizing the Middle East and developing social democratic institutions and welfare organizations. Through their tours in Israel, or hearing the good news from those fortunate enough to visit, U.S. trade unionists found in Israel a new model for developing the postcolonial world, combating Communism, and constructing a vibrant workers' state.

This chapter examines how American trade unionists came to see Israel as an exemplar of labor's potential in development and democracy in the early years of the Cold War and decolonization. It was not coincidental that their admiration of Israel and the Histadrut occurred simultaneously with development ideology's ascendance in U.S. foreign policy, independence struggles in the Third World, and international labor's emergence as a crucial battleground, if not *the* crucial battleground, in the struggle between communism and democracy.[114] This chapter traces U.S. labor's campaign to win support for Israel and the Histadrut both in labor and political circles. It places this campaign within both U.S. domestic and international contexts—illustrating how development ideology and the Cold War shaped the ways in which American

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[114] The last decade and a half has seen a spate of innovative works on the relationship between development ideology and U.S. foreign relations. These works include: Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation-Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); David Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

workers viewed Israel and the language and imagery they used to promote it.[115] Following their

tours or second-hand discoveries of Israel and the Histadrut, U.S. trade unionists became self-

described "goodwill ambassadors," working to promulgate images of a modern, progressive, and

democratic Israel. Through these actions, American workers helped "labor" the image of Israel

and the Histadrut in mainstream U.S. politics and culture—making these entities synonymous

with industrious, pioneering, democratic and westernized workers.[116] In the late 1940s and early

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[115] As observed by Daniel Immerwahr in his 2012 article, "Modernization and Development in U.S. Foreign Relations," most extant scholarship on modernization and development in U.S. foreign relations has focused on the plans and ideas of policymakers in Washington. But in reality, Immerwahr argued, "the imperial mind usually exhibits a great deal more coherence and purpose than does the imperial arm, and those operating from the centers of power often see things differently than from those toiling in the fields" [Immerwahr, "Modernization and Development in U.S. Foreign Relations," *Passport*, September 2012, 22-25]. Modernization and development ideology, which played a crucial role in the Cold War, decolonization, and nation-building in the Third World, was much more complicated than a dictate from the West to the rest. Other U.S. foreign relations and labor scholars have correctly argued that the several additional factors and actors need to be examined: how ideas about development moved back and forth between the West, the East, the global North and South; what role non-state actors, like labor, played in the promotion and execution of development ideas and projects; whether Americans truly believed theirs was a one-size-fits all model for development [David Engerman and Corinna Unger," "Towards a Global History of Modernization," *Diplomatic History* 33 (3), June 2009, 375-385]. My project addresses all three of these potential departures, examining how U.S. labor, their Israeli counterparts, and many African trade unions shared ideas about modernization and development. They found in Israel an exemplary model for labor organization and developing nations in the Third World, and they tried to convince international labor organizations and their respective governments likewise.

[116] When using the term "laboring," I am gesturing to a concept articulated in Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1998). Denning argues that during the Popular Front era of the 1930s there was a new visibility of "labor" in America. Labor became pervasive in American culture and rhetoric. The working class, and ideas about it, had an increased influence on culture and art. In the case of U.S.-Israeli relations, I argue that U.S. labor unions tried to affect a "laboring" of the way the U.S. government and American citizenry saw Israel—portraying them as hard-working, productive, and innovative laborers akin to representations of American labor unions in the previous decades. This was a marked departure from previous Western stereotypes of Jews as weak, unhealthy, white-collar bureaucrats, bankers, shopkeepers, or middle-men. Historian Michelle Mart examines how images of Jews and, particularly, Israelis became masculine, tough fighters and pioneers [Michelle Mart, "Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy: Images of Israel, 1948-1960," *Diplomatic History*, Volume 20 (3), Summer 1996]. But Mart does not thoroughly examine the significant role American labor unions played in changing these images.

1950s, Israel's U.S. labor allies tried to translate their increasingly tight-knit bond with Israeli

workers into a "special relationship"[117] between their respective nation-states.[118]

"Point Four," Modernization, and Labor Diplomacy

The ways U.S. trade unionists came to view Israel and the Histadrut was largely colored

by the ideological and political contexts of the Cold War, labor diplomacy, and development

ideology. Most U.S. labor leaders and trade unionists believed in the idea of democratic, "free"

trade unions.[119] They encouraged and supported strong labor unions independent of political

parties or governments that would give workers the means to collectively bargain for improved

working conditions, better wages, and increased benefits. In the late 1940s and early 1950s,

American labor leaders were anticommunists of all stripes—conservative, moderate, progressive,

and social democratic. To varying degrees, U.S. trade unionists also embraced the ideology of

development and modernization. They believed that increased production, improved standards of

living and government investment in infrastructure, education, and healthcare—especially as

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[117] The idea of a "special relationship" between the U.S. and Israel is a much-discussed topic among diplomatic historians. A prime example of this is the roundtable in *Diplomatic History* 22 (2), Spring 1998. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, who chaired the roundtable, explained that "the special relationship thesis generally maintains that the United States and Israel have a unique and unparalleled partnership, with high levels of friendship, amity, trust, and political and military cooperation" [Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A 'Special Relationship'?" *Diplomatic History* 22 (2), Spring 1998, 231]. He concluded, and so did Peter Hahn, that before 1967, "the values and ideals common to both sides were not sufficient to make it special in light of the divergence in strategic interests and the absence of strategic cooperation," [Ibid., 259]. Other works examining the "special relationship" include: Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Douglas Little, "The Making of a Special Relationship: the United States and Israel, 1957-1968," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25, 1993; Bernard Reich, *The United States and Israel: Influence in the Special Relationship* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1984).

[118] Few labor historians and U.S. foreign relations scholars have examined labor's influence on U.S.-Israeli relations. One exception to this historiographical gap is a 2001 essay by Peter Hahn that examined the relationship between major U.S. labor unions and the State of Israel from the late 1940s to the late 1960s. According to Hahn, American labor had an "innate pro-Israel disposition," which was cultivated and utilized by Israeli officials and Histadrut representatives to garner the U.S. government's political and economic support. However, Hahn takes for granted this "innate pro-Israel disposition" without giving the historical and ideological moorings from which this disposition came [Hahn, "The Influence of Organized Labor on U.S. Policy toward Israel, 1945-1967," in Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss, eds., *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World since 1945* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 170-171].

[119] This meaning labor unions that were independent of government or a single political party's control.

manifested in the programs of the New Deal—would not only benefit workers around the world but prevent the spread of communism.

As U.S. labor leaders and unions came to know Israel and the Histadrut, they were pleased to check off all of these ideological requirements and eager spread these assurances throughout their ranks. The Histadrut was democratic and, at least formally, independent of the government. Histadrut officials were elected by political party affiliation, but the Histadrut was still independent of the state and internally contested by its separate party factions. The Histadrut was a powerful organization that not only granted workers the right to bargain, but promised them benefits like healthcare, paid vacation, continuing education and training, and subsidized housing. In terms of garnering the support of U.S. workers, Israel and the Histadrut were an easy sell.

Israel's U.S. labor allies also utilized the late 1940s and early 1950s political contexts—the Cold War, labor diplomacy, and development ideology—to lobby the U.S. government on Israel's behalf. The Truman Administration, like U.S. labor, believed modernization and development were an effective means of waging the Cold War. The Marshall Plan, created in 1947, had marked the beginning of U.S. development aid as a means to alleviate poverty and thus combat communism in Europe. In 1949, Truman sought to extend this program to the "underdeveloped" world: Asia, Africa and Latin America. First unveiled in his inaugural address, the "Point Four" program was a massive, international development and technical aid plan that would guide postcolonial states in industrial and technical development. In both cases—the Marshall Plan and Point Four—development aid would supposedly prove democracy and capitalism's benefits and discredit the "false philosophy" of Communism.

The U.S. government brought U.S. labor onboard as a partner to promote and carry out both programs—a phenomenon historian Hugh Wilford termed "labor diplomacy."[120] In World War II's aftermath, the U.S. government recognized European labor unions' utility in stabilizing and rebuilding Europe. Just weeks after the Truman Administration drafted the Marshall Plan, they recruited U.S. labor leaders to help polish the program's details and strategize ways to encourage European labor unions' cooperation. AFL president Meany and CIO Secretary-Treasurer James Carey served on the "Harriman Committee," a 19-member committee tasked with finalizing the Marshall Plan.[121] The administration also sought U.S. labor's participation in another key piece of the Marshall Plan: the Economic Cooperation Agency (ECA). The ECA conducted massive promotional campaigns designed to convert Europe's labor unions to the American "productivity gospel"—a belief that government, business, and labor shared interests in increasing production, wages, and consumption, and should therefore seek ways to cooperate closely for the benefit of all parties. "Productivism" was an idea many U.S. labor unions, especially those of the CIO, wholeheartedly embraced.[122] Millions of Marshall Plan dollars were set aside for the ECA, and U.S. trade unionists staffed the ECA's Labor Information Division.

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[120] Hugh Wilford argued in "American Labour Diplomacy and Cold War Britain," that U.S. "labor diplomacy" was a phenomenon in which the U.S. government and American labor partnered to stabilize and rebuild Europe and strengthen its democratic trade union movements [Wilford, "American Labour Diplomacy and Cold War Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History* 37 (1), January 2002, 45-65]. "Labor diplomacy," according to Wilford, embodied both a "negative" and "positive" iteration. Wilford argued that the "negative" iteration, manifest in the policies of the AFL's Free Trade Union Committee and its leader, Jay Lovestone, was "the task of waging political warfare on communism, which tended to entail covertly supporting indigenous anti-communist groups on the European left." It involved acts of espionage, sabotage and subterfuge. It was most famously carried out by Lovestone's FTUC agent in France and Italy, Irving Brown. "Positive" labor diplomacy, on the other hand, was manifest in American attempts to spread the "productivity gospel." This consisted of "the values of non-political trade unionism, labour-management cooperation, and modern working practices, with the twin aims of protecting European economies against communist destabilization and bringing them within the American economic orbit." According to Wilford, this positive approach was most strongly promoted by the CIO and executed through massive amounts of development aid from the Marshall Plan.

[121] Robert Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 265.

[122] Wilford, "American Labour Diplomacy and Cold War Britain," 54.

During the late 1940s and 1950s, American trade unionists tried to leverage their newly acquired influence to affect U.S. foreign policy. They also endeavored to employ the logic and rhetoric of development and the Cold War as means to bring the U.S. government into a close partnership with the Israel. They waged "labor diplomacy" at home to influence their nation's relations abroad. But as they quickly discovered, it was still an uphill battle.

In the late 1940s, American labor and the U.S. government's perceptions of Israel were markedly different. The State Department was suspicious of Israel's international loyalties and unconvinced that Israel and its labor movement presented any potential utility for U.S. interests. In December 1948, for example, the State Department believed it necessary to examine whether Israel was a Communist, "Red state." They sent Samuel Klaus, a special research adviser, to Tel Aviv to investigate. After two months in Israel, Klaus concluded that there was "no immediate Soviet danger" in Israel, though he suspected that certain elements were still trying to prod the state toward the East. State Department officials were relieved that the communist threat was not "immediate," but they would keep a wary eye on certain the factions in Israeli government and labor that leaned red.[123]

In 1949, International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) Vice President Charles Zimmerman made his own trip to Israel to survey the new nation's economic and political situation; his findings starkly contrasted those of Klaus. On January 12, 1949, Zimmerman reported to the Administrative Committee of the National Committee for Labor Israel (NCLI). He told the committee, "The rumors that have been spread about the communist influence in that country are untrue." Zimmerman had apparently discussed the political situation "with all sorts of people in Israel" and was convinced that "there is no danger, whatever, of communist control

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[123] Uri Bialer, *Between East and West: Israel's Foreign Policy Orientation, 1948-1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 208.

or power in Israel."[124] The following year, Zimmerman again confirmed Israel's anti-communist bona fides and development achievements. He stated, "I remember when I was leaving for Israel nearly two years ago, all sorts of rumors—inspired rumors, I might say—were circulating in this country to the effect that Israel was one the verge of going Communist." The reality, he said, was "altogether different." Israel, as Zimmerman conveyed to his ILGWU colleagues, was "a bulwark against the forces of reaction and totalitarianism in the Near East," which he believed was one of the most critical areas in the "explosive world situation" of the emerging Cold War.[125]

While the State Department worried about Israeli factions leaning red, U.S. trade unionists believed Israel presented a powerful model for how to successfully *combat* the communist threat. In his 1950 presentation, Zimmerman argued that Israel was a "constructive democracy" that demonstrated to the developing world how to successfully modernize and inoculate itself against Communism. Like many progressives, liberals, and socialists at the time, Zimmerman believed the best way to combat communism was through development—a tenet of the "productivity gospel." He told his ILGWU audience, "You cannot fight Communism or reaction simply with words…you've got to show them. Israel is showing them. What Israel is doing is to show that there is a constructive democratic alternative to reaction and Communism." Through its mixed economy, its democratic political system, and, most importantly, its labor movement, Israel not only presented a "workable alternative to Communism" for the developing

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[124] Minutes, Administrative Committee Meeting, American Trade Union Council, National Committee for Labor Israel, 12 January 1949, Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (hereafter, KCA), Record Group (RG) 5780.014, Box 27: Folder 2.
[125] "Excerpt of Remarks of Charles Zimmerman, Vice President, ILGWU, 9 October 1950, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 27, Folder 2.

world; according to Zimmerman, there was also "a lot we in America can learn from this experiment."[126]

U.S. labor and state's dueling narratives were emblematic of the early rift between U.S.-Israeli government and labor relations. They also encapsulate a divergence of priorities and ideology during the 1950s. While President Truman recognized the Jewish state in 1948, U.S.-Israeli relations through the remainder of his presidency were ambivalent. The White House was more concerned with the reconstruction of postwar Europe and the looming threat of Soviet Communism in Europe and Asia than Israel's security and development. The Marshall Plan and the "Point Four" program signified the government's embrace of development ideology, but Washington did not yet view Israel as a trustworthy or worthwhile partner.

The alignment of U.S. labor diplomacy and American foreign policy therefore looked very different in Israel and the Middle East than Europe. Beginning with Zimmerman in 1949 and continuing throughout the 1950s, dozens of American workers and labor leaders toured Israel and viewed it positively through the lenses of modernization, liberal labor ideology, and the developing Cold War. They shared what they saw with other U.S. trade unionists, strengthening labor's support for Israel and the Histadrut. While the White House was skeptical of making Israel a key recipient—or even partner—in the "Point Four" program, U.S. workers argued for massive development aid and political support for Israel. American labor tried to assure their government that Israel was a key ally in the global struggle against Soviet communism and the campaign to steer development in a democratic direction. U.S. labor therefore engaged in a different kind of "labor diplomacy" for Israel, one in which they tried to push their own government, not foreign labor movements or nations, in the proper direction. But

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[126] Ibid.

before launching these lobbying campaigns and this form of labor diplomacy, the Histadrut and

its earliest U.S. labor supporters had to spread the good news to American workers.

Touring the "Most Modern Metropolitan Center of the Middle East"

A few months after Truman's "Point Four" speech, and shortly after Israel and its

neighboring Arab states signed a series of armistice agreements, the first vanguard of U.S. labor

leaders journeyed to see the newly independent nation firsthand. One of the first such groups was

a CIO delegation consisting of Jacob Potofsky, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers

of America (ACWA), President Joseph Curran of the National Maritime Union (NMU), and

Maxwell Brandwen, special counsel to the ILGWU. During their tour, the delegation visited

immigrant camps, housing developments, cooperative projects, the Knesset, hospitals, trade

schools, farm collectives, factories, port facilities, banks, and other "scenes of historic

bravery."[127] The way they perceived and described Israel and its labor movement to the rank-

and-file workers of the CIO in America echoed many of the themes ILGWU vice president

Zimmerman discussed after his 1949 visit.

The 1949 CIO delegation published a report that approvingly described Israel and its

workers in the imagery and rhetoric of progressive labor values, modernization and development

ideology, and Cold War terminology. Israel was "on its way to becoming the workshop of the

eastern Mediterranean," they reported. This was due to its hardy Jewish "pioneers" who were

"short of funds but filled with enthusiasm to build a nation and a new society." The fruits of their

labors included the impressive city of Tel Aviv, which was built "out of the sand dunes" and

made into "the most modern metropolitan center in the Middle East." Through blood, sweat, and

toil, the Jewish worker was putting forth "a mighty effort to build a new economy out of land,

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[127] *Report on Israel*, published by the Congress of Industrial Organizations, April 1949, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel.

rock, and sand long neglected" (presumably by the Arabs).[128] These images presented a striking contrast to centuries' old stereotypes of "unmasculine," physically weak Jews, and promoted the Israeli worker as a model for the rest of the region. Accordingly, the CIO delegation helped transform depictions of Jewish Israelis as "insiders," rather than their centuries' old "outsider" status, making them appear to U.S. workers a more relatable, trustworthy and fraternal international ally.[129]

The CIO delegation was impressed not only by these herculean tasks of modernizing the Middle East, but also by the Histadrut's social institutions and welfare organizations. They envied the power and prevalence of organized labor in Israel. During the late 1940s, the power and influence of labor unions had lost some momentum. The largest U.S. unions' membership rolls were beginning to stagnate. And after the fall 1946 congressional elections, Republicans, for the first time since 1930, gained control of both houses in Congress.[130] The Republican-led Congress tried to chip away at labor's New Deal and World War II era gains, most famously in its passage of the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act. The act curtailed many of U.S. labor's means for action, like wildcat strikes, solidarity or political strikes, secondary boycotts and picketing, and monetary donations to federal political campaigns. The Taft Hartley Act also imposed an embarrassing loyal pledge for trade union leaders. By the 1950s, labor's hopes for renewing and expanding the New Deal shifted into a defensive posture.

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[128] This would be a recurrent theme in U.S.-Israeli labor allies' ideas and rhetoric. They portrayed Arab peoples and governments as developmentally and politically backwards, and responsible for neglecting the Middle East's development. Chapter 3 covers this in more detail, but it is worth mentioning that these negative portrayals—or at times, the elision of Arab presence or achievements—further justified celebrating and supporting Israel's development, consolidation, and the spreading of its influence throughout the region.

[129] Historian Michelle Mart discusses Jewish Israelis and American Jews' transformation from cultural "outsiders" to "insiders" in her article, "Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy: Images of Israel, 1948-1960," *Diplomatic History* 20 (3), Summer 1996. However, Mart focuses primarily on cultural images found in 1950s films, books, mainstream press, and U.S. politicians' speeches, not American trade unions.

[130] Zieger, *The CIO*, 245.

Even at the height of their power and influence, U.S. labor unions never attained the same

status as their Israeli counterpart. The 1949 CIO delegation observed, "The strength and

influence of Histadrut permeate every sphere of activity in the new nation, and its voice is heard

and respected everywhere in the country and in the government."[131] Unlike the bread-and-butter

bargaining model of American unions, particularly that of the still-dominant AFL, the

Histadrut's interests expanded to every aspect of society—health-care, education, job creation,

banking, recreation, cultural activities, retirement, social security and unemployment

compensation. Many CIO leaders dissented from the AFL's predominating model and leaned

toward visions of industrial and social democracy. Israel's 1949 CIO visitors enviously observed,

"The Histadrut takes care of people from the cradle to the grave."[132]

These high-ranking CIO officials, like the ILGWU's Zimmerman before them, saw their

Israeli counterparts reflected through their own experiences and history; they were, in effect,

insiders, just like any American worker. "The American people, like the men and women of

Israel, pioneered and built a great society," the CIO report stated. "The members of the CIO, like

the men and women of Histadrut, have pioneered new economic and social programs to benefit

the workers." Politically, they described Israel as a place "where [President Franklin

Roosevelt's] Four Freedoms have solid foundations. There is liberty to talk and to think and to

practice one's own religion."[133] They found at the Histadrut's headquarters "the same type of

activity that one finds in the national CIO": legislative research, organization, publicity, political

action, international relations and other similar departments. And economically, the Israeli

[131] *Report on Israel*, published by the CIO, April 1949, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel.
[132] Ibid.
[133] The "Four Freedoms" came from a speech President Franklin Roosevelt delivered on the eve of America's entry into World War II. They were, according to the president, the four fundamental freedoms that should be enjoyed by people worldwide: freedom of speech, freedom from want, freedom of worship, freedom from fear.

pioneers were "the first in the world to have developed their own New Deal before they had a

nation." All of this led the delegation to conclude, "Our heritage has much in common. Our goals

of a better life are much the same."[134] The Histadrut, therefore, represented the best of what labor

unions could be and accomplish. Israeli labor was a natural ally in the productivist, modernizing

campaign of U.S. labor's foreign policy and an inspiring torchbearer for the mission of

progressive social democratic labor values throughout the globe.

The CIO's 1949 delegation followed its Middle East tour with a list of policy

recommendations, marking the beginning of U.S. labor's pattern of support for Israel and the

Histadrut throughout the ensuing decades. The delegation argued, "The CIO can and should

exert its influence, both in the United States and in the world labor movement, to help the cause

of Israel and Histadrut." To do this, they proposed the formation of a CIO Israel-American

Committee. They recommended their union lobby the U.S. government for more substantial

loans to Israel. They also suggested that U.S. labor unions encourage large-scale, private

investment in Israeli economic projects, stating, "the opportunities for investments are so

numerous, the signs of growth are certain, that American capital should logically find its way to

Israel in great quantities."[135]

The CIO delegation's final recommendation—making Israel a key Point Four program

partner—illustrates how Israel's U.S. labor allies understood and promoted Israel and the

Histadrut within the frameworks of the Cold War and development. "The Histadrut's methods

and pioneering spirit are being studied and examined throughout [the Middle East]," they noted.

"As President Truman's 'bold new program' for helping the people of backward areas moves

toward the action stage, the Histadrut method may well be recognized as the best method of

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[134] *Report on Israel*, published by the CIO, April 1949, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel.
[135] Ibid.

helping colonial peoples [outside the Middle East] to help themselves."[136] It was a perfect

conduit for U.S. development aid. Point Four assistance to Israel would not only benefit this

exemplary model itself, but also spur a multiplier effect throughout the Middle East and beyond.

The CIO's report signified the beginning U.S. labor's campaign to support Israel as part of a

global, modernizing and anti-communist crusade.

While the CIO's delegates spread word about Israel and the Histadrut within their own

unions, labor-based organizations and associations like the American Trade Union Council for

the Histadrut (ATUC) tried to cultivate and mobilize support for Israel and the Histadrut across a

broad swath of U.S. trade unions.[137] The ATUC was not affiliated with any particular trade

union, but prominent trade union officials served in its leadership and administration. In 1949 the

ATUC brought in about $1 million annually to support the Histadrut. During the ATUC's 26th

annual conference, the Council reported $710,895 in contributions from New York trade unions

and $219,675 from unions in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Detroit, Chicago, and Los

Angeles (as well as from Canadian union in Montreal and Toronto).[138] Among the most

significant ATUC contributors in 1949 were the ILGWU, the ACWA, the Cap Makers Union,

the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, the United Hebrew

Trades, and the Carpenters and Painters Unions. While much of the Histadrut's early American

support came from Jewish workers and the United Hebrew Trades, by the late 1940s and 1950s

Israeli workers had allies spanning a much wider spectrum.

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[136] Ibid.

[137] For instance, ILGWU Vice President Joseph Breslaw served as an early chairman; AFL President William Green and CIO President Phillip Murray served as honorary chairmen; UAW President Walter Reuther and AFL Vice President Matthew Woll served as honorary vice-chairmen [Hahn, "The Influence of Organized Labor on U.S. Policy toward Israel," 156]. The ATUC was formerly known as the National Labor Committee for Palestine.

[138] Minutes of the Annual Conference of the ATUC-NCLI, 26 November 1949, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, 1932-1966, Box 121, Folder 1.

ATUC leaders, like Zimmerman and the 1949 CIO delegation to Israel, argued that they had first-hand proof that Israel was more than worthy of this financial and political support. Isidor Laderman, one of the ATUC's 1949 convention speakers, listed the various trade unions leaders and representatives who visited Israel over the course of the year. He stressed the fact that "each and every one of them without a single exception, returned from Israel with the greatest enthusiasm about the accomplishments both of the Government of Israel and of its backbone, the Histadrut." Harry Greenberg, manager of ILGWU Local 91 and chairman of the ATUC's administrative committee, described the Israel he had visited as a "great miracle." Another recent visitor, Louis Hollander, president of the New York State CIO and vice president of the ACWA, said that much of his tour was "happy and proud, but also stark tragedy."[139] He lamented that the U.S. gave Marshall Plan aid to Germany but not to the victims of German repression who were now trying to build Israel. He worried that the international community, through initiatives like the Bernadotte recommendations, which promoted international control of Jerusalem and a "right to turn" for Palestinian refugees, would further injure the Jewish people.[140] He argued, "The people of Israel cannot permit Jerusalem to be torn away. There can be no Israel without Jerusalem and no Jerusalem without Israel."[141] Following Hollander's trip to

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[139] Ibid.

[140] The Bernadotte recommendations were a series of proposals put forward by UN Security Council Mediator Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden. Bernadotte attempted to mediate a peaceful resolution to the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. He laid out seven "basic premises" for the settlement of "the Palestine question." These included: "the right of the people uprooted from their homes by the ravages of the present war to return to their homes" and that "the city of Jerusalem, because of its religious and international significance…should be treated separately and should be placed under effective United Nations control." The militant Zionist group, LEHI, assassinated Bernadotte in 1948. ["UN Makes Public Bernadotte's Recommendations; Existence of Jewish State Recognized," 21 September 1948, Jewish Telegraphic Agency].

[141] Minutes of the Annual Conference of the ATUC-NCLI, 26 November 1949, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, 1932-1966, Box 121, Folder 1.

Israel, he lobbied U.S. unions to support Israel and the Histadrut. The ACWA's New York locals

responded, contributing $100,000 for a Histadrut Housing Project.[142]

The following year, the 1950 ATUC conference issued a summary resolution in support

of the Histadrut that described the state of Israel as "democratic" and having "a uniquely

progressive character." This progressive character was accordingly demonstrated through:

Israel's 400 cooperative agricultural settlements; the Histadrut's establishment of 200 new

industrial and service cooperatives; training programs and medical services provided to recent

immigrants; *Shikun*, the Histadrut's contracting company; Solel Boneh, the Histadrut's

construction company; and the Histadrut's various credit and loan associations. Additionally,

members of the ATUC greatly admired the Histadrut's *Kupat Holim*, which they described as

"the largest health care system in the Middle East, an area notoriously backward in caring for the

welfare of common people." Members of the ATUC supported the Histadrut because of its social

and economic institutions, its social democratic ideology, and the ways in which the Histadrut

and Israeli government worked together, "in the general development of the country." They

believed U.S. labor had been able to share a similar labor-state partnership during the New Deal

era, but those days were fading. Fortunately, Israel was still carrying that torch.[143]

Besides the Histadrut's "uniquely progressive character," the ATUC resolution illustrated

other ways in which U.S. trade unionists saw Israel and its labor movement as torch-bearers.

Israeli labor was continually portrayed as industrious, vibrant, and pioneering. ATUC conference

members saluted those who had "pioneered in many lines, sending youth groups to colonize the

wastelands, extending irrigation pipes into the desert, providing manpower to build roads and

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[142] Ibid.

[143] "Resolution on Histadrut," American Trade Union Council Annual Conference, 1950, KCA, RG 5254, Box 4, Folder: Histadrut.

railroads." Going further, ATUC members attributed a spiritual value to the role of labor in

Israel. Because "the foundations of Israel were laid by men and women imbued with a sacred

regard for creative labor in all forms," the resolution argued, "the young state [of Israel] came

into being as a full fledged democracy under the tutelage of organized labor." The result of such

a state, founded by labor and imbued with its sacred values, was "a new nation, a nation that has

reached a high mark in the course of civilization."[144]

The ATUC delegates' remarks and resolutions were significant beyond their immediate

conference proceedings, because during this period the ATUC exerted increasing influence on

broader U.S.-Israeli labor ties. In 1950, the ATUC reported that since 1948 U.S. labor unions

contributed over $3 million dollars to the Histadrut through its channels. ATUC leaders claimed

that "in these three years, the Histadrut ceased to be a remote and faintly known organization in

America…millions of American workers have heard the message…and have been activated to

aid the cause of Israel and its organized labor movement."[145] From the creation of the National

Committee for Labor-Palestine in 1924 to the ATUC's 1950 conference, U.S. labor had raised

$28.9 million for the Histadrut. The ATUC served as a major spearhead for U.S. labor's financial

and political support to Israel. By 1951, the organization boasted over 3,000 trade union and

fraternal organizations from 400 different American cities and towns, in 44 states. This included

over 100,000 annual financial contributors, in addition to the "great number of workers who

make their contributions through shop collections and other media utilized by the trade

unions."[146] The ATUC's dramatic growth and recent successes were a microcosm of larger U.S.-

Israeli labor developments.

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[144] Ibid.

[145] "Resolution on Mobilization of Technicians for Israel," American Trade Union Council Annual Conference, 1950, KCA, RG 5254, Box 4, Folder: Histadrut.

[146] Isaac Hamlin to the Manufacturers Trust Company, 25 November 1951, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 27, Folder 2.

In addition to prominent labor delegations' tours and large-scale conferences (like those of the ATUC), in the early 1950s support for the Histadrut could also be found at a very grassroots level. In Cleveland, for example, the local Labor Council held Sunday breakfasts for the Histadrut.[147] In Buffalo, New York, the local Niagara Frontier Branch of the ATUC hosted annual Histadrut Family Picnics.[148] And finally, this early 1950s grassroots-level support was evident in cities like Newark, Detroit, Baltimore, and Chicago, where ad hoc groups held Cantor Dinners and conducted their own local bond drives for Israel and the Histadrut.[149] Throughout the U.S., small-scale groups initiated their own weekly and monthly meetings and gatherings in solidarity with Israeli workers.

While local unions, like the ILGWU's New York Cloak Joint Board, may have held small, intimate gatherings, they often raised sums of money that were anything but small. In October 1950, for instance, the NY Cloak Joint Board collected $100,000 for the construction of a Labor Center in Israel.[150] This impressive sum was raised through voluntary contributions by American workers, not through official unions coffers. Speaking at a ceremonial luncheon for the Labor Center fund, Israel Feinberg, manager of the local union, explained why these U.S. trade unionists had been so motivated to support Israeli labor. He stated, "Israel is entitled to the support of the democratic nations of the world as an ally in our struggles against totalitarianism, and not as a philanthropic gesture. This fortress of freedom in the Near East can be a potential force for social justice and democratic enlightenment among the peoples of that area."[151]

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[147] Minutes of First Meeting, Cleveland Labor Council Committee, 2 October 1952, KCA, Cleveland Joint Board Records, RG 5780.048, Box 3, Folder 11.
[148] Mayer Ludwig to James Miller, 10 July 1950, KCA, RG 5254, Box 4, Folder: Histadrut.
[149] Minutes of First Meeting, Cleveland Labor Council Committee, 2 October 1952, KCA, Cleveland Joint Board Records, RG 5780.048, Box 3, Folder 11.
[150] Untitled memo, 4 October 1950, KCA, New York Cloak Joint Board Records, 1926-1973, RG 5870.020, Box 18, Folder 4.
[151] Israel Feinberg, untitled memo, 4 October 1950, KCA, New York Cloak Joint Board Records, 1926-1973, RG 5870.020, Box 18, Folder 4.

Feinberg's remarks, delivered at a much more grassroots level, demonstrated that here, too, U.S. workers viewed Israel and the Histadrut through the some combination of the same general framework: social democratic and liberal labor values; development ideology; and the Cold War.

By 1951, just three years after Israel's creation, thousands of unions spread throughout large and small communities in the U.S. were lending Israel and its labor movement political and financial support. They learned about Israel's labor-centric values through what they heard and read, and they continued to spread this good news to whoever might offer an ear. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Histadrut's supporters had mainly been Jewish workers and labor leaders in the Northeast, but—in large part because of the Cold War and the increasing influence of development ideology—support for Israeli labor spread to different regions, different unions and different types of workers. During the 1950s, to both high-level U.S. labor leaders and rank-and-file members, Israel was "a beacon of hope."[152]

Tailoring to American Labor Ideology

One of the reasons support for and admiration of the Histadrut spread so quickly and broadly within U.S. labor was Israeli labor leaders and government officials' adeptness at couching appeals in the right language and imagery. In speeches, published materials, and correspondences, Histadrut and Israeli government officials were apt to advertise their labor movement and state in terms of development, democracy, and liberal ideals. They brandished both their Cold War and "modern" bona fides in a turbulent Middle East. While they generally shared many of the same views as U.S. workers, they still skillfully cultivated U.S. support by tailoring published materials, speeches, and tours to meet Americans' expectations.

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[152] Ibid.

Histadrut General Secretary Pinchas Lavon's speech to a New York luncheon crowd provides the perfect example. In February 1951, Lavon spoke at an ATUC event, attended by over 100 American trade union representatives. "We are not neutral [in the Cold War]," he began. "We were never neutral. Only a people without character and a subjugated people, only a people which lives by the precepts of others can be neutral."[153] Lavon's statement was quite open to debate and interpretation. During Israel's first years of statehood, the government practiced an avowed foreign policy of non-alignment, "knocking on any door," Soviet, American, or otherwise, in hopes of political and financial support.[154] Given this, as well as the social democratic character of Israel's economy, Lavon attempted to assure his audience that Israel and the Histadrut, while avowedly socialist, were firmly planted in the Western camp.

Next Lavon appealed to his U.S. audience by describing Israel and the Histadrut in terms of modernization and development. He said, "We must now concentrate on three basic things: roofs, as many as possible, and bread, as much as possible, and iron, as much as possible." The Israeli people, as he described them, were hardy and willing to sacrifice in order to develop their state. "We know that we will not have meat or steak," he said. "We will probably have to give up some other things, but the basic problem to us is…how to make sure that we will be able to go on living for as long as possible in this turbulent world." Lavon then encouraged U.S. labor unions to raise money for Amun bonds, a key component in Israel's economic development. Israel used Amun bonds to build modern housing projects for new immigrants.[155]

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[153] Minutes of Luncheon Meeting, 1 February 1951, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, Box 121, Folder 1.
[154] Scholarly works covering the reasons for Israel's policy non-alignment include: Zach Levey, *Israel and the Western Powers, 1952-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Avi Shlaim, "Israel Between East and West, 1948-1956," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 36, 2004, 657-673; Yosef Govin, *Israeli-Soviet Relations, 1953-1967: From Confrontation to Disruption* (New York: Frank Cass, 1998); Bialer, *Between East and West.*
[155] Minutes of Luncheon Meeting, 1 February 1951, KCA, President's Records, Box 121, Folder 1.

Histadrut leaders were also adept at promoting the Israeli labor movement through informational materials distributed to U.S. unions, like a 1953 newsletter published by the Histadrut's Executive Board, *Labor in Israel*. Moshe Bitan, the Histadrut's U.S. representative, prepared several articles in the 1953 issue that illustrate the ways in which the Histadrut couched its successful U.S. appeals. Bitan's first piece, "How the Histadrut Functions," described to American workers a more powerful, progressive, and democratic trade union organization than those found in the U.S. He explained, "The structure of the Histadrut differs considerably from that of the American trade union movement."[156] Members of the Histadrut, unlike trade unionists in the U.S., did not join specific unions but the Histadrut directly. Only then did they become members of both a local labor council and a national trade union. Local labor councils were similar to city councils, Bitan wrote, which handled the affairs in a given locality and had jurisdiction over local unions.

Bitan also promoted the Histadrut's progressive functions and ideology, something else of which many American workers were no doubt envious. The Histadrut, he explained, "is deeply interested and therefore active in the field of social security, constructive economic enterprises, culture, vocational training, education, and other [functions]."[157] During a period in which American labor unions were battling to retain their size, influence, and gains from the New Deal era, the Histadrut was moving forward.

Finally, Bitan appealed to Americans' fascination with frontiers and pioneering in his third article, "Histadrut as a Colonizer and an Entrepreneur." He claimed, "[Jewish workers] found in Palestine a devastated, deserted country that could be reclaimed only through great

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[156] Moshe Bitan, "How Histadrut Functions," *Labor in Israel*, Volume 1 (2), 18 February 1953, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, Box 253, Folder 3B.
[157] Bitan, "Growth of Histadrut," *Labor in Israel*.

treated as VIP's during their visits, and they were shown specific locations and institutions to affirm their understanding of Israel as a modern, progressive, democratic nation. While relations between the governments of the U.S. and Israel grew cold and contentious, labor ties continued to strengthen. During these decades, dozens of U.S. trade unionists came back from Israel inspired to translate labor's "special relationship" into the realm U.S.-Israeli state relations.

Two major U.S. union tours of Israel illustrate this nexus of travel, ideology, and advocacy. These particularly salient examples come from top-level CIO and AFL delegations in 1953 and 1954, respectively. From July 16 to 27, 1953, CIO President Walter Reuther sent a group of high-ranking union officials, including CIO Secretary-Treasurer James Carey, Transport Workers Union of America President Michael Quill, and Arthur Goldberg, then-General Counsel of the CIO and United Steelworkers of America. The delegation spent eleven days in Israel, meeting with government and Kupat Holim officials, participating in the Kaplan Hospital's dedication ceremony (the ACWA financed its construction), touring industrial plants, and visiting Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Tiberius. According to the CIO delegation's report, *Swords into Plowshares*, they "asked searching questions…sought out information in every corner of that little land…inspected industrial development projects, cooperative farms, irrigation projects, and the stormy border between Israel and the Arab world." They returned to the U.S. confirming, just as had previous labor delegations, that Israel was "a bastion of democracy in the Middle East."[161]

Despite the vast ideological differences between the CIO and AFL, the latter's 1954 delegates to Israel spoke in similar terms in their booklet *We Saw Israel*.[162] William Griffin,

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[161] *Swords into Plowshares: A 1953 Report on Israel*, produced by the CIO, 1953, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel.
[162] *We Saw Israel: A Report of a Visit by American Trade Unionists*, published by the AFL, 1954, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Israel.

vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Phil Hannah, Secretary-Treasurer

of the Ohio State Federation of Labor, and P.L. Siemiller, vice-president of the International

Association of Machinists in Chicago, spent eleven days in Israel as part of a seven-man,

combined delegation with the CIO. The two labor federations were moving toward a merger, and

support for Israel seemed to be at least one area of common ground. The AFL delegation

reported similarly to their union members that, in Israel, new building was going on at a

"tremendous pace." The Israeli people were "working hard to build themselves a homeland to

create a rich, new civilization, based on old traditions and 20th century progress."[163] AFL

delegates were impressed by Israel's "modern cities and rugged pioneering country."[164] Like

their CIO counterparts, they were inspired by Israel's modern development, its democratic

political system and "pioneering" spirit.

While many of the initial American labor pilgrims to Israel were top-level leaders, U.S.

trade union delegations became more broadly based and grassroots over the course of the 1950s.

U.S. labor junkets became more representative of U.S. and Israeli workers' deep and broad ties,

including more mid- and local-level leaders. They also evinced the preponderance of U.S.-Israeli

labor relations' ideological foundations: labor-centric values, development ideology, and Cold

War politics. One delegation, during the summer of 1957, included three local and regional

leaders who illustrate these ideological bases and the role U.S. workers played as informal labor

"ambassadors" for Israel and the Histadrut.

Joe Glazer, Education Director of the United Rubber Workers, was a member of this six-

man delegation. Upon his return, Glazer wrote a travel report that was shared with the AFL-

CIO's nationwide membership. Glazer's words held added weight, because by the late 1950s, he

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[163] "The State of Israel," *We Saw Israel*.
[164] "Introduction," *We Saw Israel*.

was a U.S. labor folk hero. In 1950, he and his "Elm City Four" were the first musical group to record a version of the later civil rights movement's anthem, "We Shall Overcome." In 1955, the AFL-CIO funded Glazer's labor-themed album, "Eight New Songs for Labor."[165] During the 1940s, Glazer had traveled the U.S. to rally and inspire workers during strikes and picket lines with his music. In 1957, he traveled to the Middle East and, for a change, was the one inspired.

When Glazer returned home, the labor lyricist described Israel and the Histadrut in dramatic, religious tones, "Miracle of miracles, I saw this ancient worn-out desert land being made to bloom."[166] At first, he apparently saw "the land of the Bible"—once filled with milk and honey—"now full of rocks and sand and swamps." But, lo and behold, the "modern Israelis" were there, "planting trees, clearing the hills, draining the swamps, piping water into the desert, making the barren earth bring forth flowers, food, and fiber." Glazer had seemingly "seen the light" of development in Israel. He credited the Histadrut with bringing about such miracles. "The most fabulous labor organization in the world," he told his U.S. labor audience, the Histadrut was "the AFL-CIO of Israel plus many other things."[167] It had its own construction and contracting organization, Solel Boneh, which built roads, bridges, dams, and apartments. It flourished with agricultural produce, consumers and producers' cooperatives, and health care. After his visit, Glazer joined the chorus singing Israeli labor's praises.

Glazer's counterpart, J. William Belanger, also penned a glowing report on Israel and the Histadrut. Belanger, President of the Massachusetts CIO, described Israel almost entirely in terms of development. "Everywhere," he wrote, "there are unmistakable signs of growth." He said their two-week itinerary allowed them to gain clear insight "into the many phases of this

[165] Douglas Martin, "Joe Glazer, 88, a Singer and Songwriter for Labor, Dies," *The New York Times,* 21 September 2006.
[166] Joe Glazer, "Labor Movement Builds Israel," September 1957, PLI, IV 219A 22.
[167] Ibid.

rapid development of industrial and social life which have brought standards comparable to those

of the western world to an area where potentials for growth had been allowed for centuries to

stagnate in indifference and lack of vision." Their tour began at the "new and modern" national

headquarters of the Histadrut, where they were met by officials like General Secretary Pinchas

Lavon. "Right there in Tel Aviv," Belanger wrote, "we saw thousands of new houses that have

sprung up in formerly desert areas stretching towards the minarets of Jaffa, an old Arab town

which is now a part of Tel Aviv." From there, they toured Holon, a community of workers near

Tel Aviv, where the delegation saw modern houses and cultural institutions, all part of "a desert

area being reclaimed." Near Haifa, they visited a steel industrial plant launched by a Chicago

company in partnership with the Histadrut. And finally, Belanger described a tour of the

Histadrut's agricultural marketing cooperative, Tnuva, which was impressive because of "its

hygienic operation and cleanliness."[168]

This message of good news was literally described as "gospel" by some U.S. trade

unionists. Irving Bluestone, UAW Administrative Assistant to Walter Reuther, reported to David

Harris of the Histadrut International Affairs Department that he was "carrying the 'gospel'

wherever I can and have accepted every invitation received."[169] Bluestone said that he and his

wife, Zelda, were so inspired by their trip that it made them unofficial ambassadors for Israel,

spreading news of Israel's development and needs wherever and whenever they could.[170]

Apparently there was a very eager audience to hear this. Bluestone said he was "literally

besieged with requests" to appear before groups and describe his time in Israel and impressions

of its people, labor movement, and challenges.[171] He and his wife were having a hard time

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[168] J. William Belanger, "A Decade of Growth—Report on Israel," 1957, PLI, IV 219A, 22.
[169] Irving Bluestone to David Harris, 21 January 1964, PLI, IV 219A, 70A.
[170] Bluestone to Yehudit Simhoni, 21 January 1964, PLI, IV 219A, 70A.
[171] Bluestone to Harris, 21 January 1964, PLI, IV 219A, 70A.

settling down and accomplishing routine chores back in Detroit, because they were busy processing and unraveling all they saw and heard.

Bluestone also told Histadrut officials that he was making further plans to "bring the message" to UAW members "so they can have a clearer understanding of the significance of Histadrut as an oasis of trade union activity in the Middle East and in Africa."[172] After arriving home, he quickly arranged meetings with UAW regional directors to discuss ways of bringing "the Histadrut story" to local unions, beginning in Detroit.[173] Bluestone was also spending personal time practicing how to more effectively transmit his experiences and impressions.[174] Ultimately, Bluestone believed it imperative to talk about the relationship between the Histadrut's work in Israel and its meaning for American workers and citizens. They should not just be visitors or friends, but "compatriots."[175] Talks, information sessions, and promotional material could carry this gospel and influence local unions to become active participants in the Histadrut campaign.

U.S. labor leaders and unionists' impressions of the Histadrut and Israel were not, however, spontaneous and unguided. Israeli leaders carefully their planned tours in order to make the right appeals and create the correct narrative. Memos between Histadrut campaign officials and their Israeli counterparts help demonstrate this. One example was the 1960 tour of Secretary Treasurer Patrick Gorman and Vice-President Abe Feinglass, both of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. Gorman and Feinglass were to tour Israel with their wives for a short, six-day trip under the auspices of the Histadrut Campaign in the U.S. and the Histadrut in Israel. Two members of the Israel Histadrut Campaign of Chicago, Bernard

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[172] Ibid.
[173] Bluestone to Simhoni, 21 January 1964, PLI.
[174] Bluestone to Zev Levin, 21 January 1964, PLI, IV 219A 70A.
[175] Bluestone to Simhoni, 21 January 1964, PLI.

Jacobson and Lazar Shupakewitz, were in charge of planning and coordinating the tour with the Israeli labor federation. As Gorman and Feinglass were both big-dollar contributors, crafting the right tour was "of the utmost importance to the Histadrut and to the Campaign."[176]

Gorman and Feinglass, though they had never been to Israel, were already major Histadrut admirers and supporters. In 1955, Gorman participated in a testimonial dinner in his honor, which his union sponsored on behalf of the Histadrut. They raised $100,000, which was used to establish a cold storage plant in Kiryat Shemona, a settlement north of the Galilee. Additionally, Gorman's union had already purchased more than $230,000 in Israel bonds. Feinglass was also already a major supporter of the Histadrut, and was "personally responsible" for contributing over $100,000 to the Histadrut during the past two years.[177]

Because of his finances and clout, it was "imperative" that Gorman receive "VIP treatment" during his tour.[178] Histadrut Campaign officials in Chicago believed it was "*of the utmost importance*" that a formal dedication ceremony be held at the cold storage plant. Since expansion of the plant was still possible, they speculated that Gorman, "once in Israel," would be "most amenable to generously providing additional funds for his institution."[179]

Histadrut Campaign officials proposed a travel itinerary appealing to the religious, political, ideological, and humanitarian interests of their visitors. Since Gorman was a Christian, they proposed presenting him and his wife Bibles "with an appropriate ceremony."[180] They also suggested showing them "something of the Christian community," perhaps Nazareth. The Gorman and Feinglass tour would also include trips to Beersheba and Eilat (both places where

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[176] Bernard Jacobson and Lazar Shupakewitz to Sol Stein, 29 July 1960, PLI, IV 219A, 31A.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Stephen Remsen, Associate Director of ATUC, to Isaac Hamlin, 4 August 1960, PLI, IV 219A, 31A.
[179] Jacobson and Shupakewitz to Stein, 29 July 1960, PLI, IV 219A, 31A. Emphasis in Original.
[180] Remsen to Hamlin, 4 August 1960, PLI.

U.S. labor had funded development projects), tours of the Hebrew University and the Technion, a visit to a kibbutz, a formal reception at Vaad Hapoel (the Histadrut's construction company), and a meeting with Histadrut General Secretary Pinchas Lavon. The tour would cover all the right bases and hopefully appeal to all the right heartstrings.

Modernizing Mizrahim and Organizing Arabs

American labor visitors sometimes asked "searching questions" about the Histadrut's relations with Arab workers and its influence on Israel's growing Mizrahi populations. Many U.S. trade unionists were interested in learning about Arab-Israeli and Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relations. But they usually arrived in Israel with preconceived notions of these populations and already quite optimistic about the Histadrut's potential to organize and modernize them. Their subsequent observations more closely matched their hopes for Israeli labor's role in the Middle East rather than revealed complicated and sometimes unpleasant realities, and their reports were colored by an ideological adherence to modernization and development thinking.

Many U.S. trade unionists had, for years, received a steady stream of optimistic informational material from the Histadrut regarding Jewish-Arab labor relations. In the 1940s, for instance, the Histadrut sent copies of its Arabic-language weekly to U.S. trade union leaders. According to the Histadrut's U.S. representative, initiatives like this paper, *Haqiqat el-Amar* (Arabic for "Truth of the Matter"), provided "correct information to the Arabs" and helped cement Arab-Jewish friendship.[181] *Haqiqat el-Amar*'s articles discussed topics like a friendly Arab-Jewish soccer match in Lod (Lydda); positive stories about the Histadrut's co-operative wholesale society and how it benefitted Arabs and Jews alike; and, perhaps most importantly, information on "the advantages of Jewish immigration to Palestine." The paper was supposed to

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[181] Israel Meremenski to David Dubinsky, 1940, KCA, ILGWU President's Records, Box 121, Folder 3A.

play a vital role in presenting this case before the Arab masses. At the same time, Histadrut

leaders intended it to serve as a window for U.S. trade unionists into Arab-Jewish relations.

A 1944 Histadrut 1944 bulletin, titled "Labor Palestine Information Bureau: Special

Bulletin—Can Arab and Jewish Workers Get Along?" offers another example of the means by

which U.S. trade unionists learned secondhand about Arab-Jewish relations.[182] Written for U.S.

trade union audiences, the bulletin described a March 1944 meeting of 70 Arab Palestinian Labor

League (the Histadrut's Arab worker division) representatives in Tel Aviv. Its authors claimed,

"This meeting represents the culmination of a long up-hill struggle on the part of the Histadrut in

its efforts in behalf of the Arab workers." During the gathering, Histadrut officials informed PLL

representatives of the differences between trade unions in Britain and Palestine, explained the

benefits of the Histadrut's medical services, and shared information about the Histadrut's

offerings in sports and cultural activities. The Histadrut bulletin told U.S. trade unionists that this

meeting was evidence of Israeli labor's efforts "to unite all the workers of Palestine, regardless

of religion, nationality and race, into the [PLL] for the purpose of improving their economic,

social, and cultural position." The answer to the bulletin's title— "Can Arab and Jewish Workers

Get Along?"—seemed to be a resounding "yes," particularly if the Histadrut led the way.

These materials, and U.S. trade unionists' subsequent tours and reports, belied a much

more complicated reality. By the time the first U.S. trade union delegations arrived in Israel, in

the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Histadrut had a decades-long, conflicted relationship with

Arab workers. The Histadrut's dual functions and aims—colonization and state-building

alongside an adherence to socialism—presented an inherent tension in its approach toward Arab

workers. At its creation, in 1920, the Histadrut was explicitly Jewish. This was attributable to

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[182] "Labor Palestine Information Bureau: Special Bulletin," April 1944, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 27, Folder 1.

both necessity and ideology.[183] Arab workers and employers instituted their own preferential

hiring and purchasing practices. Many eyed the growing Jewish population warily and did not

want to encourage further immigration. At the same time, the Histadrut was a nationalist organ

that endeavored to facilitate Jewish workers' own self-help and nation-building. So by both

necessity and preference, the Histadrut became the main vehicle through which Labor Zionists

created an exclusively Jewish, high-wage sector in British Palestine.[184]

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Histadrut made sporadic attempts to organize and

educate Arab workers while keeping them separate from the Histadrut's larger, Jewish and

nationalist entities. In 1925 the Histadrut launched two such initiatives: its first Arab language

newspaper and an Arab Workers' Club in Haifa. The paper, *Ittihad al-Ummal* (Arabic for

"Workers' Unity") was intended, according to one Histadrut official, to "impart to the Arab

proletarian reader general concepts from the international workers' movement and an

understanding of the activities and positions of the Histadrut in Palestine."[185] The paper had a

very marginal readership and probably did not appreciably influence Arab workers. Its

circulation was only 500 copies, and most Arab workers either could not read or were not

interested in the Histadrut's perspective. The paper ceased publication in 1928. The Workers'

Club in Haifa had a similarly short shelf-life. Opened in July 1925, it was located in a busy, Arab

and largely Christian section of Haifa. It offered evening classes in Hebrew and Arabic literacy,

lectures given by various left-wing Zionist party officials, and Arabic newspapers. Initially, it

attracted the attention of some of Haifa's skilled Arab craftsmen, but by 1927, the club was

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[183] Debora Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (State University of New York Press, 2000), 211.
[184] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 98; Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 53.
[185] Ibid., 53.

defunct. It could not survive the barrage of criticism it faced from Arab nationalists and Jewish

communists, who argued it was primarily an organ to recruit collaborationists or gather

intelligence on Arab workers and political developments.

In the late 1930s, the Histadrut formally established an Arab Affairs Department. For

multiple reasons, it too was challenged from the start. The Histadrut's nationalist nature

remained a key obstacle to its relations with Arab workers. Many Arab workers insisted that they

could not join a union "whose purpose is not just that of labor but also has other purposes which

for you are more important than the interests of railway, postal, and telegraphic workers."[186]

Additionally, and relatedly, the Histadrut was only tenuously committed to the Arab Affairs

Department. It was almost always low on funds and minimally staffed. The department had only

one full-time worker, Yehuda Burla, who had to perpetually plead for funds to keep it afloat.[187]

By 1948, the department, then dubbed the Palestinian Labor League (PLL) was an organization

that existed more in name than substance.

The Histadrut's efforts to organize Arab workers also failed to succeed because Arabs

endeavored to organize their own, independent labor movement. Just five years after the

Histadrut's founding, in 1925, Palestinian Arabs established the Palestinian Arab Workers'

Society (PAWS).[188] PAWS, founded by a core of 150 railway workers in Haifa, never became

comparable to the Histadrut. It lacked requisite financial and organizational resources. Its leaders

could not offer Histadrut-levels of material benefits—such healthcare, social security, and

training courses—or wield the same powerful bargaining position with employers. Still, by 1940

PAWS had 5,000 members. Another Arab trade union emerged in 1942. That year, a coalition of

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[186] Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (Oxford University Press, 1985)*,* 64.
[187] Ibid., 184.
[188] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies,* 90.

young Arab Marxist intellectuals and working-class activists broke away from PAWS and

formed the Federation of Arab Trade Unions and Labor Societies (FATULS).[189] In its first year,

FATULS recruited some 1,000 to 1,500 members, primarily in the Haifa area.[190] It also

published its own newspaper, *al-Ittihad* ("Unity").[191] Despite Histadrut leaders and U.S. trade

unionists' belief that Israelis had a responsibility to organize and guide Arab workers, Arab

workers were, in fact, forming their own trade unions.

By the early 1950s, when U.S. labor's vanguard of visitors arrived on the scene, the

Histadrut did not admit Arab workers as full members. Yet the Israeli labor federation still

attracted a number of Arabs, because they were granted many of the federation's material

benefits and perks—healthcare, social security, cultural facilities and programs.[192] Until 1959,

these workers remained relegated to the Histadrut's separate Arab Affairs Department or the

PLL. Additionally, it was not until after 1965 that they had an equal political voice in the

Histadrut's elections or could serve in its top-level positions and administrations. The mission

that Histadrut officials avowed to their U.S. counterparts— "to unite all the workers of

Palestine"—at the least required some caveats and careful nuance.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Histadrut also had a complicated and

conflicted relationship with Jewish immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa—

Mizrahim. Between 1882 and 1947, Mizrahi Jews made up only 12% of total immigration to

Israel. But after 1948, they comprised 48% of new immigrants.[193] Israeli responses to this mass

immigration vacillated between excitement and grave concern. Immigration, "the Ingathering of

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[189] Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 124.
[190] Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 72.
[191] FATULS was forced to disband in 1950, when Jordan annexed the West Bank.
[192] In 1953, there were around 16,000 Arab members of the Histadrut's Arab section. Israel's Arab population at that time was around 170,000 ["Israel, 1953," *Swords into Plowshares*, CIO, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder, Israel].
[193] Avi Bareli, "Mapai and the Oriental Jewish Question in the Early Years of the State," *Jewish Social Studies* 16 (1), Fall 2009, 54.

the Exiles," was, after all, the number one mission of the state of Israel.[194] However, the newly created state was already in dire economic straits, with a shortage of houses, capital, and skilled workers. The sudden and unexpected flood of Mizrahi immigrants—perceived as culturally backward, impoverished, and potentially burdensome—exacerbated these challenges and spurred many Israeli political and labor leaders, journalists, and academics to debate the proper response.[195]

Mapai leaders like Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion feared a "Levantization" of Israel. Ben-Gurion wanted to double Israel's Jewish population by 1952, and he was committed to evacuating Jews from dangerous situations in places such as Yemen and Iraq.[196] Yet he worried about these new immigrants' potential effects on Israeli culture and politics. He believed they arrived in Israel "without a trace of Jewish or human education." Labor Zionist leaders thus embarked on a necessary mission to uplift and tutor their Mizrahi brethren. Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett argued for a "regulated democracy" and a hierarchical structure within Mapai to prevent its growing number of Mizrahi members from "degenerating" the movement.[197] The Party needed to guide and educate these masses from above, infusing them with political discipline and characteristics of modern culture.

These beliefs extended from Israel's labor party to its labor federation. Histadrut leaders, like Secretary General Pinchas Lavon, ascribed to similar notions of duty and uplift. During internal discussions in 1950, Lavon posited that Mizrahim should be integrated by means of tutelage from the "proletarian aristocracy" in the kibbutz movement. If they were left unguided,

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[194] Dvora Hacohen, *Immigrants in Turmoil: Mass Immigration to Israel and Its Repercussions in the 1950s and After* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 1.
[195] Orit Rozin, *The Rise of the Individual in 1950s Israel: A Challenge to Collectivism* (Brandeis University Press, 2011), 139-150.
[196] Hacohen, *Immigrants in Turmoil,* 69.
[197] Avi Bareli, "Mapai and the Oriental Jewish Question in the Early Years of the State,"65.

he worried, "we will degenerate into a Jewish version of Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt."[198] The Histadrut's Ashkenazi leadership, despite their socialist ideology, marginalized Mizrahi members socially and politically, seeking to protect their control over the Israeli labor movement. Ashkenazim were given the vast majority of white-collar and management positions, and Mizrahim were primarily funneled into blue-collar, unskilled work. Mizrahim, like Israel's Arab workers, were placed under a separate Histadrut department. Theirs was referred to officially as the "Oriental Department."

By the time Israel achieved statehood and the first U.S. labor delegations arrived to observe the Histadrut at work, Israel's predominant labor party and labor movement exhibited marked tensions or perhaps outright contradictions between their socialist, universalist beliefs and their commitment to a specific, nationalist, state-building project. Many Israeli labor leaders, like their American visitors, also demonstrated a perspective tinged with paternalism and colored by the tenets of modernization and development thinking.

The tensions in Israeli society and labor were largely lost on U.S. labor leaders and trade unionists who visited Israel. They were either unaware of these complicated realities, biased by their preconceived notions about the region and its peoples, or perhaps content in seeing what they wanted to see. This became evident in the early 1950s, when U.S. trade unionists began to create their own firsthand accounts of Arab-Jewish affairs and Israeli labor's relations with Mizrahi workers. It was also manifest in the ways they envisioned Israel's role for the region and U.S. labor's efforts to support Israel and the Histadrut within U.S. foreign policy and international politics.

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[198] Ibid., 64.

The CIO and AFL delegations in 1953 and 1954 were some of the first major labor groups to explicitly analyze Arab-Israel relations and Mizrahi workers' state of affairs. The CIO's 1953 mission explained Israel's difficult duty to modernize Arabs and Mizrahim. Israel, they believed, faced modernizationist challenges from without. It was a "beleaguered" modern nation amidst an Arab world, "large sections of which still live in the manner and spirit of the ancient nomadic kingdoms, or at best feudalism."[199] They also noted Israel's uphill battle to modernize within its border. CIO delegates informed their fellow trade unionists that over 700,000 Jewish immigrants had arrived in Israel since 1949, mostly coming from backwards societies from North Africa and the Middle East. This particular immigrant influx created problems "big enough for a country three times its size."[200]

Like many of their Israeli counterparts, CIO visitors believed Mizrahim needed cultural guidance and uplift. Mizrahim arrived from allegedly primitive, backward societies. U.S. labor visitors reported that the Israeli government and Histadrut dealt with this in part through vibrant co-operative farms. After arriving in Israel, Mizrahi immigrants were first sent to state-run "reception depots" where they were processed and organized. Then they were often shipped off to "frontier" areas, where they populated and worked new farms and agricultural projects.[201] CIO visitors believed this was a win-win policy. Frontier farms could serve as an assimilationist boot camp for Mizrahi immigrants while helping Israel continue to tame harsh lands and secure its tenuous borders. Histadrut officials showed U.S. trade union visitors some of these frontier farms and reception depots. They also introduced them to Israel's network of cultural and education programs. These too were designed to educate and assimilate Mizrahim.[202] U.S. trade unionists

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[199] "Israel, 1953," *Swords into Plowshares*, CIO, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder, Israel.
[200] "Israel's Economy," *Swords into Plowshares*, CIO.
[201] "Israeli Agriculture," *Swords into Plowshares*, CIO.
[202] "Israel's Economy," *Swords into Plowshares*, CIO.

were eager to support these efforts. During the 1950s, U.S. labor unions underwrote a number of cultural and educational centers for Israeli immigrants in Holon, Lydda, Haifa, Tel Aviv, and elsewhere. In 1954, for instance, the ILGWU's Local 22 pledged to build a large sports and cultural center in Beersheba, aimed at Mizrahi immigrant youth. According to its U.S. sponsors, this center was "urgently needed primarily as a means to combat juvenile delinquency which has plagued the city of Beersheba."[203] Through the Histadrut's educational efforts, its co-operative farms, its cultural centers and worker training facilities, U.S. trade unionists believed Israeli labor was successfully waging modernization within.

If Mizrahi immigrants seemed decades, even centuries behind their Ashkenazi counterparts, U.S. trade union visitors believed the Middle East's non-Jewish Arabs were stuck millennia in the past. Commenting on Israeli agriculture, the 1953 CIO delegation wrote, "In some of the Arab villages, people are still tilling the soil as their forefathers did more than 2000 years ago, with the cow and the wooden plow. A few miles away, farmers are working with mules and steel plows; and in the same valley there are up-to-date farm cooperatives operating with modern tractors and a most efficient system of irrigation."[204] This stark contrast between Israeli pioneers and Arabs within and surrounding the new nation presented Israel's modernizing mission with its greatest challenges.

In some cases, U.S. labor visitors did not even notice or mention Palestinian Arabs, their role in the region's history, or their relations with the Histadrut. Instead, they rhetorically erased Arabs from an area's history or landscape. The CIO *Swords into Plowshares* report described vast parts of Israeli territory as "arid desert, untended for centuries." The AFL's *We Saw Israel* portrayed the region nearly identical terms. They depicted Israeli pioneers "going out to the field

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[203] Gregory Bardacke to Charles Zimmerman, 10 August 1954, KCA, RG 5780.014, Box 27, Folder 2.
[204] "The Immigrants," *Swords into Plowshares,* CIO.

with their hoe in one hand and their rifle in another" and redeeming a land "neglected for centuries."[205] Readers of both reports were left with the impression that Palestinians had not taken proper care of the land, if their presence was even acknowledged.

In other cases, American trade unionists made a point to meet with selected Arab workers and representatives from the Histadrut's Arab section, and they excitedly relayed their findings to trade unionists at home. In 1953, CIO delegates met with Salim Gibran, an Arab who directed the Haifa Labor Council's Arab Section.[206] Gibran informed his U.S. visitors that Israeli statehood had been an economic boon to Arab workers. He told them that skilled workers' wages, both Arabs and Jews, were equal and that agricultural produce from Jewish and Arab farms fetched equal prices.

Gibran's information was partially accurate. While the presence of Jewish labor did raise Arab workers' wages (comparable to those in neighboring Middle Eastern nations), a wide gap still existed between Arab and Jew. From 1934 to 1945, for instance, Jewish workers earned between two to three times the wages of Arabs in the same industries.[207] That divide continued into the late 1940s and 1950s. Arabs were not admitted as full Histadrut members until 1959 and, even then, they were not able to vote in Histadrut elections until 1965.[208] Additionally, most of Israel's Arab populations were not citizens. They lived under military rule, continuing until 1966.[209] Yet because of Gibran's presentation, CIO delegates left Israel optimistic about Arab-Jewish labor relations and the Histadrut's role therein. They reported home that the Israeli labor

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[205] "Israel's Security," *We Saw Israel*, AFL.
[206] "Arabs and Jews," *Swords into Plowshares,* CIO.
[207] Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 32.
[208] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 359.
[209] Ibid.*,* 358.

federation's Arab-worker initiatives would "do much to promote the ideals of social brotherhood."[210]

Before their visit in 1954, AFL delegates wondered if they would even find Arabs in the Jewish State. They assumed most had fled during the 1948 war or decided they could not tolerate living in a Jewish nation afterward. AFL visitors were pleased to discover some 170,000 Arabs "living in peace with their Jewish fellow citizens and well on the road to higher living standards and greater freedom than most of the Arab peoples of the Middle East have ever enjoyed." Like their CIO counterparts, AFL delegates met with an Arab Histadrut representative, this time in Nazareth. They too came away believing that Arab integration in Israel, while not easy, was on the right track. AFL visitors erroneously reported home that Israel's Arab minority enjoyed full and complete equality "of rights and obligations," including the right to vote.[211]

The realities they gathered from their hosts, from the Histadrut's Arab representatives, and from secondhand accounts in U.S. media and popular culture presented a modern and fully democratic Israeli state and labor movement that provided inspiration and hope for an otherwise chaotic region. Without hearing or seeking out independent, dissenting Arab voices, U.S. labor's perceptions lacked the tensions and complexities of reality. Instead, they uncritically lauded Israelis' supposed intervention in the backwards, pre-modern Middle East. U.S. trade unionists believed Israel was helping organize and educate Arab workers and uplift and assimilate Mizrahi Jews. As an international partner in trade unionism, democracy, and development, U.S. labor was counting on the Histadrut "to be ready to help the workers of Arab lands."[212] After seeing things firsthand, U.S. trade unionists began to believe that Israel and its labor-development

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[210] Ibid.
[211] "Arab Workers," *We Saw Israel*, AFL.
[212] An Act of Faith," *David Dubinsky: A Mission to Histadrut in Israel*, published by the Histadrut, Office of the American Representative, 1960, KCA, ILGWU President's Records, Box 253, Folder 4B

model could not only modernize Arabs and Mizrahim, but lead other developing nations out of the primitive world and into Western civilization.

Laboring for U.S.-Israeli Relations

Given the images of Israel that U.S. trade unionists perceived through tours, speeches, interviews, and published materials, it is no surprise that they were inspired to serve as good will ambassadors, not only within their own labor unions but also within the U.S. political system. During the 1950s, U.S. labor leaders and rank-and-file unions members consistently lobbied on Israel's behalf. Turning the phenomena of "labor diplomacy" in late 1940s Europe on its head, many American unionists tried to influence their own government and citizenry on behalf of outside entities. After the Truman administration's promotion of Point Four, U.S. labor often touted Israel as a logical recipient of development aid and a useful ally to catalyze the right kind of development in the Middle East. Additionally, U.S. labor continually promoted Israel's anti-Communist credentials and apparent Western orientation as an outpost for democracy in a desert of totalitarianism and Soviet-vulnerable instability. From 1949 through the 1950s, American labor sought to mitigate what they perceived as a growing rift between Washington and Tel Aviv. Examining a few examples of this labor diplomacy—in 1950, 1951, and 1953—illustrates how American unions' laboring for Israel was emblematic of the real "special relationship" during this period.

In 1949, Truman proposed his Point Four program. Shortly thereafter, U.S. labor's top leaders and erstwhile rivals, AFL and CIO presidents William Green and Philip Murray, paid a joint visit to the president. During their February 1950, Green and Murray called for a halt to the "Middle East arms race" and for increased support for Israel, under the auspices of Point Four. Their concerns stemmed from reports that Great Britain was giving large arms supplies to Trans-

Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and other Arab states. This was particularly against U.S. interests, they

claimed, because Israel, not Arab states, was a key ally in both the Cold War and America's

mission to modernize the Middle East. In a joint statement, the two leaders wrote, "We have

come to recognize the republic of Israel as a bastion of our hopes for strengthening the

democratic processes in the Middle East." They argued that increased financial support to Israel

would not only enable its continued development but, by example and outreach, the development

of the region. While the "great majority" of people in the Middle East lived "in ignorance,

poverty, and disease," they argued, Israel was "working effectively…to bring its people higher

standards of living, literacy, housing and health." Therefore, according to the logics of the Cold

War and development, it was in the U.S's best interest to arm and aid this "bastion of hope" in

the Middle East.[213]

Another example of U.S. labor's diplomacy for Israel took place during the summer of

1951. Congress was set to vote on HR-3458, known as the "Israel Aid Act." The act proposed a

$150 million grant to Israel, something U.S. labor thought vital to Israel's economic security and

development. Israel's American labor allies mobilized to lobby for the bill. The ILGWU initiated

a letter campaign to members of Congress. Israel Feinberg, the ILGWU's vice president, drafted

a note that was sent to every Senator and Congress member from the state of New York.

Feinberg argued that HR-3458 was "vital for strengthening democracy in the Middle East."[214] He

wrote to Congress members that this "young nation" had done "remarkably well" in developing

its economy, had "performed a virtual miracle" in absorbing 600,000 Jewish refugees, and was

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[213] "Green, Murray Call on President Truman," text of statement, 10 February 1950, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, 1932-1966, Box 121, Folder 1.

[214] Israel Feinberg to John Taber, 31 May 1951, KCA, New York Cloak Joint Board Records, 1926-1973, RG 5870.020, Box 18, Folder 3.

"building…a strong, virile democratic state." The Israel Aid Act, he concluded, would, "just as the Marshall Plan aid to Europe," strengthen democracy in a vulnerable and strategic region.

Most of the New York legislators Feinberg contacted replied to his letter. Senator Jacob Javits (NY-R), for example, thanked Feinberg for the letter, and stated that with financial support from the U.S., "Israel may become the military, economic, and ideological bastion of world peace, security and liberty, and thereby promoting the general welfare and security of our own country."[215] Congressman Arthur Klein (NY-R) told Feinberg, "I want to assure you that I am one of the most enthusiastic supporters of this measure in the House."[216] Finally, House member Abraham Multer (NY-D) simply replied, "I am in hearty accord with your views regarding aid to Israel."[217]

The Truman administration, however, was not eager to give Israel $150 million. Secretary of State Dean Acheson held a meeting with Abraham Feinberg—a prominent businessman and ardent supporter of Israel—to explain the administration's position on the bill.[218] During their meeting, Acheson essentially argued that the White House was against the bill, because it was in both Israel's and the U.S.'s best interests to give the money to neighboring Arab states instead. These nations, Acheson argued, "were not very secure. At the present time they could not defend themselves against the Soviet Union." More importantly, Acheson believed that if $150 million was made available for Israel, it would be deducted from the State Department's program already contemplated for the region, which focused on Near Eastern

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[215] Jacob Javits to Israel Feinberg, 7 June 1951, KCA, New York Cloak Joint Board Records, 1926-1973, RG 5870.020, Box 18, Folder 3.
[216] Arthur Klein to Israel Feinberg, 6 June 1951, KCA, New York Cloak Joint Board Records, 1926-1973, RG 5870.020, Box 18, Folder 3.
[217] Abraham Multer to Israel Feinberg, 5 June 1951, KCA, New York Cloak Joint Board Records, 1926-1973, RG 5870.020, Box 18, Folder 3.
[218] The meeting was probably something of a personal favor as Feinberg was a personal friend of Truman who had organized the president's 1948 "whistle stop" campaign tour.

states and Iran. Unlike U.S. labor, the White House would not lobby Congress for this aid to Israel; instead, they tried to persuade Israel and its U.S. allies to accept the notion that the aid should go elsewhere.[219] Fortunately for Israel and U.S. labor, the bill had staunch support in Congress and passed despite the administration's opposition.

U.S.-Israeli state relations became even more strained with the arrival of the Eisenhower administration. Israeli leaders continued to seek closer ties to the U.S., while the new administration sought to distance itself further from Tel Aviv. White House officials were concerned with maintaining stability in the Middle East and containing the rise of "radical" Arab nationalism. If they appeared too close to Israel, they believed, the U.S. would lose its ability to work with moderate and conservative Arab states. Therefore, in 1953 Eisenhower approved NSC-155/1, a policy proposal that embodied this strategy of placating "moderate" and conservative Arab leaders by keeping Israel at arm's-length.[220]

The early years of the Eisenhower administration created an anxious atmosphere for U.S. trade unionists and their Israeli allies. During the fall of 1953, the administration made perhaps the most dramatic, negative gesture in U.S.-Israel relations history. A spate of border clashes occurred along the Israeli-Jordanian border during 1953, much of it the result of a water dispute. Israel was building a new hydroelectric project that diverted water from the Jordan River. Tel Aviv balked at a UN Resolution demanding it stop, and the Eisenhower administration reacted

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[219] In fact, President Truman summoned Feinberg to the White House whereupon he demanded that "political Jews be kept quiet for the time being" [Peter Hahn, *Caught in the Middle: U.S. Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006)]

[220] The directive, written on 14 July 1953, called for the "reversal of the anti-American trends of Arab opinion" by making it clear that "Israel will not, merely because of its Jewish population, receive preferential treatment" [Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 89].

sternly. On October 20, 1953, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles announced that American economic aid to Israel would be withheld.[221]

Over the following two days, the Histadrut's U.S. representative, Moshe Bitan, anxiously and repeatedly contacted both AFL President Meany and ILGWU President David Dubinsky regarding "the deterioration in the relationship between the United States State Department and Israel."[222] Bitan feared that the White House was not acting "even-handed" in the Middle East, as they claimed. Instead, the U.S. government had "become one-sided" in its reactions to events in the region.[223] Washington claimed to help all countries in the Middle East with economic and technical assistance. It claimed to be desirous of "cooperating with the free world in defense of human freedom and against totalitarian aggression." So why, Bitan asked, was the administration turning a cold shoulder to its most vital Cold War ally in the region? The picture Bitan painted was dire.

Bitan then appealed to both Meany and Dubinsky to step into this fray and advocate on Israel's behalf. He gave them both his own account of recent incidents along the Israeli-Jordanian border. He also gave Meany, who was Catholic (unlike Dubinsky who was Jewish), a map showing the locations of holy sites in Jerusalem. Meany seemed "amazed" to find that most of the Christian holy sites were in the Arab part of the city.[224] Bitan's move was no doubt intended to further persuade Meany that the Israeli portion of the Israeli-Jordanian border needed to be extended so that the more trustworthy Israel might control these sites. The Histadrut, Bitan wrote to Meany, would "appreciate very much an official statement of the AFL on these issues

[221] Editorial, *Davar*, 21 October 1953, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, Box 253, Folder 3A.
[222] Moshe Bitan to David Dubinsky, 22 October 1953, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, Box 253, Folder 3A.
[223] Moshe Bitan, "Recent Developments in US-Israeli Relations," draft memo enclosed in letter to David Dubinsky, 22 October 1953, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, Box 253, Folder 3A.
[224] Moshe Bitan to David Dubinsky, 22 October 1953, KCA, ILGWU, President's Records, Box 253, Folder 3A.

so that both the State Department and the public in the United States should know that American labor is with us." Meany and Dubinsky were both happy to oblige, making their discontent known to U.S. officials.

By early December 1953, the Eisenhower administration reinstated U.S. aid to Israel. Yet Bitan seemed to vent his frustration with the AFL leadership's failure to prevent the aid stoppage in the first place. He was disappointed that the AFL had not sufficiently conveyed to the U.S. government Israel's supposed willingness to adjust its water development program. Bitan wrote to AFL International Affairs Department director Jay Lovestone, "It should be pointed out that the AFL knows of Histadrut's role in the State of Israel and is aware of the fact that Israel through the influence of labor become one of the civilizing and colonizing factors in Asia and the Middle East. American labor, knowing leaders of Israeli labor, are aware that the only purpose of Israel is to live in peace and to be able to continue in its development."[225] Latent in this letter was a frustration with and, perhaps, a misunderstanding of American labor's influence on U.S. foreign policy. In Israel, labor was the government; Mapai, a social democratic labor party, was the majority party in both the government and the Histadrut. It was potentially frustrating to Bitan and other Israeli leaders that U.S. labor could not translate the strong ties between American and Israeli unionists into U.S. foreign policy and U.S.-Israeli state relations. American labor knew Israel was a vital, "civilizing" and "colonizing" force for democratic and modern values in the Middle East. Why didn't the U.S. government, as well?

During the 1950s, through various diplomatic crises the Israeli government and Histadrut officials were in close contact with their U.S. labor allies, continually sending letters, making phone calls, and holding meetings in which they appealed to U.S. trade unionists' sympathetic

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[225] Moshe Bitan to Jay Lovestone, 2 December 1953, George Meany Memorial AFL-CIO Archive, University of Maryland, Jay Lovestone Files: New York Office, Subject Files: Israel, Box 44, Folder 9.

ideological outlook. American labor leaders and workers, through their tours, solidarity

campaigns and events, published materials, and newspaper interviews and articles, had already

come to see Israel as a "bastion of hope" in the Middle East. In these moments of crises, they

responded decisively, launching political and fundraising campaigns to aid their Israeli allies. It

was therefore frustrating and confusing to U.S. trade unionists that their government did not

similarly see Israel similarly and cultivate the kind of "special relationship" that labor already

enjoyed.

Conclusion

In 1958, the newly-merged AFL-CIO sent a delegation to Israel whose findings were

presented in a report titled "Ten Years of Progress: A Report on Israel."[226] The Histadrut's

executive committee invited U.S. labor to participate in the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of

Israeli statehood. For such a momentous occasion, the AFL-CIO sent its top-ranking officials,

like George Harrison, President of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks and chairman of the AFL-

CIO Committee on International Affairs, President Potofsky of the ACWA, and AFL-CIO

President Meany. It is not surprising that the AFL-CIO's ten-year assessment of Israel was

positive. The language of the delegation's report had not changed much, if at all, from other

labor groups over the previous ten years. They wrote glowingly of modern Israeli cities like Tel

Aviv. It was a city "built up literally from the sand," they wrote. "When the first Zionist pioneers

settled there a few decades ago, it was merely a stretch of sandy beach." Now it was a bustling

city of white apartment buildings and a population of over 400,000. The Histadrut was still

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[226] *Ten Years of Progress: A Report on Israel*, AFL-CIO, September 1958, GMA, RG 18-001, Country Files: Israel—Including Histadrut, Box 10, Folder 10.

thriving. It was a "creative force" in Israel's independence, and it continued to play "a central and decisive role in the country's development."[227]

Throughout the 1950s, U.S. labor leaders and workers viewed the state of Israel and its labor movement as a bastion for democracy, a torchbearer of progressive labor values, and a successful example of modernization and development in the Middle East. They held these perceptions because of the ways they "saw" Israel: through carefully crafted tours, speeches, published materials, and other support campaigns. These images of Israel and Israeli labor spread quickly through the broad ranks of American labor, moving beyond top-level leadership into regional and local associations. Labor leaders and rank-and-file workers responded throughout the decade, advocating for Israel and the Histadrut within domestic and international labor movements. Additionally, U.S. trade unionists conducted labor diplomacy on behalf of their Israeli allies within the realm of U.S. foreign policy.

A full decade before President John F. Kennedy announced the "Decade of Development," and years before the same president spoke of a "special relationship" between America and Israel, U.S. trade unions helped pioneer both. They viewed Israel and the Histadrut as paragons of development and argued that supporting Israel would positively influence the entire Middle East. The depth, breadth, and fervency of U.S.-Israeli labor ties were a stark contrast to bilateral state relations during this period, and one could certainly dub this labor connection as a "special relationship." The case of U.S.-Israeli labor diplomacy during the 1950s therefore alters the historical narrative of American labor's diplomacy, U.S.-Israeli relations, and the influence of modernization and development ideology on U.S. international relations and the Cold War.

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[227] "A Visit to Histadrut," *Ten Years of Progress*, AFL-CIO.

Chapter 3

Beyond the Middle East

After the cementing of its *de facto* Western orientation in the early 1950s, Israel stepped fully onto the global stage. Yet, the degree to which Israeli political and labor leaders vocalized their nation's Western orientation was largely contingent on the context. Israeli leaders sought to assure their European and U.S. allies that they were firmly in the West. But as dozens of new nations in the Afro-Asian world achieved independence and formed powerful international political blocs and organizations, Israel endeavored to affiliate itself not just with the West; it simultaneously endeavored to join the non-aligned, "third" bloc of nations.

In this way, "Israel" became something of a floating signifier in the late 1950s; it meant different things to different observers, sometimes presenting conflicting images and ideas. Israel's Western allies were convinced that it was committed to their cause. At the same time, Israel convincingly proclaimed to Afro-Asian states that its position lay somewhere between the East and West. Despite differences of emphasis, Israel's admirers continued to speak of it in terms of modern, yet old; developing, yet advanced; a "bridge" between the West and the underdeveloped world. The fluidity of what "Israel" represented meant that for much of the late 1950s and early 1960s, it served as a hub of ambitions for various parties along a wide political spectrum.

Israeli government and labor leaders had good reasons for maintaining this fluid image. The Histadrut consisted of a coalition of political parties. Moving the labor federation toward even a *de facto* western orientation had been a tense and somewhat destructive battle. Factions on both sides, particularly Mapai and Mapam, were not fully content with the outcome. If

Histadrut leaders traveled around the globe loudly touting their trade union's staunch anticommunism and firm Western orientation, the Histadrut's internal cohesion could splinter beyond repair. Simultaneously positioning themselves within and outside the West was also diplomatically advantageous. Speaking before Western audiences, Israeli leaders could preach their commitment to democracy and the West as a means of obtaining further political and material support. In Afro-Asian settings or speaking before other European audiences, however, they could place themselves within the Third World or "developing world" and cultivate a sense of comraderie or utility.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Israeli labor and political leaders had other reasons to utilize their nation's fluid international image to its diplomatic advantage. Israel's frigid relations with Afro-Asian states like India, its exclusion from important Afro-Asian meetings like the 1955 Bandung Conference, and even its terse relations with the Eisenhower Administration in the U.S., convinced Israeli leaders by late 1956 that traditional, official government diplomatic channels were failing them. They needed to find ways to translate their diplomatic, state-centered goals and interests into different avenues and mechanisms. Israeli leaders would not only make use of Israel's ability to be imagined as a floating signifier. They also began to formulate and execute non-traditional, alternative forms of diplomacy that existed outside official state channels. Fortunately, they already had a blueprint for this in their earliest relations with the U.S.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Israeli leaders initiated an all-hands-on-deck approach to diplomacy in the non-aligned world. They focused particularly on the African continent, for several reasons. Africa was a continent where Israel's labor-development model seemed especially relevant. Africa's waves of new nations were often led or supported by trade unions— one of the few arenas in which colonial regimes allowed Africans to organize. Finally, Israel's

conquest of the port of Eilat in the 1956 Suez War gave it easy access to Africa, which lay a short distance across the Red Sea.

In Africa, Israeli political and labor leaders most diligently employed non-governmental avenues of influence and diplomacy and tried to take advantage of their nation's fluid international reputation and image. They turned to non-governmental organizations, like the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Socialist International (SI), to cultivate relationships with rising African leaders. They utilized their nation's development model and labor federation, the Histadrut, to create alternative avenues for bilateral relations. The Histadrut sent its agricultural and technical experts to newly independent African nations and colonies still struggling for their freedom. The Histadrut and Israeli Foreign Ministry partnered to bring influential and rising African leaders to Israel to study labor organization and co-operative farming. Mapai, Israel's leading socialist party, helped connect the Histadrut and Foreign Ministry to some of these African figures at SI meetings in Europe and Asian Socialist Conference (ASC) meetings in Burma. It was an all-out approach to right Israel's sinking reputation in the Afro-Asian world. And, for a time, it seemed to be wildly successful.

This chapter outlines the transformation of Israel's diplomatic approach to the Afro-Asian world, focusing particularly on Africa. The chapter centers around Israel's labor and development model and examines how and why Israelis turned to this alternative approach in international relations. It illustrates how this approach operated on the ground in Africa and Israel, and how it opened unprecedented, bilateral doors for Israeli relations with the Afro-Asian world. Finally, the chapter closes by revealing some of the challenges latent in or quickly arising from Israel's alternative diplomacy. In particular, it ran up against budgetary constraints and the

political minefield that African politics and labor sometimes presented. On both of these issues, Israelis would once again turn to their foremost allies and supporters, U.S. labor unions.

After some heavy diplomatic lifting, Israel and the Histadrut successfully transformed their reputation in the Afro-Asian world and experienced a period of unprecedented bilateral relations in Africa. In doing so, they began to fulfill the vision cast earlier by socialists and trade unionists in both Israel and the U.S.; they began to export Israel's model for state-building and labor organization beyond the Middle East. Like U.S. workers years before them, numerous African political leaders, labor officials, co-operative farmers and trade unionists "saw Israel," were inspired to support Israel, and tried to bring something of it back to their own communities.

Ambivalent Beginnings: Israel and the Afro-Asian World, 1948 to 1955

From the late 1940s to the mid-1950s, Israel's relations with the Afro-Asian world were tenuous. Early ties with India presented one major impediment to Israel's acceptance into the emerging Afro-Asian movement. India was perhaps the most influential state in the Afro-Asian world during this period. In 1947-48, its leaders dealt Zionist leaders a major blow when they opposed Israeli statehood. Under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's direction, India's UN delegation voted against the partition of Palestine. Nehru and his party placed more weight on the possible repercussions that friendly Indian-Israeli relations might have on Indian-Pakistani affairs, as well as the opinion of India's millions of Muslims. The Indian government was also mindful of its need for Arab votes in the UN during debates on the fate of Kashmir. India delayed recognition of Israel until September 1950, but, even then, it refused to establish

diplomatic relations and only permitted Israel to open a consulate in Bombay. Several other Asian states followed India's cool reception of Israel.[228]

Israel's tenuous early relations with the Third World leaders led to its exclusion from several important international meetings and conferences, such as the second Asian Relations Conference (ARC) in 1949. Jewish leaders from Palestine had attended the first ARC, held in 1947 in New Delhi. It had been an encouraging diplomatic success for Zionist diplomacy. Leaders from 28 African and Asian states and colonial territories attended the 1947 meeting, and Mapai party officials interpreted their invitation as recognition of their status as legitimate Asian bloc members.[229] Two years later, however, Israel's rivals in several Arab and Muslim states blocked their invitation to the second ARC. While this was an early, major setback for Israel in the Afro-Asian world, it did not yet register alarm bells for Mapai and Histadrut officials.

Despite their exclusion from the second ARC, from 1950-1953 Mapai and Histadrut officials gained influence and allies in non-state arenas, particularly the international socialist and labor movements. In 1950, the Histadrut sent a delegation to the Trade Union Congress in Belgrade. There Israeli delegates garnered friendly ties with Israel's first major Asian ally, Burma. During the Belgrade congress, Histadrut delegates invited three Burmese labor union officials to visit Israel on their way back to Burma.[230] The Burmese unionists came away impressed at their counterparts' accomplishments in another young, emerging socialist nation.[231] David Hacohen, a Histadrut official and one of its Belgrade delegates, followed up on the visit, traveling to Burma in 1953 as Israel's first diplomatic envoy there.

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[228] Meron Medzini, "Reflections on Israel's Asian Policy," in *Israel in the Third World*, Michael Curtis and Susan Gitelson, eds., (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Books, 1976), 203. It was not until 1957-1962 that Israel had official diplomatic ties with Thailand, Ceylon, Nepal, the Philippines, and South Korea.
[229] Ran Kochan, "Israel in Third World Forums," in *Israel in the Third World*, 248.
[230] Mordechai Kreinin, "Israel and Africa: The Early Years," in *Israel in the Third World*, 54.
[231] Akiva Eger, "Histadrut: Pioneer and Pilot Plant for Israel's International Cooperation with the Third World," in *Israel in the Third World,* 76.

These labor exchanges set a pattern for the decade, in which Israel sent technical experts to Burma, and Burmese labor leaders traveled to Israel for training. Hacohen became a major figure in Israel's outreach to the Afro-Asian world, and he helps illustrate Israel's unique blurring of state and non-state initiatives in the Afro-Asian world. Hacohen, an influential labor and political leader, wore many hats, some official state positions and others that were in non-governmental spheres. He was one of Mapai's Knesset leaders, an executive of the Histadrut's building and contracting company (Solel Boneh), and eventually one of Israel's foremost diplomats. Like the collaboration of Hacohen, the Histadrut, and Mapai with Burma, Israel's first labor and technical aid enterprises combined labor, socialist politics, and government organs. These relationships initially developed in East and Southeast Asia: Burma, Ceylon, Thailand, and the Philippines, and later served as models for activities and outreach to Africa.[232]

The Histadrut's activity and reputation in international labor forums served as one avenue for Israel's early non-state outreach to the Afro-Asian world. Another crucial arena for this was the Socialist International (SI), reinstituted in 1951 in Frankfurt, Germany. Ideologically, the new SI was a fit for Israel's Mapai party. For instance, the 1951 congress issued a "Frankfurt Declaration," outlining the new SI's principles. Among these were a condemnation of capitalism, a statement that "socialism can only be achieved through democracy," and a stinging criticism of communism.[233] The first and second SI conferences, in 1951 and 1952, also foreshadowed two of the International's major foci for the next decade. It would attempt to expand its influence in the Third World and do this in part through delivering development aid. The SI's western

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[232] These are the same nations that initially followed India's lead in taking a cool approach to Israeli relations [Arye Oded, "Fifty Years of MASHAV Activity," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 21:3-4, Fall 2009, 3].

[233] This condemnation of capitalism read, "Capitalism…is by its nature incapable of satisfying the elementary needs of the world's population" in Julius Braunthal, *History of the International, 1943*-1968, vol. 3 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 202.

European leaders immediately recognized the fact that, of the 34 parties present, only seven came from outside of Europe. The SI, one French representative lamented, was not really "international."

To make the International more international, SI leaders needed help from their few Afro-Asian members, like Israel. French socialist leader Guillame Devin and Morgan Phillips, General Secretary of the British Labor Party (BLP), began to partner with SI members from Burma, India, Japan, and Israel to formulate plans for their outreach to "underdeveloped" states.[234] In December 1951, Phillips spoke at length about the International's need to create an organ for lending development aid to the Third World. He proposed the SI partner with non-European socialists to form a "World Plan for Mutual Aid." A committee made up of members from Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain (four colonial powers), would consult with certain Asian socialists and draft potential programs for the non-European world. [235]

The committee's report, presented at the SI's 1952 congress in Milan, echoed the emerging global language of modernization thinking. It also closely aligned with the way many viewed development models like Israel's as a blueprint for the developing world. *Socialist Policy for the Underdeveloped Territories—A Declaration of Principles* argued that the main causes of underdevelopment came from barriers like "primitive" agricultural techniques, feudal land divisions, outmoded political systems, and the "traditional" mentality of native peoples.[236] Like the logic of the U.S.'s Point Four Program, western European SI leaders believed the answer to these problems had to come from "outside," from the West or exemplary developing states like Israel. The report set the tenor for the SI's Third World relations over the next decade. It

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[234] Ibid., 368.
[235] Peter Van Klemseke, *Towards an Era of Development: The Globalization of Socialism and Christian Democracy, 1945-1965* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2006), 72.
[236] Ibid., 250.

previewed the strategic importance socialists placed on a nation like Israel, which they believed could geographically and developmentally bridge the gap between the "West and the rest."

Meanwhile, Asian socialists began organizing their own international organization, presenting Israeli leaders with another opportunity to make diplomatic inroads. Led by the Congress Socialist Party of India, in 1951 Asian socialists began discussions for a regional conference of Asian socialist parties. Representatives from Japan, Burma, Ceylon, and Indonesia, along with socialists from Lebanon, held a preparatory meeting in spring 1952 in Burma for their own Asian Socialist Conference (ASC). During this meeting, delegates envisioned an *Asian Socialist International*. It would serve as a global "third power," aligned neither with the Western nor Soviet camp. They created a standing committee to continue the movement's organization and they established a bimonthly bulletin—*Socialist Asia*—which bluntly stated that Asian socialist parties "refused to become slaves to either Totalitarian Communism or Capitalist Democracies of the West." The most pressing issues for Asian socialists, however, were decolonization and development. And their demand was immediate. This position, more than any other, put them on a course for conflict with their western European socialist counterparts.[237]

Unlike the 1949 ARC, delegates from Mapai were invited to the ASC's inaugural meeting in January 1953. At the city hall building in Rangoon, Burma, 177 delegates from ten Asian countries rang in their own International.[238] Over the course of this nine-day conference, representatives hammered out guidelines framing the ASC and Asian socialist movement for the next several years. The ASC's founding declaration explicitly rejected communism.[239] It

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[237] Ibid., 77, 99.
[238] Pakistan, Malaysia, Lebanon, Japan, India, Indonesia, Burma, Egypt and Israel sent delegations. Tunisia, Algeria, Nepal, Uganda, Yugoslavia, and the SI sent guest observers.
[239] "Communism, as practiced today in its totalitarian form in the Soviet Union and its satellites," it read, "has degenerated into a regime which [allows] the complete subordination of the individual and the group to the centralized power of the leadership of the ruling party" (Braunthal, *History of the International*, 370).

proclaimed a "passionate devotion" to the cause of self-determination and true independence in

"the colonial and so-called underdeveloped countries." Along these lines, delegates created a

permanent Anti-Colonial Bureau that would dispatch special search commissions to study, report

on, and support liberation movements.[240] The ASC also drafted optimistic guidelines for

agrarian, political, and economic development in member states. Finally, and most contentiously,

representatives took up the issue of the ASC's relationship to the SI and the West.

For this reason, the SI had sent Clement Attlee to lead their guest delegation. Attlee's

mission was to draw as many Asian socialist parties under the SI umbrella as possible and to

steer the ASC into a regional component of the SI rather than an independent entity. Many Asian

socialists, especially parties from Egypt, Pakistan, and Lebanon, strongly opposed any form of

integration with the SI. They believed there was a fundamental difference between socialism in

the "underdeveloped" world and the "advanced" nations of the West, differences that made their

forms of socialism distinct and, perhaps, at odds. More importantly, they distrusted European

socialist parties that continued to advocate gradual, "guided" independence in colonial territories.

Attlee reported that the "remnants of colonialism" represented the most significant obstacle to

cooperation between socialists in Asia and Europe. Given his and the SI's outsider status, he held

little hope for influencing the discussion.

Israel's delegates, however, were able to play a crucial role in seeking compromise.[241]

Led by Reuven Barkat, Moshe Sharett, and Moshe Bitan, Israel's delegates tried to presented

their nation as part of a non-aligned, "third bloc" while simultaneously working to steer the ASC

in a pro-Western, democratic direction. While Egypt, Pakistan, Lebanon, and others advocated

an ASC un-affiliated with the SI, representatives from Israel and Japan proposed the ASC

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[240] Van Klemseke, *Towards an Era of Development,* 94.
[241] Ibid., 82, 91.

constitute a regional organization within the SI.[242] Sharett, who documented the official minutes

of these important sessions, noted that Israel, Malaya, and Japan all argued that a divide between

the SI and ASC would only play into the hands of communists and the Soviet Union. Instead,

they argued, socialists around the globe needed to present a united front.[243] In the end, ASC

delegates settled on a compromise in which their new organization remained independent of the

SI but permitted member parties to participate in both. The ASC debate enabled Mapai's

delegates to bolster their nation's standing as a bridge connecting the European-Asian socialist

divide.

Mapai's moderating influence on the ASC was not lost on western European SI leaders.

They increasingly thought of ways to utilize the Israelis' position within the ASC and Afro-

Asian world. This was partially attributable to the SI's dwindling finances. Shortly after the

Rangoon conference, the SI conducted an internal audit that showed it faced a severe budget

shortfall. The expenses necessary to send delegates to and monitor every ASC meeting were too

high. The International's Executive Council decided they would rely on Japanese and Israeli

representatives as liaisons between the SI and ASC.[244] This decision was a strong vote of

confidence for Israeli socialists' ability to reliably position themselves within both the Western

and Afro-Asian camps.

Two years after the ASC's inaugural meeting, Mapai's influence within the international

socialist movement continued to pay diplomatic dividends in both European and Afro-Asian

circles. In fall 1955, Israel hosted a study tour from the International Union of Socialist Youth

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[242] Pradip Bose, *Social Democracy in Practice: Socialist International (1951-2001)* (New Delhi: Authorspress Global Network, 2005)*,* 59.
[243] Van Klemseke, *Towards an Era of Development,* 81.
[244] Ibid., 85.

(IUSY).[245] Five IUSY scholarship grantees—from the Gold Coast, Indonesia, Nepal, Uruguay, and Chile—traveled to Israel as part of a multi-nation study of socialist youth organizations and social and economic development. They spent time in parts of Western Europe, Yugoslavia, and Israel in hopes of finding applicable practices and models for their own developing nations.

Zuberu Baba Shardow, a young member of the Gold Coast's Convention People's Party (CPP) wrote a glowing report of the IUSY group's time in Israel. He found in Israel "some of the finest creative impulses mankind has ever seen." The IUSY group met with members and leaders of the Histadrut, a model organization Shardow believed could "be experimented in the Gold Coast as well as other under-developed countries." They visited several Israeli collective farms (kibbutzim and *moshavim*). Shardow believed these too could serve as models for his nation. "We can make use of [them]," he reported, "by sending pioneers to study these institutions and come to apply their experiences within our communities." Shardow, like many Americans before and many Afro-Asian leaders after him, left Israel believing it was "the only advanced country in that part of the world." He was inspired to emulate its labor and development practices and to support Israel in the international arena. "What I gathered from the people there," he wrote, "is that they are prepared to move in peace with everybody and even to the point of helping any Arab country which cares for their help." Shardow's 1955 report was both an echo of past visitors to Israel and a preview of those yet to come.[246]

Despite these early successes in non-governmental, international movements and meetings, the Israeli state's position in the emerging Afro-Asian bloc still declined 1955-1956. A major part of this arose from Israel's unexpected exclusion from the 1955 Afro-Asian

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[245] Zuberu Baba Shardow, "Report of the International Union of Socialist Youth," November 1955, The Moshe Sharett Israel Labor Party Archives, Beit Berl, Israel (hereafter, LPA), 2.914.1956.1
[246] Ibid.

Conference in Bandung. The conference was a product of meetings held in 1954 between the

"Colombo Powers"—Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, India, and Pakistan. The Colombo Powers were

particularly concerned with the prospect of the Cold War erupting in South East Asia. Indonesian

Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidijojo, a vocal critic of Western interventions in Asia, proposed an

Asian-African conference to counter the U.S.-sponsored Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

(SEATO). Participants would gather to create a non-aligned, "third bloc" of nations that might

bring peace and sanity to a dangerous, bipolar Cold War order. Invitations for the proposed

conference were sent to 29 nations, including China, the Colombo Powers, Egypt, Japan,

Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan, the Gold Coast, and others, representing nearly 1.5 billion people. It

was a meeting Israeli officials felt they could not afford to miss.[247]

Mapai leaders spent months before the Bandung meeting trying to get an invitation. They

worked with some of their new Asian allies, like Burma, to counter pressure from Egypt,

Pakistan, and other Arab states who wanted them excluded. The Colombo Powers, however,

needed Arab UN support in opposing Western interventions in Korea and Taiwan, and Egypt's

president Gamal Abdul Nasser threatened that Arabs would not attend Bandung if Israel did.[248]

After first receiving an invitation, Israeli leaders were "shocked" when it was abruptly

withdrawn.[249] Israel would be left out of the Afro-Asian world's historic "Bandung Moment"

and the veritable "who's who" of postcolonial leaders.

The Bandung Conference was a particularly important moment for the Afro-Asian world

for two reasons. First, it generated the idea of a Third World. This was conceived of as a new,

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[247] Christopher Lee, "Between a Moment and an Era: The Origins and Afterlives of Bandung," in *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, 10.
[248] Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 158.
[249] Sasha Polakow-Suranksy, *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 22.

alternative global bloc committed to self-determination, world peace, and equal development and

a political voice for all nations. It would stand outside the bipolar, East-West order that was

becoming increasingly dangerous, especially for Asia.[250] The Third World would also embody

an alternative to Western capitalism and Soviet communism. The conference's final

communiqué articulated delegates' desires for self-determination, human rights, and greater

economic cooperation and cultural exchange within the Afro-Asian world. While the term "non-

aligned movement" (NAM) was not yet formalized, Bandung represented a watershed moment

moving toward it.

The Afro-Asian Conference was also a major moment in which a new generation of

postcolonial leaders emerged. Figures like Indonesia's Sukarno, India's Nehru, and the Gold

Coast's Kwame Nkrumah used the opportunity to cultivate their reputations as movers and

shakers of the emerging NAM. This was particularly true for Israel's foremost rival, Nasser. As

if exclusion from the conference was not bad enough for Israeli leaders, Bandung also helped

launch Nasser onto the global stage. He and his Free Officers Movement had only recently come

to power in Egypt. Bandung marked his first major international appearance, and it offered him a

chance to vocalize his anti-imperialist sentiments to a receptive and influential audience.[251]

A year after Bandung, Egypt and Israel's reputations within the Afro-Asian world

diverged even more sharply. In September 1956, Nasser defied Western powers and inspired

many in the Third World when he nationalized the Suez Canal.[252] Great Britain and France,

whose oil shipments through the canal were now threatened, began plotting a military

intervention. The French persuaded Israel to join the operation, and on October 29, Israel

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[250] Lee, "Between a Moment and an Era," 15.
[251] James Brennan, "Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953-64," in *Making a World After Empire*, 175.
[252] Polakow-Suransky, *The Unspoken Alliance,* 25.

invaded the Sinai Peninsula. The Israeli army quickly swept through the Sinai and claimed

military victory. Yet the Suez War was devastating for Israel diplomatically. Israel was

condemned by both the Soviet Union and the Eisenhower administration. For Israel's Third

World detractors, the fact that Tel Aviv had cooperated militarily with two colonial powers

confirmed that it was a tool of the West. Israel faced boycotts and diplomatic attacks within the

UN. And while Mapai had once been an influential member of the ASC, it was excluded from

the organization's November 1956 conference in India.

These international diplomatic crises spurred Israeli officials to rethink their foreign

policy approach. In prior years, when Mapai and the Histadrut cultivated contacts in Asia, the

Israeli government had been slow to follow-up and parsimonious in its funding. Moshe Sharett,

who served as Foreign Minister 1955-56, had previously believed that Afro-Asian pleas for

assistance should be handled by the UN or the SI, not Israel bilaterally. Additionally, the Foreign

and Defense Ministries had focused most of their diplomatic efforts on obtaining aid, arms, and

security pacts from the U.S. and France. But the situation had changed. Now Eisenhower

condemned Israel for its role in the Suez War and espoused an "even-handed" approach toward

the Middle East. The French alliance had benefited Israel militarily, but their open cooperation

against Egypt and France's violent repression of Algerian independence painted Israel as an ally

or even a tool of Western imperialism. Meanwhile, newly independent nations in the Third

World constituted a larger and more influential bloc in international forums like the UN.

Morocco, Tunisia, and Sudan attained independence in 1956. Ghana would do so in March 1957.

The rest of the continent seemed poised to follow.

Israel was not the only state with a newfound interest in these nations. Its main regional

rival, Egypt, was already engaged in a vigorous propaganda campaign for Africans' hearts and

minds.[253] At stake were markets, raw materials, and allies on a continent that seemed primed for takeoff. Thus far, traditional avenues of state-centered diplomacy had largely failed Israel. At the beginning of 1957, Israel had only seven official embassies around the globe. State-to-state connections had not moved the needle in Israel's relations with influential Afro-Asian states like India, and they were forced to sit on the sidelines during the momentous Bandung meeting.

Despite these major setbacks, the combination of Israel's still admired socialist and labor movements held potential for alternative means for achieving diplomatic successes. Israeli political and labor leaders began to rethink what putting their best foot forward might look like. The Histadrut, international socialist movements, and the emerging global embrace of modernization and development ideology created promising openings for non-governmental diplomacy. These mechanisms, combined with Israel's newly conquered, direct access to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean—via Eilat and the Straits of Aqaba—gave Israel's leaders hope for changing their nation's international fortunes. Mapai and Histadrut leaders would begin to embark on a major campaign to increase their nation's diplomatic momentum and connect to their African counterparts. Building on a similar blueprint to what they used in U.S.-Israeli relations, Israelis would create for themselves a new type of diplomacy to promote closely knit, bilateral ties that might bear fruit for Israel in the international arena.

"Pioneering" for Israel in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1956-57

When Israeli Foreign Ministry officials decided it was imperative to launch a major diplomatic push into Africa, there were promising seeds already sowed. According to Akiva Eger, who later served as director of Israel's Afro-Asian Institute, the Histadrut "was a pioneer

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[253] James Brennan provides one excellent study of Egypt's African diplomacy: "Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa," in *Making a World after Empire*, 173-190.

and pilot plant for Israel's relations and practical cooperation with the Third World."[254] Labor unions were a primary vehicle for African political organization, and many African independence leaders rose through labor's ranks. In colonies where African political parties—especially those advocating independence—were often outlawed, trade unions were an alternative for organization and collective action. Labor unions and socialist movements thus presented a natural and advantageous avenue for Israel to make inroads into Africa.

African political and labor leaders, like the Burmese before them, met Mapai and Histadrut officials like Hacohen and Barkat at international labor and socialist conferences. They spoke a common ideological language, talked about their nations' similar colonial backgrounds, and discussed mutual concerns about their nations' development and economic independence. These conversations often led to invitations to Israel, where African leaders could see how Israel was addressing these issues. Former Israeli foreign officials described a "vanguard of [African] visitors," beginning 1956-1957, who "were interested mainly in Israel's social structure" and the kibbutz and *moshav* models which were "based on mutual aid."[255]

The first Israeli political and labor leaders on the ground in Africa were not traditional politicians and bureaucrats. They were instead *kibbutzniks*, farmers, and trade unionists. They were, according to historian Sasha Polakow-Suransky, "laid-back, sandal-wearing *sabras*, who blended easily with statesmen and farmers alike."[256] The first three Israeli representatives in Africa were kibbutz members: Shlomo Hillel (Guinea), Hanan Yavor (Liberia), and Ehud Avriel (Ghana).[257] In contrast to European and U.S. officials in Africa, they seemed exceedingly more

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[254] Eger, "Histadrut," 75.
[255] Shimon Avimor and Hanan S. Aynor, *Thirty Years of Israel's International Technical Assistance and Cooperation* (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem Press, 1990), E6.
[256] Polakow-Suransky, *The Unspoken Alliance,* 29.
[257] Avimor, *Thirty Years of Israel's International Technical Assistance and Cooperation,* E11.

relatable and their intentions more earnest. These diplomatic kibbutzniks tried to practice non-traditional, hands-on diplomacy, showing off their expertise in both agricultural development and international diplomacy. Many of them, including Yavor, became close confidants of African leaders and cultivated strong personal bonds between nations.

In addition to the kibbutzim and moshavim, the Histadrut was particularly appealing to Africans. The Israeli labor federation, like many African trade unions, existed well before the state. But the Histadrut, in many ways, also developed the state. For decades, Palestinian Jews had not been allowed their own state, so they utilized their trade federation to build many of its aspects: infrastructure, education, welfare, and banking systems, consumers' and producers' cooperatives, and a system for converting immigrants into skilled and productive workers.[258] The Histadrut's all-encompassing nature—quite different from most Western trade unions—was what many Africans sought. It appeared to be a successful model for quickly moving African countries toward independence, consolidating and expanding on those gains after statehood, and doing so while avoiding falling into dependence on either Cold War camp. The Histadrut's appeal opened doors for Israeli bilateral ties that might have remained closed otherwise.

Ghana provides the earliest example of Israel's alternative diplomacy. Ties between Israelis and their colleagues in Ghana (then known as Britain's Gold Coast colony) began as early as 1954-55. By that point, the Gold Coast was largely self-governing, and members of its governing party, the CPP, met Mapai leaders through the SI. As mentioned above, Zuberu Shardow visited Israel in 1955 during the IUSY's study tour. Israeli diplomatic officials also tried to cultivate contacts with CPP leaders at formal diplomatic events. One such instance took place at Liberian President William Tubman's third inauguration in 1956. Daniel Levin, director

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[258] Melech Noy, "Growth of the Histadrut," *Jewish Frontier*, June 1955, Volume 22 (6), 14.

of the Foreign Ministry's Asia Department, utilized the trip to connect with two Gold Coast representatives. They spent hours comparing their political parties' similar ideologies and sharing experiences in nation-building and trade union organization.[259] When Levin returned, he told the Israeli press that the prospects for Israeli-African relations were good. The CPP, he announced, planned to send an educational mission to Israel and Liberia may follow suit.[260]

David Kahane, director of Israel's consulate in Accra, reported similarly good news in early 1956. Writing to Golda Meir, then Israel's Labor Minister, Kahane said that the Gold Coast government had extended an invitation to the Histadrut to send Israeli co-operative experts. They would tour the African state, study agricultural conditions there, and draft recommendations for the Gold Coast's co-operative development programs.[261] Kahane was himself given a tour of the African nation's countryside in order to help better organize the exchange mission. In Accra, he was granted audience with people in "key positions" in the colony's economy and social services. Additionally, Kahane met in Accra with Western Nigeria's Minister of Economic Planning, Chief C.D. Akran. Akran too had heard about the Histadrut's vibrant co-operative movements, and he asked the Histadrut to lend one of their experts to assist Western Nigeria's Co-operative Union.[262] Kahane did not commit an Israeli to the chief's project, but he informed Akran that the Histadrut would gladly host a number of Nigerian co-operative members.

After these 1956 meetings in Accra, Kahane was bullish on the potential for Israeli inroads into Africa. He wrote to the Foreign Ministry office in Tel Aviv, "I would like to postpone my reply to your question about Israel-Ghana relations [but] at the moment I would say only one thing: It's an extremely positive attitude on the part of the Ghana Government." And, as

[259] Ehud Avriel, "Israel's Beginnings in Africa," in *Israel in the Third World,* 70.
[260] "Relations with Africa," Tel Aviv, 17 January 1956, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter, FBIS).
[261] David Kahane, Report to the Minister of Labor, Tel Aviv, 1956, PLI, IV 123.145.
[262] Kahane to President Obisesou, Co-operative Union of Western Nigeria, 11 June 1956, PLI, IV 123.145.

an added bonus to Kahane's work in the Gold Coast, he had spoken with Chief Akran, "the right

hand man" of Western Nigeria's Prime Minister and "found a remarkable knowledge on his part

about Israel."[263] Just months after Israel's diplomatic setbacks at Bandung and in the Suez crisis,

things in Africa were already looking promising. This was partially attributable to Nasser and

Arab leaders' failures to substantially impact West Africa during this period. But it was also

attributable to the appeal of Israel's labor organization and development model.

More than any formal diplomatic meeting in or visit to Africa, unofficial Ghanaian

delegations to Israel had the most powerful impact on Israeli-Ghanaian relations. Beginning in

the summer of 1957, the "vanguard of visitors" began arriving. First came a four-member team

from newly independent Ghana and its governing party, the CPP. As guests of Mapai, they spent

three and a half months in Israel studying the pioneering youth brigade, *Nahal*, and the

Histadrut's co-operative movements. Then, in early fall 1957, a handful of Ghanaian political

and labor leaders came for shorter periods of time. These guests included Ghana's Trade and

Development Minister Kojo Botsio and John K. Tettegah, General-Secretary of the Ghana Trade

Union Congress (GTUC). Finally, in December 1957 a six-member team of GTUC officials

traveled to Israel to spend three months as guests of the Histadrut. By the time their trip ended,

the influence of these delegations' time in Israel was more than evident.

On June 24, 1957, the *Ashanti Pioneer*, a Ghanaian newspaper, detailed the first of these

delegations' send-off. At a departure ceremony in Accra, the CPP's International Affairs

Secretary described the importance of their mission. He advised them to study Israeli

organizations as closely as possible, because Ghana was counting on them to bring this vital

knowledge back home. The secretary told the delegates they were not only representing the CPP,

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[263] Kahane to Foreign Ministry, Tel Aviv, 7 February 1957, LPA, 2.914.1956.1.

but serving as unofficial ambassadors of Ghana itself. They must, he said, "portray the new state in a very good light."[264] Ghana was just three months-independent. As one of the first independent nations in Africa, CPP and government officials strove to become leaders of the sub-continent. At this point in time, something as seemingly small as a four-man delegation to Israel held outsized importance.

Across the Red Sea, Israeli labor and political leaders were also trying to ensure their state would be portrayed in a very good light. By then, Israeli labor and political leaders had nearly a decade of experience crafting these kinds of international junkets. They had organized similar trips for U.S. trade unionists during the late 1940s and early 1950s, and they had done so more recently for socialists from Burma, India, and Japan.

The itineraries for CPP and GTUC visitors were ambitious and meant to create an impressive and immersive experience. Botsio and Tettegah's delegation spent just nine days in Israel, but their trip's itinerary read more like a nine-week stay. They held audience with a laundry list of Israeli government officials, including the prime minister, president, and ministers of labor, foreign affairs, development, and finance.[265] They were also introduced to nearly all the movers and shakers of the Histadrut: its entire Central Committee, Zim (the Histadrut's shipping line) director Nephtali Wydra, and Solel Boneh's board of directors (including David Hacohen). Botsio and Tettegah were also shown an impressive array of development projects—agricultural, industrial, and commercial. Their trip included a tour of Israel's "Conquest of the Desert" exhibition, a visit to the Lachish development area in the southern desert, an outing to Israel's

[264] "Ghanaians Leave for Israel," *Ashanti Pioneer*, 24 June 1957, LPA, 2.914.1956.1.
[265] This included: President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, Foreign Minister Golda Meir, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Walter Eitan, Minister of Trade and Industry Pinchas Sapir, Finance Minister Levi Eshkol, Labor Minister Pinchas Namir, and Development Minister Mordechai Bentov.

institute of technology (Technion), and various other water plants, kibbutzim, industrial fish ponds, factories and army installations.

The locations and leaders introduced to Botsio and Tettegah were meant to spur the visitors' imaginations regarding how these things could be translated to Ghana. For instance, when they met with Sol Boneh's board of directors, the Ghanaians began planning a partnered contracting company between the Histadrut and their government. When they visited the Defense Ministry, the Ghanaians and their hosts discussed how Ghana's Builders Brigade, a youth movement originally organized under British command, could instead model itself in the image of Israel's Nahal. Nahal was unique in that it recruited young volunteers to combine military service and farming, usually setting up agricultural settlements along Israel's borders. Ghanaian leaders like Botsio and Tettegah believed this model could better serve Ghana's needs—especially cultivating new agricultural lands and better integrating rural areas under the government's purview—while also giving its youth a sense of national purpose.[266]

After nine days of such impressive sites and personalities, Botsio and Tettegah were inspired. In September 1957, Botsio reflected positively on his trip in a letter to Hamashbir*'s* director, Zvi Ben-Schachar. The Ghanaian minister wrote that he had heard a lot about Israel's co-operative movements before the journey, "but it was only on our visit to the center of the Israeli Co-operative Wholesale Society that we saw the real extent to which the movement has developed."[267] Botsio was encouraged to see many of Ghanaians' aspirations become reality in Israel. "It is really encouraging," he wrote, "to see how the co-operative trader has succeeded in setting up a movement to compete not only with any private trading company but has attained also a leading position in Israel's economy." Botsio hoped to continue the Israel-Ghana exchange

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[266] "Suggested Program for Government Visit from Ghana," August 7-16, 1957, LPA, 2.914.1956.1.
[267] Botsio to Zvi Ben-Schachar, 7 September 1957, PLI, IV 219A 2.

and bring Histadrut experts to Ghana to set up pilot programs. He requested the presence of an Israeli expert to "revive" Ghana's own Wholesale Co-operative Society. He asked Hamashbir to partner with the Ghanaian government and create a co-operative flour mill like the one he had visited in Israel.[268] But most importantly, from the Israeli perspective, Botsio began to express— and would continue to demonstrate—that he had become a staunch, long-time friend and advocate for Israel and the Histadrut in Afro-Asian world.

John Tettegah was similarly inspired to bring some of Israel and the Histadrut back to Ghana. While Botsio returned from Israel ready to reshape Ghanaian co-operatives, Tettegah, the GTUC's General Secretary, began a campaign to totally reorganize his labor federation in the Histadrut's image. The GTUC had previously functioned as a vehicle in the struggle against colonialism. Yet it had also been modeled after British trade unions and kept under close colonial surveillance. GTUC leaders believed changes were needed on many fronts. "Some of us," Tettegah wrote, "[have begun] to realize that certain phases of western civilization would not fit into our way of life; this way of life being connected to our traditions and customs." Tettegah and other GTUC leaders had therefore been seeking out alternative trade union models, "to pick the best out of western civilization and to reject those customs, traditions, etc., or our own which are not conductive to our progressive growth." This search led Tettegah to Israel.

In October 1957, Tettegah outlined his revelation in *The African Masses*. "Right now, I am convinced we are in the midst of a profound change in our trade union habits," he argued. He believed that, post-independence, Israel's development model and labor movement were much more applicable. Both were smaller nations—Israel's population was around two million and Ghana's five. In Israel, like Ghana, the government was the biggest employer. Tettegah had been

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[268] David Kahane, Accra, to Yaacov Efter, Tel Aviv, 2 October 1957, PLI, IV 219A 2.

particularly impressed by Israeli agricultural practices and co-operative farming, which he and other Ghanaians viewed as distinct from commercial farming modeled in Europe. The GTUC was also seeking a more centralized structure, like that of the Histadrut.

For these reasons and others, Tettegah prescribed a single, all-encompassing union structure for the GTUC. "The Histadrut pattern," he wrote, "has commended itself to us" and was the "pattern for the future."[269] Over the following months Tettegah began outlining specific plans for this transformation. It would involve bringing Histadrut officials to Ghana and sending additional GTUC officials for a several-month study of Histadrut operations in Israel.

While Tettegah was writing about Israel's influence on the GTUC, members of the four-man CPP delegation—in Israel since late June—finally made their way home. The delegates spent more than three weeks as guests of both Mapai and the Histadrut. They visited trade union offices, kibbutzim and *moshavim*, various youth movement events and institutions, and a number of Histadrut-owned industries. These CPP officials—who were up-and-coming leaders in Ghana's governing political party—returned ready to serve, in the words of one member, as "unofficial ambassadors of Israel."[270]

Two of the delegates wrote informative "thank you" letters that described the ways in which they would try to convince their countrymen to implement what they had seen and learned in Israel. For S.S. Badoo, General Secretary of the CPP's Youth League, Israel's ability to foster economic and agricultural development along socialist lines was encouraging for the new, underdeveloped nations of Africa. He told Mapai's International Department director, "For the first time…in your settlements, the principles and ideology of socialism which we now advocate

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[269] John Tettegah, "Ghana Labor Looks for Change: The Structure of the Histadrut is Pattern for the Future," *The African Masses*, 26 October 1957, GMA, RG18-001, Country Files: Ghana, Box 9/12.
[270] S.S. Badoo to S. Hugo Moratt, Tel Aviv, 21 November 1957, LPA, 2.914.1956.1.

in Ghana for ourselves and all other African countries, are successfully being practiced with the most fruitful results."[271] Badoo hoped that Ghana would "take a leaf out of that as a basis for her development." Peter Ackom, Executive Secretary of the CPP's Ashanti Region, was impressed not only by Israeli development, but the welcoming, fraternal atmosphere fostered by his hosts. "You took a personal and special interest in our visit," he wrote.[272] Ackom's sentiment would be shared by many subsequent African political and labor leaders who spent time in Israel. Their hosts apparently treated them not only as VIP's, but as capable and equals.

Ackom and Badoo assured their newfound Israeli allies that they were working to serve as "unofficial ambassadors," carrying the good news and bringing their nations closer together. The four-man delegation began these efforts before even getting off their boat in Accra. They were met ashore by a crowd of CPP members and government officials, friends and family. "Even from the harbor," Badoo later recounted, "we started talking on Israel to those people."[273] Ackom likewise assured his Israeli hosts that as soon as he arrived home, he was "very busy talking to schools, different organizations and other sections of the community about my visit to Israel."[274] The results from both CPP officials' work was apparently promising.

The Israeli-Ghanaian exchange benefitted both host and visitor. The delegates were now considered experts in an increasingly well-known model of development and labor organization. They had something other political and labor leaders did not. And, when groups like theirs returned home, audiences around the country wanted to hear from them, giving them a platform from which to speak. Their stock rose at home, and with it, Israel's reputation and influence ascended.

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[271] S.S. Badoo to Secretary's Office, Mapai International Department, 20 October 1957, LPA, 2.914.1956.1.
[272] Peter Ackom to S. Hugo Moratt, 9 December 1957, LPA, 2.914.1956.1.
[273] S.S. Badoo to S. Hugo Moratt, 21 November 1957, LPA, 2.914.1956.1.
[274] Ackom to Moratt, 9 December 1957.

Utilizing the Histadrut to influence a small but well-connected core of Ghanaians quickly

yielded the state of Israel positive results and created a multiplier effect. Ackom observed that

Ghanaians were "getting more interested in Israel than before" and Badoo believed that CPP and

government leaders were all quite interested in learning more about the delegations' trip and "are

highly impressed with the opportunities you made available to us." In October 1957, Ghana's

Black Star Line and the Histadrut's Zim Navigation formed a major maritime shipping

partnership.[275] It was 40% financed by Zim and the Histadrut's building company, Solel Boneh,

while the Ghanaian government financed the remaining 60%.[276] While Ghana and Israel's

economic ties grew, the Histadrut sent industrial and construction experts to Accra to advise their

counterparts in creating new factories and infrastructure. By November 1959, Solel Boneh's

chairman of the board estimated that it was carrying out cooperative projects in Africa totaling

more than $35 million.[277]

Meanwhile, trade union relations between Israel and Ghana continued to grow quickly

and create a larger cadre of African allies for Israel. After Tettegah's late 1957 trip to Israel, he

and the GTUC Executive Board published a detailed handbook titled, *A New Chapter for Ghana

Labor*.[278] The handbook's forward, written by GTUC President Joe-Fio Meyer, laid out the trade

federation's history, goals, and path it had taken to arrive at this transformative moment. Meyer

wrote that GTUC leaders were determined to spur Ghana's "economic reconstruction, structural

reorganization and legislative reforms such as [to] bring prosperity to Ghana and respect to the

individual worker before any employer." To accomplish these tasks, the federation had

conducted "carefully planned research," consulting with the International Labor Organization

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[275] Embassy of Israel, Accra, to Yaacov Efter, Tel Aviv, 2 October 1957, PLI, IV 219A 2.
[276] Levey, "Israel's Strategy in Africa, 1961-67," 74.
[277] "Projects in Africa," Tel Aviv, May 10, 1959, FBIS.
[278] John Tettegah, *A New Chapter for Ghana Labor*, 1958, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Ghana (2).

(ILO) and drawing from the experience of other labor movements in Europe, America and Asia, "particularly Germany, Israel, Australia, British Columbia, and USA." The GTUC Executive Board sent Tettegah and Meyer on research trips to Israel and Germany to study trade union models. They hoped to find alternative structures to their British TUC-style federation. Meyer spent eight days with the Histadrut and another eight days with the German DGB.

In the end Meyer, like Tettegah before him, decided that Ghana "must turn to something like the [Histadrut]." He wrote, "This is a new nation and we must build trade union machinery that can hasten the building of socialism and raise the standards of the working people." The GTUC's 13th annual congress, which had met in the fall, supported this idea of "one big Union," and determined that its previous British TUC modeling "was too cumbersome and ineffective as far as there were no large industries [in Ghana]." Meyer continued, "Ghana was not an industrialized country like Britain or America and it was a mistake for the [Colonial] Government Labor Advisers to impose that structure." The GTUC would instead emulate the Histadrut's centralized structure, its social insurance and welfare systems, its co-operative movements and institutions, and its "national check-off" dues system.[279]

The overriding appeal of the Histadrut, according to the GTUC booklet, was the scope of its activities in the Israeli economy and society. It had "no parallel…of this comprehensive nature" among its Western counterparts. Ghana did not have factories "to smash" or classes to clash—it was not an advanced industrial nation. Instead, Ghana still needed to create industries "and to give work to the masses" of its people. So like the Histadrut, the GTUC would greatly expand its scope and responsibilities. *A New Chapter for Ghana Labor* proposed the trade federation begin investing in "productive enterprises" like building and construction companies,

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[279] Meyer quoted in *A New Chapter for Ghana Labor*.

co-operatives, wholesale, retail and distributive shops. The GTUC's 64 affiliated unions would be condensed into 16 national unions. They would form the component parts of a newly centralized and more powerful GTUC. And this new union would, it was hoped, become the engine to spur development in Ghana's economy, industries, and social institutions.[280]

Speaking at the town hall in Cape Coast, Ghana, Tettegah gave a rousing speech endorsing what was now called the "New Structure" of the GTUC.[281] The New Structure was a central component to Ghana's call to arms. Ghana needed to be "militarized" not for war, but "for service, not for aggression but for production." The New Structure would enable the labor movement "to help wipe out the slums that are the souvenir of British colonialism so that every family can live in a decent house and in a wholesome neighborhood." Echoing Nkrumah's calls for "jet-propelled" development, Tettegah argued that Ghana desperately needed to act "in such a way as to catch up with the already advanced industrial nations who are now employing their technological devices in producing armaments that will only destroy mankind. We must do this," he implored, "we must industrialize our country or stagnate and die as individuals." Believing that Israel and the Histadrut presented a means for spurring this "jet-propelled" take-off, the GTUC sent another delegation to Israel. Its trip would, in part, follow in the footsteps of Tettegah and other previous Ghanaian visitors. However, it would be much longer, and their mission was slightly different. Now that Ghanaians had found their model, they would study it more closely and lead the GTUC's reformation.

In December 1957, while the details of the GTUC's transformation were being ironed out, the group shipped out to the Middle East. Spearheading the GTUC delegation was a 40-year-old former nurse and British Army volunteer, Mettle Nunoo. In 1957-1958, he was

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[280] Ibid.
[281] Appendix II, *A New Chapter for Ghana Labor*.

pervasive in the Ghanaian trade union movement. He was General Secretary of the Building

Workers' Union, Director of the Institute for Worker Education, and a member of the Ghana

National Housing Company.[282] Mettle Nunoo was no parochial African trade unionist or anti-

Western radical. During WWII, he volunteered for the British Army. He gained a reputation for

bravery and competency during the war, pulling wounded soldiers from the frontlines and

treating them as part of the army medical corps. Following the war, he represented the GTUC in

England and traveled to Morocco to meet with North African trade union leaders.

Mettle Nunoo rose through the GTUC's ranks to become second-in-command, serving

under Tettegah as the union's assistant secretary general. Like many younger African leaders, he

was cautiously optimistic about his nation's newly won independence. During a 1958 interview

with the Histadrut's newspaper, *Davar*, he reflected on what drove him and his colleagues to

search for models like Israel's labor developmentalism. "Ghana became independent only a year

ago," he stated, "and faces a serious problem which it must solve: industrializing the country and

developing it in order to improve the low standard of living of its inhabitants."[283] Mettle Nunoo

believed the key to Ghana's development lay in its workers. The workers' movement needed to

be strengthened and enlarged, spreading from urban to rural areas. "It is not easy to establish a

general organization of workers in an underdeveloped country," he argued. Trade unions in such

nations faced the challenge of reaching out to agricultural workers and convincing them to

integrate into the national economy and trade union movement. Mettle Nunoo came to believe

that Israel was overcoming this major challenge.

On December 30, 1957, Mettle Nunoo's delegation stepped off the *S.S. Yehuda* and onto

the shore in the port city of Haifa. At beginning of their three month stay, the group spent time

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[282] "Conversation with Mettle Nunoo, Head of the Ghana Delegation," *Davar*, 14 January 1958, PLI, IV 219A 2.
[283] Ibid.

together in Haifa and around Tel Aviv, receiving a primer in the Histadrut's structure and operations on the whole. They were most interested in the following fields of study: agriculture, industrial development, health and social services, combining military defense training and farming, and bringing all of these things together under the umbrella of a centralized trade union movement. Essentially, they wanted to learn how to put the GTUC in service of Ghana's development like the Histadrut had done for Israel.[284]

Like most other trade unionist tours of Israel, the group visited several kibbutzim and moshavim, a variety of Histadrut-owned and operated factories throughout the country, religious sites, and youth movement and Histadrut offices in Haifa and Tel Aviv. After their initial introduction to Israeli labor, each delegate was attached to an institution specifically related to their field of work back home. The *Jewish Frontier* observed, "One saw them piling into the large cab that took them all over the country, and then afterwards settling down in the Histadrut offices almost like permanent members of the staff to write up their reports."[285] A.A. Moffatt, for example, settled down to train in the Histadrut's central dues office. In Ghana, Moffatt helped run the GTUC's Accounting Department. He believed the GTUC's financial struggles could be alleviated if it emulated the Histadrut's check-off system and had individual members pay directly to a GTUC central organization.[286]

After their months-long stay in Israel, Moffatt, Woods, and the rest of the group were ready to affirm Tettegah's earlier conclusions. In fact, their lengthier and more expansive study inspired in them even more ideas for how Ghana could better "march abreast with other

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[284] "Study Programmes [sic] for Groups from Africa and Asia, Arranged by Histadrut," written in 1960, PLI, IV 219A 28C.
[285] Ziona Meyer, "With the Ghanaians in Israel," *Jewish Frontier*, September 1958, 25
[286] A.A. Moffatt, "Impressions," 1958, PLI, IV 219A 2.

Department. In March 1958, Barkat pledged assistance to the GTUC's growth and reorganization. This included typewriters and stationery for the GTUC Secretariat and a new Land-Rover outfitted with a loudspeaker "for organizational purposes relative to the New Trade Union Structure based on the Histadrut pattern." The Histadrut also sent trade union experts to Ghana for on-the-ground training. Barkat and Mettle Nunoo agreed to have a team of three Israeli trade unionists assist the GTUC implement this transition.[290]

To Israeli observers, the GTUC-Histadrut connection illustrated the influence that alternative avenues of diplomacy could have on state-to-state relations. A September 1958 article in *Jewish Frontier*, for instance, remarked that relations between Ghana and Israel, which were clearly on the rise at this point, "have developed largely through trade union contacts."[291] The earliest Ghanaian visitors to Israel came under unofficial auspices, with the Histadrut or Mapai. Yet almost all invariably pledged afterward to serve as ambassadors for the state of Israel or at least to bring their nations closer together. The 1958 GTUC group was no different. "We shall try to establish ever closer contacts with the State of Israel and the Histadrut," Mettle Nunoo vowed.[292] In just two years' time, Israel's prospects in the Afro-Asian world had gone from dire to very promising. Using non-traditional channels for diplomacy and reaching out to Ghanaians in influential places—its trade unions, youth movements, and socialist party—could not only multiply Israel's friends and influence in Ghana, but perhaps do so on the entire sub-continent.

Strategizing to Reach "the African Mind"

In January and October 1959, Israeli Foreign Ministry official Zvi Halmer wrote two lengthy reports reflecting on Israeli diplomacy in Africa. Halmer had recently ended a months-

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[290] Mettle Nunoo to Reuven Barkatt, 21 March 1958, PLI, IV 219A 2.
[291] Meyer, "With Ghanaians in Israel," 24.
[292] "Conversation with Mettle Nunoo, Head of the Ghana Delegation," *Davar*, 14 January 1958, PLI, IV 219A 2.

long tour of Ghana. In his first report, "Notes on Africa," Halmer described his understanding of "the African Personality" and strategized the ways in which Israel could continue to utilize non-state, non-traditional avenues of diplomacy.[293] In fact, Halmer had pretended to be a Histadrut official during his visit, using the labor federation's cachet in Ghana to grant him access and influence not normally given to Western diplomats. The Histadrut, Halmer concluded in October 1959, was one of the state's "best methods of infiltration into the countries of Africa."[294]

Halmer's mission to Ghana and his subsequent reports clearly illuminate Israel's alternative diplomatic approach to Africa. His reports, which he wrote to the Histadrut's Political Department director Reuven Barkat, reveal some of the logic and emerging strategies behind Israel's labor- and development-based outreach. Halmer's activities on the ground in Ghana also illustrate the ways in which the Israeli Foreign Ministry (and later Defense Ministry) could appropriate the bilateral and transnational relations labor and socialists had created for Israel in the Afro-Asian world. State officials, like Halmer, tried to carefully thread the needle of accomplishing diplomatic, state-interested goals while working through seemingly non-governmental means and entities, like trade federations. This line was particularly blurry in Israel's case, much to the state's advantage, because there was no clear line between labor and state, Histadrut and Mapai (or Mapam). In places like Ghana, state officials like Halmer now worked to insure that the international reputation and relationships of the former (labor) would serve and improve those of the latter (the state).

For these reasons, in fall 1958, the Foreign Ministry sent Halmer to Ghana. The embassy in Accra hoped his visit could deepen ties between the Histadrut and the GTUC, which in turn

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[293] "The African Personality" was a notion widely discussed after Ghana's independence ceremonies. There, Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah began speaking about Africans' need to rediscover themselves and their continent and embrace and foster a unique "African personality."
[294] Zvi Halmer, "Notes on Africa," 24 October 1959, LPA, 4.11.1952.10 B.

would grant Israel closer connections to influential Ghanaians. Halmer would be the eyes and ears on the ground for both the Israeli Foreign Ministry and the Histadrut. After his stay, he would assess Israel's activities in the region and strategize how best to move forward.

Halmer was well aware of the fact that the Histadrut's reputation far outshone that of the Israeli state in Ghana. So, though he was an official from the Foreign Ministry, when he arrived in Accra Halmer presented himself as a Histadrut representative. He believed it was necessary in order to achieve the embassy's directives. "I have indeed at all times tried to act as though I have been in fact a representative of the Histadrut and even an important representative," Halmer reported."[295] His false identification as an Israeli trade union official opened doors that were not granted to just any international guest. It meant, he reflected, "they're providing transport so I can see something of the development of this country, and they've given me opportunity of hearing something of their problems and how they're setting out to overcome them."

Halmer tapped into the close-knit GTUC-Histadrut relationship and tried to capitalize on it in several key areas. As a self-described, "world-renowned expert on youth affairs," Halmer conferred with the CPP's Youth League and its executive leadership. He concluded that "the only way" Ghana's youth could be effectively enlisted for the causes of national development and labor activism was to study and emulate Nahal. Kojo Botsio, a CPP official, Ghana Youth League executive member, and recent visitor to Israel, called a meeting to advocate for Halmer's proposals, which the CPP accepted. Halmer was able to combine his supposed Histadrut credentials, the Nahal's excellent reputation in Ghana, and the sway of an influential friend of Israel, Botsio, to establish this Israeli-Ghanaian partnership in a movement that promised to shape future CPP leaders.

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[295] Confidential, "Interim Report Submitted to R. Barkat by Zvi Halmer on Visit to Ghana," 15 October 1958, LPA, 4.11.1952.10 A.

Halmer also continued the strategy of the multiplier effect; he facilitated another study-exchange between the Histadrut and the GTUC. The GTUC decided to send an eight-person mission to Israel and the Histadrut would send "a small group" to Ghana. Since the Israelis were inviting high-level, influential GTUC leaders to Israel, Halmer deemed it necessary that the Histadrut give Tettegah "some help in the form of a reciprocal delegation from Histadrut." He suggested Israel send four experts, each specializing in a different, vital field. First, Halmer proposed sending an expert in public relations, who could help the GTUC form its International Department. Second, Halmer wanted the Histadrut to send someone to set up a GTUC department specializing in social security benefits, such as health insurance and unemployment. Third, the Histadrut would send a statistics and research specialist who could draft documents and strategies for GTUC labor contract negotiations. Finally, Halmer suggested an official head for this Histadrut delegation, someone who would work as Tettegah's liaison and personal assistant. "In my opinion," Halmer wrote, "this person will be the one who can exert the most influence on the GTUC here through Tettegah…and with the International Public Relations expert [they] could ensure that things go our way, not only in this local TUC but also in other trade union organizations here with the possibility of being an influence in the West African WFTU trade unions of Nigeria." From Halmer's perspective, the potential successes of this Histadrut delegation in Ghana, and the work of a newly formed and Histadrut-sponsored GTUC International Department, could spread Israel's influence and goodwill beyond Ghana's borders.

Tettegah and other GTUC officials did not have to be persuaded before agreeing to these proposals. Shortly after Halmer left, Tettegah wrote to Barkat that the GTUC "very much enjoy[ed] his acquaintance." In fact, the Ghanaians would be "very grateful" to have him as a member of the Histadrut mission, and Tettegah requested Halmer fill the role of liaison and

masses posted photos of Nasser in their homes or offices. In Ghana it was Kwame Nkrumah. Despite charges of corruption against Nkrumah's government, Halmer was not very unsettled about working with Nkrumah or his party. It must be understood, he explained, "the African way of life is not 'British,' and, in any case, it is difficult to distinguish between gifts and bribes." Most importantly, Halmer added, the leader of a personality cult surrounds himself with "his boys." If an outsider could gain influence with one of these insiders, perhaps they could also gain influence with the powerful figure they surrounded.

In Ghana, Halmer believed Israel already had access to such an insider—one who was affiliated with the most powerful diplomatic tool at Israel's disposal: labor. "Our friend Tettegah," he wrote, "fits into the hierarchy and features high on the list. He is a great friend of Israel and dislikes Americans, British, and French as well as seeming to dislike the Russian groups." Israeli labor and its relationship with Tettegah gave Israel a unique advantage among Western states. Halmer saw this as a potential lever for Israel to get Western support for its Africa programs, and as another reason to court more influential friends like Tettegah. Israel, he wrote, was "the outpost of 'westernism' in West Africa." He continued, "The Americans, French, and British should be made to realize this, otherwise they will make the same mess of Africa as they made of the Middle East." In the meantime, Israel's Foreign Ministry would continue to utilize the Histadrut for maintaining and strengthening this "outpost." "Trade unionism is our best weapon," Halmer argued, "and Tettegah our prophet." Through Tettegah, Israel could "contact and influence the whole of West Africa—and further."

Still, Halmer anticipated several challenges to expanding Israel's relations and influence in Africa, challenges that were, once again, related to traditional, state-centered diplomacy. The '56 Suez war had fortunately "almost been forgotten," but Israel still needed to work quietly in

its relations with colonial powers. Israel had to manage, for example, being "both pro-French and anti-French…and one day will have to make up our minds which." France's ongoing war with Algerians was deteriorating its relations across the continent.[298] Israelis feared being dragged down by extension. At the same time, Israel was highly dependent on France for its arms and military hardware. At some point, Halmer believed Israel would have to choose a side. Presciently, he added that the same dilemma would soon apply to Israel's ambivalent ties with South Africa.

African politics, Halmer's report concluded, were a tenuous minefield requiring patience, ideological and diplomatic flexibility, and the right personnel. During his visit, he had noted several opposition factions bubbling under the rule of Nkrumah's government. These included disillusioned intellectuals, some of Ghana's Muslim population, and even members within Nkrumah's CPP. For the time being, Halmer cautioned Israel to hedge its bets and avoid taking sides. "We have to sit on the fence no matter what contortions this may demand," he advised. "We must no doubt continue to be pro-French and anti-French imperialism; pro-Nkrumah but on the lookout for whatever might replace him; pro-Ghana but pro-Nigeria and pro-Kenya, etc." Additionally, he encouraged the Foreign Ministry to think hard and long about who it sent to Africa. They needed to send Israelis who required little instruction and zero coddling, could navigate the nuances and uncertainties of African politics and culture, and who could rough it in sometimes challenging living conditions. They also needed to send diplomats who would maintain Israel's reputation as one of the only "Westernized" nations that treated Africans as

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[298] Matthew Connelly has written a seminal study on France and Algeria's war and its extension into the international arena: *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

equals, representatives who, in his words, "can at least stand the sight of Africans in the raw, and should neither despise them nor want to convert them to Western standards."

Halmer's "Notes on Africa," written to Barkat in October 1959, spoke again about "the African Personality," trying to parse out what it might entail and how to better discover it, adapt to it, and put Israel's best diplomatic foot or face (as will be discussed later) forward. Africans, according to Halmer, "may be as educated as Nkrumah but they are still primitive and politically inexperienced." At the same time, Halmer wanted to avoid the ways in which Western officials offended Africans and treated them paternalistically or condescendingly. He knew how much it cost the West in access and influence. He wanted to make sure Israel's reputation remained different. Israel's Africa representatives needed to "find out what makes the people of Africa loyal, and what makes them offended." Africans themselves made this difficult though, according to Halmer. Africans were at one time "naïve" and also "so callous that they can forget their own promises almost as soon as they have uttered them." In order to decipher this African mind, Halmer decided that the Israeli diplomatic corps in Africa needed to include anthropologists and sociologists. He hoped they could, "during their stay, study about the physio-social makeup of the people."

Halmer's report critiqued some of Israel's current diplomatic corps in Africa, especially in contrast to the successes of non-traditional diplomatic figures like the Histadrut's kibbutzniks and technical experts. He believed the Foreign Ministry needed to more carefully and strategically select personnel for the Africa corps. Representatives chosen, he cautioned, "should…know that primitive does not mean stupid. They will have to like the African or they will soon, willy-nilly, develop the same relationship to them that their colonial overlords had." Halmer had detected major problems in this regard among some of Israel's current Africa

representatives. He suggested that there were "routine diplomats" in Africa that saw their posting as an unfortunate "filling in time between Europe and America." They should be withdrawn from Africa, "and the embassies should be staffed with people who are making Africa a personal and permanent interest. These people who think of Africans as stupid Niggers or Kaffirs should come home," he argued. They should be taken out of the Africa rotation.

In addition to burnishing Israel's reputation in Africa via the Histadrut, Halmer believed Israel should literally put a different face on its African diplomatic corps. Like some other nations at the time, including the U.S., he believed that Israel should strategically utilize its small number of non-white representatives. The Foreign Ministry had some diplomats of Arab or African descent. They needed to be deployed advantageously. Halmer believed it was not necessary that every single diplomat in Africa should be a Yemenite, for example, but he asked Barkat, "is it not time that we had an Arab or two as First Secretary somewhere?" He cautioned that it should be done delicately and seem to have happened naturally. "If we do send Arabs or near-African Jews," he proposed, "let us do it without any undue publicity, as though it happened to be the most natural thing in the world." The fact that Halmer added this last caveat suggests the opposite. But he hoped that by literally changing the face of Israel's presence in Africa, they could gain yet another leg up on the competition.

Finally, Halmer reaffirmed the significance and continued utility of the Histadrut in the Israeli state's international relations. Israeli labor and co-operative movements were perhaps the nation's "best methods of infiltration into the countries of Africa." It was a "very suitable agent for working in Africa." And, Halmer observed, it was often non-state actors that had the most success cultivating ties. Egypt, for example, had flooded its neighboring states with teachers. "And everybody," he added, "sends technicians to all under-developed nations. We have to do

this on as large a scale as we can manage." Halmer had learned firsthand how his false Histadrut credentials opened many doors in Ghana and Western Nigeria. He wanted to see this utilized to the fullest. Part of this, he concluded, should include a growing number of Afro-Asian conferences and delegations hosted in Israel, which he argued were among Israel's "most important and useful ways of making contact with the leaders-to-be of the African countries." He hoped they could compete with other nations' like France and Germany as a destination for Afro-Asian leaders to study and train, then go onto positions of power and influence.

Halmer's notes again reveal that every aspect of visitors' itineraries was designed with specific diplomatic effects in mind, right down to the length of the stays themselves. For instance, Halmer wrote that he wanted to end "mass visits." Instead, one or two people could "be 'worked on' with greater ease and effect than six or eight." And this smaller number of visitors needed to be more carefully selected. They could not be just any African trade unionist or political party member. The Histadrut and Foreign Ministry had to winnow the field and select visitors, he argued, "who come on the basis of their possible future…as it is possible to bring some who become of no value while ignoring others who will be in positions of importance." Halmer's second point had to do with the length and scope of African visits. He argued against months-long stays. Three weeks was enough. Shorter trips were easier to manage, and if guests were left feeling there was still more of Israel to see, "so much the better."

As far as itineraries and program materials went, Halmer advised Barkat that they should depend on the individual, and "the intensity of activity should decrease the more Africanised [sic] he is." Continuing along these lines, Halmer advocated a shift in the Histadrut and Foreign Ministry's educational and informational materials. In short, they needed to cut back on the amount of materials they were producing. "The People of the Book have become the people of

the pamphlet," he quipped. "I think our overproduction in printed materials is more of a problem than our surplus of chickens." They also needed to make materials more succinct, simpler, and include more pictures and fewer words. This was mainly due to their audience's needs. "Primitive people," Halmer observed, "do not read much and when they do they avoid subtleties, preferring pictures." This final note fits Halmer's notions that there was a certain, discernible difference between "Africanised" and Westernized peoples and states. It also blurs Halmer's earlier argument that there was a difference between "primitive" and "stupid," as he believed Israel's African visitors could not handle subtleties and preferred pictures to words. Again, these reports help illuminate the fact that Israel's outreach to Africa, while much more successful and well-received than the most nations—especially from the West—could still share the same self-interest, cold-calculations, and racial insensitivities of Israel's global colleagues.

Halmer's reports were pragmatic and calculated compared to the idealistic rhetoric emanating from Tel Aviv and Israel's various Afro-Asian conferences and seminars. But Israel, despite the idealistic imagery many used to describe it and its development model, was a nation-state like any other, with real national interests and strategic ways of achieving them. "We are on the African wagon," Halmer wrote, "it is too important a ride for us to fall off." Israel had to use whatever advantages it could to win hearts and minds in Africa and stay on the "wagon." For the time being, this meant fully utilizing non-state actors, organizations and movements, like the labor, socialism, and modernization and development ideology. If the state could not achieve diplomatic successes on its own, perhaps diplomacy could operate through other means.

Becoming an International Hub: The Afro-Asian Seminar in Cooperation

The first several years of Israel's new approach to Africa began to change the state's international momentum and expand its reputation as a hub for Afro-Asian visitors and allies.

Establishing close relationships with one or two influential visitors here and there had been a good start, and it created a multiplier effect in places like Ghana. But to really spread Israel's influence and goodwill across the African continent, and to keep up with Egyptian competition, Israeli leaders believed they needed to do more. Though Halmer had cautioned against "mass visits," he and others still envisioned the Histadrut and Israel's co-operative organizations helping Israel turn into the next "Sorbonne or Heidelberg," a mecca for Afro-Asians who wanted to learn how to develop their nation and build vibrant trade union movements. The question Israeli political and labor leaders now asked was how they could make this non-traditional diplomatic approach more efficient, replicable, and exportable to other parts of Africa. Some members of the Mapai, the Foreign Ministry, and, later, the Defense Ministry, also wanted to find ways to institutionalize this alternative diplomacy and bring it more within the purview of state interests and control.

Beginning in November 1958, the Foreign and Labor Ministries, the Histadrut, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem partnered to take the first major step in fine-tuning and expanding Israel's alternative diplomacy across the African continent. While Mettle Nunoo and the GTUC's six-man mission were in Israel, there was another, much larger group of Afro-Asian visitors studying the Histadrut's structure and operations. They were participants in the first Afro-Asian Seminar in Cooperation, a three-month long seminar that eventually became the capstone in Israel and the Histadrut's growing outreach to and influence in the Afro-Asian world.

The Afro-Asian Seminar, while jointly sponsored by the Israeli government and the Hebrew University, was still mainly a Histadrut affair. Taking place from November 1958 to February 1959, the Seminar was organized and operated by the Histadrut, and almost all of the study programs were under labor's purview. It was a three-month combination of theoretical and

hands-on studies, and it drew 60 students from 17 different African and Asian nations.[299]

Delegations came from Israel's closest allies in the Afro-Asian world and from states where

Israel hoped to make new connections. The largest delegation came from Ghana. The GTUC and

CPP sent five Ghanaians from the Farmers' Council to focus on Israeli agriculture and five

members from Ghana's Cooperative Alliance to study Histadrut co-operatives like Hamashbir.

Burma, India, and the Republic of Guinea all sent delegates, and 14 other African students came

from several French-speaking, West African states.

The Seminar encapsulated many of the most enticing things Israel had offered its

previous visitors, but they now had the time and resources to offer both in-depth classroom study

and hands-on training. Students attended lectures on topics like "Stages of Development," "A

Survey of the International Co-operative Movement," and "Present Day Problems of the Co-

operative Movement in Asia and Africa." Students also made week-long visits to kibbutzim and

moshavim, visited co-operative settlements populated by immigrants from "low-income

nations," and interned at a specialized branch of the co-operative movement of their choosing.[300]

Participants would not just be inspired by and admiring of Israel but be equipped to apply some

of that model and train their fellow countrymen back home.

Rhetoric from the Seminar's opening ceremony reveals how leaders from Israel and

participating Afro-Asian states envisioned the event's importance and potential. Pinchas Lavon,

Reuven Barkat, and Golda Meir all delivered remarks that illuminated how the Israeli

government and Histadrut wanted to frame the program as well as Israel's position in the

international world. Lavon, the Histadrut's General Secretary, emphasized a fraternity between

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[299] "Study Programmes for Groups from Africa and Asian, Arranged by Histadrut," 1957-1960, PLI, IV 219A 28C.
[300] "Syllabus," Seminar on Cooperation for Co-operators from Asian and African Countries, 1958-1959, PLI, IV 277 229.

Israel and Afro-Asian peoples and Israel's supposed international non-alignment. "We welcome you as brothers and friends," he announced, "engaged in a common effort to free all the nations of the world from every form of discrimination and of being subjected either to the will of so-called 'superior-nations' or to the power politics of the big and mighty of this world."[301] Lavon also emphasized that young nations—like Israel and Afro-Asian territories—had an indispensable need for development in order to attain true independence. Political independence, he argued, "only confronts us with the real and decisive question: what are we going to do with our political independence?" The Seminar, hosts and participants hoped, would help answer this.

Barkat similarly positioned Israel as a member of the Afro-Asian "emerging" world, and his remarks promoted Israel's role as a leader in development. His repeated use of "we" in his remarks signified that Barkat located Israel in this category of newly independent, non-aligned Afro-Asian nations. "We ask for help without strings and want true friendship," he stated. Israel was, on the one hand, an emerging nation asking for help without preconditions. Yet on the other hand, Israel was also offering. "This seminar," Barkat announced, "is a true expression of Israel's desire to contribute in whatever small measure to the welfare of the free people of the world." It was a tenuous line along which the Israelis would repeatedly try to balance—portraying themselves as in and of the Afro-Asian, non-aligned and socialist worlds to some audiences, while at other times trying to convince the Western powers that they were in and of the West and a valuable conduit through which to modernize and develop lesser nations in the "underdeveloped" world. Before this audience, however, it was the former image that Israeli leaders presented.

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[301] Excerpts from Addresses at the Opening of the Afro-Asian Seminar on Cooperation, Tel Aviv, 20 November 1958, LPA, 2.914.1957.4.

Lavon and Meir both tried to make sense of this Venn-Diagram-like overlap. Lavon described Israel's as a "unique position" in the world. It was a nation composed of Europeans, Asians, and Africans. The Jewish people had for centuries, he explained, "lived with most of the peoples of the world on all the continents" and "absorbed many of the cultural values of the West and the East." Because of this peculiar character and heritage, he argued, Israel could serve as "a sort of spiritual and moral bridge between the West and East." Representing the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Meir repeated this line of thinking in her short, opening ceremony remarks. "For us Israelis to know that the soil of Israel has been chosen as the meeting place of people from countries of Africa and Asia to study cooperation is one of the greatest attributes that we could have wished for ourselves," she said. The first Afro-Asian seminar was to serve as an early manifestation of this meeting place and encourage people around the globe to imagine Israel as a literal and figurative bridge between the East and West, the West and "the rest."

At the Seminar's conclusion, many African and Asian delegates expressed that they now saw the same picture painted by their hosts. They believed it had brought people together from around the globe in a common purpose for peace and prosperity, and that it exemplified an alternative path in the Cold War era. One such delegate was Tayetch Beyene, an Ethiopian woman who addressed the Seminar's closing ceremony. Beyene said the Seminar had "served a double purpose." First, it made Israel "a reality" to participants from 17 different Afro-Asian states. Instead of hearing secondhand accounts of what the Histadrut and Israel's socialist government had been doing in the desert, they were able to see and feel it directly. Secondly, Beyene told observers at the closing ceremony that the Seminar enabled Africans, Asians, and Israelis to dialogue about their "common problems of poverty, disease, and ignorance which in

turn drew us nearer to each other." Beyene believed the Seminar, and Israel, helped bring

delegates from the far reaches of Asia and Africa closer together.[302]

The Israelis may have been excluded from the Afro-Asian world's "Bandung Moment"

several years prior. But for many of the Afro-Asian Seminar's influential participants, a similarly

inspiring and spiritual sentiment was now emanating from the very place that previous meeting

had eschewed. Participants believed Israel's example—and the harmonious cooperation of Afro-

Asian peoples at the Seminar—presented a pathway for international solidarity and world peace

in a time of Cold War and bipolar competition. J.A. Ayorindo, Western Nigeria's Minster of

Agriculture and Natural Resources, believed Afro-Asian Seminar students found in Israel a

vision of hope: materially, politically, and even spiritually. "Our eyes have seen a lot already,"

Ayorindo declared, "and we are making a mental note of those to take with us and in the hope

that when we get back to sow the seed of cooperation and love…the world over will join us in

singing the song of love that will chase away all hating in so much virtue that will take the place

of vice and unity the place of discord."[303] Kaname Matsumoto, a delegate from one of Japan's

socialists parties, repeated this notion. He believed the Japanese people had a particular

awareness of the devastation the atomic age and Cold War era presented. They sensed that the

international community was balanced on the edge of a knife. The "re-foundation of Israel,"

however, was a "miracle and wonder of mankind. Her spirit of cooperation," Matsumoto said, "is

the newest and most effective way to rescue the present crisis of the human being. I want to learn

this spirit and formula of cooperatives as much as I can."

Given these emphatic responses, it is not surprising that the Afro-Asian Seminar helped

Israel and the Histadrut expand their influence well beyond Ghana. The successes of early Israel-

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[302] Tayetch Beyene, Speech to the Closing Ceremony of the Afro-Asian Seminar, 1959, LPA, 2.914.1959.26.
[303] J.A. Ayorindo, Speech to the Opening Ceremony of the Afro-Asian Seminar, LPA, 2.914.1957.4.

Ghana ties, combined with international delegations from the IUSY and the Afro-Asian Seminar, quickly connected Israeli government and labor leaders to their counterparts across the continent. Popular and influential Israeli diplomats and leaders, especially Yavor, Avriel, Halmer, and Meir, were able to utilize the Histadrut's growing international reputation, garner meetings with African leaders, and create openings for Israeli-African partnerships.

By early 1959, Israel's African partnerships and influence extended to places like Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan. In December 1958, the Kenyan government's commissioner for trade and industry, James Martin, proudly announced that economic ties between Israel and Kenya had doubled since the previous year. Speaking before the Anglo-Israeli Chamber of Commerce, Martin argued that Israel was a natural market for East Africa's raw materials. With easy communications and travel between Eilat and Mombassa, the prospects for bilateral economic ties were good.[304] Labor representatives from the Kenya Federation of Labor (KFL) studied at the Afro-Asian Seminars of 1958 and 1959 and Tom Mboya, KFL General Secretary, was becoming one of Israel's staunchest African allies. The Histadrut was receiving new requests from Northern and Southern Rhodesian unions, who also wanted to send study missions to Israel. Things had changed significantly in just three years.

The Israeli press and public began to pick up on the growing phenomena and took pride in their nation's increasing reputation as an invaluable member of the international community. They were especially proud of Israel's role in assisting newly independent Afro-Asian states. Michael Comay, a senior Foreign Ministry official and future Israeli ambassador to the UN, touched on this topic during a fall 1958 radio interview. Speaking to both a national and international audience, he told listeners that "fruitful new channels" of trade and diplomacy had

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[304] "Trade with Kenya," 10 December 1958, FBIS-Foreign Radio Broadcast (FRB).

been opened between Israel and Africa. He recounted recent visits to Israel by many of Africa's "leading personalities," including a cabinet delegation from Ghana, the Economic Planning Minister and Agriculture Minister of Western Nigeria, and a delegation from Sudan.[305]

These new friendships were particularly important, Comay told listeners, because Israel and its Arab rivals, led by Egypt, were embroiled in their own international cold war. He and other Israeli officials, like the Foreign Ministry's Director General Walter Eitan, had for years seen the deleterious effects of Arab campaigns against them. Egypt and other Muslim nations had blocked Israel from the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the Asian Socialist Conference in 1956. Then in December 1957, Nasser hosted an Asian-African Solidarity Conference (AASC) in Cairo. Eitan claimed this meeting was held mainly "to poison the minds of Afro-Asian delegates against Israel." From his perspective, Nasser, who had "long abandoned" improving his own nation, was simply seeking to maintain power and influence in the international arena. An easy means of doing so was by disparaging Israel.

Building alliances with African nations could help undercut Nasser's efforts. Comay told listeners that stronger ties to Africa were helping reverse Israel's international isolation and neutralize Egypt's propaganda. "Arab propaganda," Comay argued, "has always sought to present to the Asians and Africans a picture of the Jewish national home as an imperialist tool, intruding and usurping the Middle East." Comay asserted that Africans were now much less willing to listen or agree.

While the U.S. and the USSR revved up a Cold War, East-West competition on the African continent, Israel and Egypt's battles for the hearts and minds of the Afro-Asian world were underway. Comay gave Israeli and international radio listeners an optimistic outlook on the

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[305] Michael Comay, "Friendship with Africa Encouraging," 21 October 1958, FBIS-FRB.

future. "More countries in Asia and Africa have come…to seek friendship with us," he explained. "They frustrated the Arab design of capturing the Afro-Asian bloc to make it an anti-Israel force." The Histadrut's hard work in reaching out to the Afro-Asian world was beginning to bear real fruit for the state of Israel.

"At the Doorstep of the African Continent": The SI and the 1960 Haifa Conference

In 1960, Israel's non-traditional efforts in the Afro-Asian world scored the nation's greatest diplomatic coup to date. Like many of Israel's early Afro-Asian diplomatic victories, it came through labor and socialist movements, this time the SI. By the late 1950s the SI's European leaders finally took the issue of development in colonial and former colonial states seriously. Asian socialists, especially through the ASC, had pressed the matter for years. SI leaders feared losing Afro-Asian socialists' further goodwill, and they were also concerned about the increased prospects for communism in underdeveloped states. The Soviet Union's Foreign Ministry, for instance, established an Africa bureau in 1957, and new Africa nations, like Guinea, either turned to the Soviet Union or threatened to do so. SI leaders viewed development aid as an avenue for garnering Afro-Asian socialists' favor with the added benefit of allowing them influence over the ways in which Afro-Asian states developed.

The SI's 1959 congress in Hamburg marked this major shift in the International's focus. It was also an important moment in which its gaze turned to Israel. The SI had already been an important vehicle for Israeli labor and political leaders to cultivate their state's image as a bridge to the Afro-Asian world. When Afro-Asian socialists formed the ASC in 1953, SI leaders viewed Israel's delegation, from Mapai, as both a figurative and literal link between Western Europe and the ASC. Now the SI's European leaders were turning their attention from the ASC to the continent of Africa. Representatives at the Hamburg meeting devoted almost all of their attention

to underdeveloped states and colonies there.[306] And once again, they would start to strategize how they could utilize their socialist allies in Israel to act.

During the 1959 meeting in Hamburg, SI leaders decided to organize an international meeting in 1960 based entirely around the theme of assisting developing states. Representatives from the Dutch Labor Party (PvdA), wanted to meet Africans halfway; they requested that the development-focused meeting be held in the Israeli port city of Haifa.[307] The location was "at the doorstep of the African continent," as one of Israel's SI representatives put it. The location was also meant to underline the SI's laser-pointed focus on development. Israel, for many SI leaders, not only represented a geographical bridge between the SI and Africa, but a developmental link between the two worlds.

The 1960 gathering in Haifa made Israel the SI's first ever non-European host. Israel's selection was a culmination of trends. The international community, including the SI, was increasingly focused on modernization and development as a means to combat communism and facilitate a stable, orderly transition from colonialism to independence in the Afro-Asian world. At the same time, independence leaders in Africa and Asia viewed "jet-propelled" development as the only real guarantor of their freedom and protection against neo-colonialism. These leaders sought rapid development to assuage the outsized expectations of their people. Finally, the SI's selection of Israel to host this meeting illustrated international recognition of Israel's hard and successful work in Africa. Five years after its exclusion at Bandung, Israel would now host its own major international meeting and serve as a physical and symbolic center for the West and the socialist movements of Third World.

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[306] Van Klemseke, *Towards an Era of Development,* 256.
[307] Ibid., 256.

The PvdA's request to hold the meeting in Israel came as no surprise to many in the SI. Many European socialist leaders and organizations had lauded Israel's development for years. Just a year before the SI's 1959 congress in Hamburg, former SI Secretary General Julius Braunthal wrote an admiring article on Israeli socialism and labor for the Mapai-affiliated magazine, *Jewish Frontier*.[308] Braunthal's piece, "Israeli Socialism—Its Significance," argued that Israel contained "one of the strongest and most cohesive socialist movements of those that are affiliated with the SI and the ASC." The former Secretary General lent particular importance to Israel's "two, exceptional socialist institutions," the Histadrut and the kibbutz. They were ostensible evidence of a vibrant, egalitarian society and state that merited praise and emulation not only from the Afro-Asian world, but from European socialists, too. It was, he wrote, "one of the few countries in which socialist influence is paramount." The large contingents of African and Asian socialists who would arrive in Haifa could study and learn about Israeli socialism, labor, and development firsthand.

On April 27, 1960, Mayor Abba Hushi welcomed international socialists and observers to Haifa. Showing off his city, Hushi said Haifa represented what a modern, industrialized nation like Israel could do. Built by "tens of thousands of seamen and dockworkers, workers in iron and steel foundries, in oil refineries and chemical factories," Haifa was the industrial complement to Israel's well-known agricultural systems.[309] Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's welcoming address focused on the meaning of the meeting and its significance during that particular international moment. Highlighting Israel's position between Europe and the Afro-Asian world, he warned not of the East-West cold war competition, but "the tremendous gap between the wealthy and highly

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[308] Julius Braunthal, "Israeli Socialism—Its Significance," *Jewish Frontier*, February 1958, 25 (2), 11-14.
[309] Van Klemseke, *Towards an Era of Development,* 257.

developed nations in Europe and America and the poor nations now awakening to independence in Asia and Africa."[310]

For many of Israel's American allies and U.S. trade unionists, it would have been a surprising, perhaps even discomforting speech. But that was not Ben-Gurion's audience. Afro-Asian socialists were much more concerned about attaining independence and making it mean something—they were interested in development and autonomy. "This," Ben-Gurion said, gesturing to his Afro-Asian counterparts' perspective, "is the great human problem of our time, and it is much more crucial than the so-called cold war between East and West." Just five years earlier, at Bandung, Israel had been excluded from a watershed moment in an Afro-Asian, non-aligned movement. Now, in 1960, Afro-Asian socialists had come to Israel, where they heard firsthand that nation's prime minister place his country squarely within that movement and sought to learn from Israel how to achieve true independence and development.

Hosting the SI meeting and showcasing the Histadrut and kibbutzim movements bolstered the Israeli state's image as a friend of and potential model for Africa. It did this in the minds of both African and European participants. SI president and PvdA representative Alsing Anderson "rejoiced" at the ways in which the conference facilitated cooperation with Asian socialists and cultivated stronger contacts with Africans. The meeting fostered stronger bonds between the SI and the Afro-Asian world. Having Israel serve as the context for such a meeting seemed to fulfill the PvdA's initial hopes. Anderson described Israel and the Histadrut in ways numerous admirers had before him. On one hand, he proclaimed, the meeting was held "on historic soil, in the ancient country of an ancient people. At the same time, we know," he added, "that we find ourselves on the territory of a new state." It had and always would be, he posited,

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[310] Philip Gillon, "International Socialism at a Crossroads," *Jewish Frontier*, June 1960.

"the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. May it in the future under the leadership of Mapai become the bridge of peace and understanding between the peoples of these three continents."[311]

Israel also served as the setting for the Standing Joint Committee on Developing Areas' (SJCDA) first meeting.[312] Established earlier in the spring, the SJCDA was a joint endeavor of the ASC and SI. Members discussed ways to facilitate tighter ideological, economic, and organizational cooperation between their parties and, by extension, between the "developing" and "developed" worlds.[313] During their meeting in Haifa, SJCDA members strategized ways to strengthen socialism in developing nations and block communist inroads into these regions. Israeli and Italian Social Democratic Party leaders also proposed the SI set up its own special body for operations and assistance to underdeveloped nations. It would then have its own development assistance arm, like the UN's Special United National Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED).[314]

In these Afro-Asian initiatives, Israeli hosts took the opportunity to help lead the charge. During a meeting of the SI Council, on April 28, Meir called on the international socialist movement to follow Israel's example to recruit and send technical, trade union, and agricultural experts for service in Africa and other underdeveloped regions. Her nation's successes in Africa, despite Israel's modest resources, provided evidence that it had an effective and efficient strategy for relations with and outreach to the Afro-Asian world. SI leaders agreed. "We feel confident," SI president Anderson remarked, "that the Mapai has a special role to play in this field."[315]

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[311] Alsing Anderson, Chairman's Address, Conference of the Council of the Socialist International, 27 April 1960, LPA, 4.11.1960.11 A.
[312] Van Klemseke, *Towards an Era of Development,* 260.
[313] Ibid., 148.
[314] "Socialists Take up Afro-Asian Problems," 28 April 1960, Israeli Home Service, FBIS-FRB.
[315] Alsing Anderson, Chairman's Address, Conference of the Council of the Socialist International, 27 April 1960, LPA, 4.11.1960.11 A.

While the SI utilized Israel for its reputation and influence in Africa, the state of Israel greatly benefitted, too. Over the following years, SI outreach programs to the Afro-Asian world made frequent use of and bolstered Mapai and the Histadrut's goodwill and much-admired example in Africa. In 1961, for instance, when the SI sent a mission to Africa to establish new contacts and partnerships, they sent Norwegian representative Paul Engstad and Mapai member and Histadrut official David Hacohen. The two socialists visited over a half-dozen English-speaking African nations.[316] The SI promoted Israel's agricultural and co-operative movements as models for developing African states, and they touted Israel's mixed economy as evidence of what democratic socialism could achieve.[317] By playing a dutiful role in the SI, Israel's own image had a new outlet through which it was promulgated across Africa.

When the Haifa meeting drew to a close, Israel's position within the Third World, and its relations with Africa and the West, had undergone a palpable sea change. In the eyes of many socialists, labor leaders, and politicians from the Afro-Asian world, Israel now embodied a hub of activity, assistance, and inspiration. Israeli technical experts, labor leaders, and volunteers traveled by the dozens to newly independent African nations desperately in need of assistance. And, unlike the West, many believed Israel helped more quickly, more adeptly, and with little or no strings attached. Israel was a young nation. It had been under colonial rule. Its economy, labor structure, agricultural systems, and even culture seemed much more comparable to African conditions than those of the Western powers, who were trying to foist their systems on Africa. And, in the eyes of its African admirers and allies, Israel was not part of—or trying to make Africa part of—the East-West, Cold War competition. In fact, Israel's Prime Minister had announced before Afro-Asian socialists in Haifa that the gap between the developed and

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[316] These were: Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Madagascar, and Mauritius.
[317] Van Klemseke, *Towards an Era of Development,* 139.

developing world, not "the so-called cold war," was "the great human problem" of the time. Israel's stock in the Afro-Asian world had come a long, long way from its 1955-56 nadir.

For many Israelis, both in the government and general public, Israel's newfound international popularity and string of diplomatic achievements were intoxicating. Members of the Foreign Ministry, Histadrut officials, and numerous Israeli media outlets began calling for more—more programs and projects that would bring more friends and international admiration. As a small nation heavily reliant on Western aid, however, these ambitious initiatives quickly stretched Israel's budgets to the point of breaking. If it was to continue outcompeting Egypt and its rivals in the Afro-Asian world, bolstering its place and reputation in the Third World, and serving as a vital "western outpost" in Africa, Israel would need help in underwriting its efforts. Once again, Israeli labor and political leaders would turn to their U.S. allies for support.

Chapter 4

The "Special Relationship" at Work in Africa

In the 1950s and 1960s, Maida Springer, an African American trade unionist from New

York, was perhaps the best-connected and influential foreign labor leader on the African

continent. A veteran ILGWU activist, vehement anti-colonialist, sympathizer of Pan-Africanism,

and anti-communist, Springer had the ear of both U.S. labor's top brass and prominent Africans.

In 1958, "that busy little Negress," as the *New York Times* described her, traveled to Ghana to

represent the AFL-CIO at the All-African People's Conference (AAPC). The conference took

place during a period of strained Western-African labor relations. The West's African labor allies

were disillusioned with the half-hearted support the anti-communist International Confederation

of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) offered, and some threatened to break from that organization and

join a separate, Pan-African labor federation. Springer, well known and well-liked by many of

the AAPC's delegates, met with both new and familiar faces, listened to their thoughts and

opinions, and tried to persuade them not to give up on the West and the ICFTU.[318] By the end of

the AAPC, however, delegates still called for the creation of an All-African Trade Union

Federation (AATUF). Springer and her AFL-CIO colleagues feared the worst was becoming

inevitable, and they believed their allies in Western Europe were doing nothing to help.

Before returning from Ghana to present her findings, Springer traveled across the Red

Sea to Israel. There, she, like numerous U.S. trade unionists before her, toured co-operatives,

vocational schools, industrial plants, and newly developed communities. Held in tandem with her

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[318] Yevette Richards-Jordan, "African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle Over International
Affiliation," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 31 (2), 1998, 315.

visit, an Afro-Asian Seminar on Cooperation allowed her to observe 60 delegates from 17

African and Asian nations who were training with the Histadrut. She remarked, "My observation

of Israeli-African relations as I saw them in Israel confirmed what I had previously observed in

Ghana; [relations] between Africans and Israelis to a degree wholly unrealized by Europeans

even though the latter have been in close contact with the Africans for generations."[319] Springer

believed that Israel, an "embattled little nation," was bearing "the responsibility of the entire

western world."

That "embattled little nation" would not long bear such responsibility alone. In the late

1950s, U.S. labor's Africanists—the policymakers and representatives most attuned to and active

in U.S.-African relations—formed a close-knit partnership with their Israeli labor counterparts.

They met before, during, and after important African conferences and seminars to strategize.

They shared valuable information about political and labor trends in African nations. They even

traveled together. Most significantly, when U.S. labor's Africanists felt their hands had been tied

by the ICFTU in 1957—which proscribed them from initiating their own, independent African

programs—they leaned on Israel and the Histadrut to help develop African nations and fight on

behalf of free trade unionism and democratic values.

This partnership culminated in 1960-61, when U.S. labor underwrote the capstone of

Israel's Africa programs—the Afro-Asian Institute for Labor Studies and Cooperation. The

Institute became a mecca for emerging leaders from across Africa and placed Israel prominently

on the map as an exemplar for labor organization and state development. U.S. labor's Africanists

celebrated the Institute as a hub for training, too. From their perspective, it was instilling the

democratic, free trade union values undergirding the West writ large. Top-level U.S. trade union

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[319]Maida Springer, "Israeli-African Relations," 13 January 1959, GMA, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.

leaders, like the AFL-CIO's George Meany and the ILGWU's David Dubinsky, served as Institute board members, and rank-and-file workers and mid-level leaders from California to New York to Ohio, conducted grassroots fundraising campaigns to support U.S.-Israeli labor initiatives in Africa. For its participants and sponsors, the Institute marked an exciting moment of promise for Africa, Western values, and U.S.-Israeli relations.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, a combination of shared ideals and frustrating circumstances brought U.S. and Israeli labor together again, this time in Africa. Parallel to their visions for the Middle East, U.S. labor leaders and activists wanted to guide African countries towards the creation of democratic, free trade unions and state development. Figures like Meany, Springer, Irving Brown and, to a degree, Jay Lovestone eventually saw Israel's labor and development model as one applicable to all regions of the developing world. Although a democratic labor system like America's was the ultimate goal, they all came to believe that underdeveloped, newly independent nations in Africa required the example of Israel and the Histadrut, models that were more compatible with African needs.

U.S. labor's Africanists and Israeli labor found that they shared many of the same obstacles in Africa, and they consequently tried to work out solutions together. After early successes with trade unions in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanganyika, American trade union representatives faced a number of barriers to their mission: battles over African unions' international affiliation, decolonization and Cold War politics, antagonistic Western European labor unions, ICFTU policies that handcuffed U.S. labor's autonomy, and complicated power dynamics between African governments and labor. These variables drove frustrated U.S. trade unionists, like Springer and Brown, to admire, support, and partner with Israeli initiatives in

Africa. For a brief time, it appeared possible that U.S.-Israeli labor's special relationship, once a Middle Eastern affair, could change from an international to a transnational phenomenon.

The U.S. and American Labor's Pivot to Africa

In the mid-1950s, the Iron Curtain hardened the dividing lines of the Cold War and ostensibly stabilized Europe. Foreign policymakers on both sides of the divide sensed an opportunity to catch their breath. It was also an opportune moment to turn their focus to the Afro-Asian world, where colonial territories were quickly moving toward independence.

Vice President Richard Nixon was one of the initial and most influential U.S. officials to make this pivot. On March 1, 1957, Nixon boarded a plane headed across the Atlantic. Having packed "a top hat, morning coat, striped trousers, and two tuxedos," he was ready for "dozens of dinners, luncheons, and other ceremonies" during a 22-day, 18,000-mile tour. Before his plane departed, the vice president took a moment to describe his journey's importance. He explained that he was headed to sub-Saharan Africa, the new location of the "decisive struggle" between "communism and the forces of freedom."[320] Serving as President Eisenhower's special emissary, Nixon nation-hopped across nine nations and territories.[321] His visit to Ghana coincided with that nation's independence ceremonies. The White House hoped Nixon's presence would underscore American support for African independence and the U.S.'s newfound determination to assist these young governments' transition to stable and steadily growing economies and democratic political systems. Ghana, the White House hoped, would set a precedent for the continent.[322]

For much of the 1940s and 1950s, White House and State Department officials had viewed Africa—especially south of the Sahara—as a diplomatic and Cold War backwater. These

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[320] "Nixon Flies to Visit Africa as U.S. Goodwill Emissary," *The Cornell Daily Sun*, 1 March 1957.
[321] Ghana, Morocco, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya, and Tunisia.
[322] Zander Hollander, "Nixon Trip Stresses U.S. Friendship for Africa," *Africa: Special Report*, Bulletin of the Institute of African American Relations, Inc., 29 March 1957, volume 2 (3), KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder: Ghana.

officials viewed Africa's vast natural resources and markets as vital to U.S. interests but only insofar as they could help America's NATO allies remain economically afloat. Most Congressional leaders felt similarly. The chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on Africa was described as a "booby prize." The sub-committee's first chairman, John F. Kennedy, only accepted the position with the caveat that he could hold no hearings.[323]

By the mid-1950s, U.S. and European government officials and policymakers at least accepted in theory that colonialism and racism were outmoded.[324] But they remained hesitant to yield control and tried to have it both ways: appearing to respect self-determination while preserving strategic interests.[325] Members of the Eisenhower administration shared the opinion of many European colonial regimes—that Africans were not ready to rule themselves. The president himself viewed much of Africa as "wild jungle." During one National Security Council meeting, for instance, the president wondered aloud "whether the Somalia [sic] people were primitive and aborigines."[326] Eisenhower cited his experience with "primitive peoples in the Philippines," and questioned how Somalians "could expect to run an independent nation and why they were so possessed as to try to do so." CIA Director Allen Dulles agreed. Like many other U.S. officials at the time, Dulles also doubted Africans like the Somali people could organize and administer "a modern, civilized state."

The Eisenhower administration doubted Africans' abilities to self-govern but was not willing to shoulder the burden. "The whole area is a mish-mash of chopped-up geography," the president declared. Washington would defer to Europe and let the colonial and former colonial

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[323] Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1956-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 382.

[324] Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 65.

[325] Philip Agee, "Introduction," in *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa,* Ellen Ray, ed. (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1979), 2.

[326] Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*, 19.

powers police their "mish-mashed" spheres of influence. The fact that, in 1957, the State Department still did not have a bureau explicitly dedicated to African affairs illustrates this point. As African peoples began organizing and more loudly calling for their independence, Washington dragged its feet and toed a careful line between honoring the U.S.'s ideological commitment to self-determination and propping up its Western colonialist allies.

Vice President Nixon and his African "aerial safari" embodied changing attitudes and priorities in the White House and at Foggy Bottom. His high-profile presence at Ghana's independence ceremonies, for example, were an attempt to counter and catch up to an increasingly active Soviet foreign policy in Africa. It was not that Nixon and similarly minded officials had suddenly decided Africans deserved independence and were ready for self-government. It was because the Cold War seemed to have arrived in Africa. The Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, staked a verbal claim to partnership with new African states and independence movements. In his 1956 speech to the 22nd Party Congress, Khrushchev proclaimed it was the job of the Soviet Union to liberate European colonies and support their desires for freedom. "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union," he announced," supports the just struggle of the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America against imperialism and the oppression of the multinational monopolies." The Soviet Union subsequently increased its military and economic aid to emerging states in Africa and Southeast Asia.[327] By the time Nixon arrived in Accra, it was clear that the colonial powers were on the way out; the race was on to replace their influence and reap the subsequent rewards.

Following his African tour, the vice president reported to Congress and the president and tried to put Africa on the U.S.'s strategic map. It was "a continent of 200 million people with

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[327] Stephen West, "Nikita Khrushchev's Support for Developing Regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa from 1955 to 1964," *Colgate Academic Review* vol. 3, Spring 2008, 228.

tremendous natural resources," he noted.[328] It was also geographically important. Newly independent nations like Morocco, which Nixon visited, housed multi-million-dollar airfields in key areas that were capable of handling U.S. bombers and comprising a network of U.S. airbases.[329] Nixon's tour convinced him that government officials needed to realize that the U.S. could no longer afford to treat Africa as a diplomatic and military backwater. The vice president urged Congress to dramatically increase appropriations for aid to the new nations of Africa. Additionally, the State Department still lacked a bureau dedicated specifically to Africa. Nixon pressed for the creation of a separate Bureau of African Affairs in the State Department.

One of Nixon's final observations and proposals for U.S.-African relations was much less heralded and, to this day, remains largely overlooked by diplomatic historians. In his 1957 report to Congress, the vice president noted one other key element to African independence movements and U.S.-African relations: trade unions. Nixon observed, "It is of vital importance that the American government should closely follow what goes on in the trade-union sphere."[330] In addition to establishing an African Bureau, Nixon proposed the State Department and its consular and diplomatic representatives "get to know the trade union leaders of these countries intimately." The Republican Party was not exactly a friend of U.S. labor at home, but that did not stop Nixon from recognizing the potential role labor could play for the U.S. abroad.

At least one U.S. government body had already recognized and utilized the role of labor in Africa. Unburdened by bureaucratic inertia, public opinion, or changing administrations, the CIA had been active in Africa at least since 1953.[331] CIA officials aimed to further erode

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[328] Hollander, "Nixon Trip Stresses U.S. Friendship for Africa."
[329] "Nixon Flies to Visit Africa as U.S. Goodwill Emissary."
[330] Barry Cohen, "The CIA and African Trade Unions," in *Dirty Work 2*, 71.
[331] Ibid.

Europe's waning influence and make sure it was supplanted by the U.S. They took an early

interest in working through Africa's emerging cultural-political elites: labor and political leaders,

writers, and journalists. Operating through various front organizations, the CIA sponsored a

series of newspapers, Western-friendly African writers, and cultural magazines in and about

Africa. They also underwrote the work and travels of promising and Western-friendly African

trade union leaders, like the KFL's Tom Mboya. Selected African leaders, like Mboya, practiced

versions of nationalism and socialism that were palatable to CIA officials. The KFL general

secretary, for example, preached a socialism that included free trade unions, foreign investment

and banking, and even foreign land ownership.[332] Mboya would become a particular favorite of

the CIA. During the late 1950s the organization covertly channeled funds for Mboya through the

State Department's African Bureau and the ICFTU, sponsoring his globetrotting from Oxford to

Calcutta to New York.

In some ways, the relationship between the U.S. government and American labor during

the late 1950s and early 1960s paralleled that of their Israeli counterparts. Some government

officials and foreign policy experts recognized the unique doors that labor was able to open,

serving as "spearheads of democracy," and they endeavored to support, collaborate with, or even

covertly appropriate U.S. labor's African initiatives.[333] Over time, however, this American labor-

state relationship would transform from a boon to millstone for U.S. labor's reputation and

influence in Africa. While they championed "free trade unionism," by the 1960s reports and

exposes would circulate around the globe depicting U.S. labor unions not as spearheads for

democracy, but tools for the State Department and CIA intrigues. But in the late 1950s, the

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[332] Dan Schechter, Michael Ansara, et al, "The CIA is an Equal Opportunity Employer," in *Dirty Work 2*, 57-59.

[333] In 1962, the Council on Foreign Relations sponsored George Cabot Lodge's book on this subject. The former Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs turned academic, Lodge advocated this U.S. labor-state partnership in *Spearheads of Democracy: Labor in Developing Countries* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

CIA's role in underwriting or partnering with U.S. labor's African initiatives was little known and still relatively minor. The State Department was not yet convinced, and Nixon was more a voice crying from the wilderness than emblematic of the White House and Foggy Bottom's perspective.

In contrast to Israeli state-labor relations in Africa, Washington and U.S. trade unions already had significant areas of ideological divergence and, consequently, markedly different missions. While the U.S. government waffled on African independence, American labor was unwavering in its anti-colonialism. During the late 1950s and 1960s, American trade unions labored to change U.S. foreign policy toward African independence and America's European colonialist allies. They worked determinedly to undercut Europe's colonial presence in Africa. For the U.S. state and American labor, Africa presented an ambivalent arena for collaboration and conflicting missions.

While Nixon tried to bring Africa to the U.S. government's attention, it was clear to him and other observers that non-state actors, including American labor, had a measurable head start. During the early 1950s, non-governmental organizations had been attuned to the percolating unrest throughout the colonial world, and they had benefited from their flexibility to act more quickly and decisively. By the mid-1950s, non-state, international organizations like the Socialist International and the International Labor Organization (ILO) began strategizing how best to approach the Afro-Asian world and guide certain aspects of those territories' transitions.[334] Western labor and the ICFTU, as well as their communist rivals and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), quickly engaged Africans' emerging independence movements and trade

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[334] John C. Stoner, "'We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy; but We Will Never Be Neutral': American Labor and Neutralism in Cold War Africa, 1957-1962," in *American Labor's Global Ambassadors: The International History of the AFL-CIO during the Cold War*, edited by Geert van Goethem and Robert Anthony Waters, Jr. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 237.

union moments, as well. In the non-state arena, a new "scramble" for the Afro-Asian world was already well underway.

Never one to wait for—or obey—marching orders, the AFL's Jay Lovestone and his Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) were ahead of the curve. Lovestone knew communism from the inside and out, and he was certain he could spot or predict where it would rear its ugly, Red head. He had been a founding member of the Communist Party in the U.S. and served as its Executive Secretary from 1927 to 1929. He was known as a masterful political tactician and trade union factionalist. Factionalism, however, was also the reason for Lovestone's communist party demise. In 1929, he casted his lot with Nikolai Bukharin during a factional struggle in the Soviet Union, and when Joseph Stalin destroyed Bukharin, Lovestone was expelled as well. Lovestone was forced to stay in the Moscow indefinitely, where he lingered for several months before secretly escaping.[335]

After the Bukharin fiasco, Lovestone decided to use his skills and experience to exact revenge. Lovestone was, as he and others believed, the perfect crusader to save trade unions from international communism. Prominent U.S. trade union leaders, like the AFL's George Meany and the ILGWU's David Dubinsky, agreed and endeavored to utilize Lovestone's unique skill set. In 1944, he was Meany's obvious choice to lead the AFL's newly created FTUC, an international labor organization committed to anticommunism and supporting "free" trade unions. Lovestone immediately sent his agents, like Irving Brown, to Europe to fill an apparent void in American international anticommunism, sabotage communist trade unions, and support the creation and growth of Europe's free trade unions.[336]

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[335] Hughes, Quenby Olmsted, "'In the Interest of Democracy:' The Rise and Fall of the Early Cold War Alliance Between the American Federation of Labor and the Central Intelligence Agency," PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2003, 46.

[336] Michael Holzman, *James Jesus Angleton, the CIA, and the Craft of Counterintelligence* (Amherst: University of

Lovestone also had an intuition of where communism would strike next: Asia. He sent a cadre of labor agents to places like Japan, China, India, and Indonesia as early as 1949. Their mission was to promote free trade unions and democratic development models in newly independent and developing nations.[337] It was not Lovestone, however, but his right-hand man, Brown, who predicted that Africa would quickly follow Asia as ground zero of labor's cold war. Dubbed by his enemies as "the grey eminence of the yellow international," "the notorious American fascist racketeer," and "the chief union splitter," Brown was also an accomplished veteran of labor's cold war.[338] He had dutifully served the AFL's anticommunist campaigns in Italy and France. He had also helped establish the anti-communist, western-oriented ICFTU in 1949. In the mid-1950s, Brown saw indications that labor's cold war was moving to Africa. When he advised that the AFL turn its attention there, Lovestone concurred.[339]

The AFL's initial activities in Africa took place north of the Sahara, but they still demonstrate two core components of U.S. labor's continent-wide Africa policies—supporting free trade unionism and championing democracy and anti-colonialism. Algeria's independence struggle drew the AFL to the north.[340] In 1954, war erupted on battlefields and in international forums between France and Algeria. Algerians Ahmed Ben Bella and Hocine Ait Ahmed led the political struggle, forming the National Liberation Front (FLN). The following year, the FLN sent a delegation to the U.S. hoping to present their case before the United Nations.

Massachusetts Press, 2008), 78.

[337] Christopher Gerteis, "Labor's Cold Warriors: The American Federation of Labor and 'Free Trade Unionism' in Cold War Japan," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 12 (3/4)*,* Fall-Winter 2003, 207-224; Hughes, "'In the Interest of Democracy.'"

[338] "Labor: The Most Dangerous Man," *Time*, 17 March 1952.

[339] Stoner, "'We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy; but We Will Never Be Neutral,'" 240.

[340] Morgan, *A Covert Life*, 255.

Lovestone and the now-merged AFL-CIO entered the fray, not on behalf of America's NATO ally or U.S. labor's European counterparts, but on behalf of the Algerian independence movement. The AFL-CIO helped facilitate the Algerians' UN trip. Lovestone assigned his assistant, Louise Page Morris—a former fashion model turned labor and CIA agent—to host the delegates and assist their work. She showed them around New York, let them use her apartment for meetings, and even wrote parts of their speeches. Morris also arranged for the Algerians a meeting with AFL-CIO president Meany. She told Meany, "They're just like us except that they don't have any tea to throw into the harbor."[341] Meany granted them an audience and enhanced the movement's perceived legitimacy. Following the Algerians' visit, the AFL-CIO's annual convention passed a resolution supporting the FLN against the French.

The AFL-CIO's Algerian activities also operated on a second front. Brown worked closely with Algerian activists on the ground in North Africa. He helped them form the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), which Algerians could use to disrupt French colonial rule.[342] Colonial officials quickly banned the UGTA. It continued to operate, albeit clandestinely, and the AFL-CIO continued to support it.[343] Brown's assistance to the Algerian rebels aroused the ire of French resident minister, Robert Lacoste, who declared Brown persona non grata. He dubbed Brown "the master corrupting force in North Africa."

Unfortunately for the French, Brown and the AFL-CIO were not yet finished "corrupting" North Africa. The AFL-CIO also supported trade unions and anti-colonialism in Morocco. In 1955, Lovestone brought Taieb Bouazza, a Moroccan trade union leader and independence leader, to the U.S. While Bouazza was in New York, Lovestone gave him funds to

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[341] Ibid., 259.

[342] Max Green, *Epitaph for American Labor: How Union Leaders Lost Touch with America* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1996), 59.

[343] Ibid.

launch a trade union, the Moroccan Workers' Union.[344] As in Algeria, the AFL-CIO-supported

labor movement played a vital role agitating for full independence, which Morocco attained in

March 1956.

In the short term, the AFL-CIO's policies in North Africa seemed to fulfill U.S. labor's

vision for the continent. AFL-CIO leaders and activists wanted to see rapid decolonization and

African independence. They believed strong, free trade unions were a key piece of the

independence struggle and that they would also help nurture stable, non-communist economic

and political development. And, generally speaking, U.S. trade unionists believed that the U.S.

and American labor were perched in a unique position—distinctly anti-imperialist, democratic

and possessing strong free trade unions—that made it imperative they answer the call to act in

Africa. In these early cases, they seemed to have checked off all the boxes.

In the longer term, these cases would reveal major obstacles to U.S. labor's vision for

Africa. After Algerian independence, for instance, the relationship between Algerian state and

labor turned in a direction quite opposite of the West's free trade union model. Algerian labor

had been an invaluable partner for the FLN and the independence struggle. Once the FLN was in

power, however, the relationship quickly changed. Algerian leaders believed the new

government's need for stability and rapid growth meant that the nation's various social

movements should fall in line. Ben Bella, now the prime minister, warned the UGTA, "Trade

unions…had to defer to the decisions of the party in power."[345] The UGTA would now yield to

the state's prerogatives. Seeking to distance itself more fully from France, the UGTA also

disaffiliated from the ICFTU and joined the Soviet led-WFTU. As the Algerian imperative

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[344] Morgan, *A Covert Life*, 291-292.
[345] Green, *Epitaph for American Labor,* 59.

shifted from decolonization to stability and development, state and party pushed labor into acquiescence.

Developments in Algeria were not enough to dissuade U.S. labor from casting an ambitious vision for their role in Africa. For some, the stakes of the Cold War were too high to sit on the sidelines. U.S. labor's most ardent cold warriors, like Lovestone and Meany, saw Africa as the new East-West battleground. They championed African self-determination and free trade union movements largely as part of a zero-sum game with Moscow. For others—especially prominent African Americans—fighting for decolonization, assisting African trade unions, and encouraging African development were part and parcel of a broader vision for civil rights, equality, and justice. Black U.S. trade unionists like Springer and George McCray were not unconcerned about communism in Africa, but they, like their African friends and allies, were more motivated by North-South issues than East-West competition. [346]

In general, though, U.S. labor leaders and activists of all stripes hoped that strong, independent African trade unions would foster vibrant and stable democracies. Post-independence, they hoped unions would remain an effective force for rapid but stable development that benefited the African masses, not just a narrow elite. As the "wind of change" began stirring in Africa, U.S. trade unionists looked optimistically toward this next frontier.

<u>Early Visions and First Connections</u>

U.S. labor's first connections to sub-Saharan Africa began in ways that paralleled those with Israel. In the late 1920s and 1930s, the bulk of U.S. labor's first intermediaries with Jewish labor and political movements in Palestine had been Jewish American trade unionists. In a similar manner, African Americans were at the forefront of U.S.-African relations. Black U.S.

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[346] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 109.

trade unionists had long been in tune with African political developments and actively tried to

shape U.S. foreign policy toward the continent. African American labor leaders, like Springer

and Randolph, had friends and allies in Africa by the late 1940s. When U.S. labor unions pivoted

to Africa, they held this second card to play. In addition to the U.S.'s democratic, anti-colonialist

reputation, Lovestone, Brown, Meany and other labor leaders believed black American trade

unionists could help garner African trade union movements' trust and affinity.

Lester Granger was one of U.S. labor's earliest and most valuable black diplomats to

Africa. Though not himself a labor official, Granger was a veteran activist for African American

civil rights and labor. Born in Newport, New Jersey in 1896, Granger began work with the

National Urban League (NUL) in 1934, directing its workers' education section and leading

NUL efforts to desegregate trade unions and promote African American union membership. His

tireless efforts compelled NUL members to elect Granger as the organization's executive

secretary in 1941, a position he held for two decades.[347] Granger continued compiling an

impressive civil rights resume throughout the 1940s-1950s. As NUL Executive Secretary, he lent

invaluable support to Randolph's proposed March on Washington in 1941. Granger was

appointed special advisor to the Secretary of the Navy and helped implement the Defense

Department's desegregation. After WWII, Granger was awarded the Navy Medal for

Distinguished Civilian Service and the President's Medal for Merit in recognition of his

efforts.[348]

Granger's interest in U.S.-African relations and labor predated that of the AFL-CIO's

mostly white leadership. The dynamic internationalism of WWII and the immediate postwar

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[347] Lester Blackwell Granger Papers collection description, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
[348] "Granger, Lester Blackwell," *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle*, in Stanford University "King Encyclopedia," http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia_contents.html.

years connected Granger, like many other African Americans, to Pan-Africanism and anti-

colonialist movements around the globe. He saw parallels between the plight of African

Americans and their counterparts in Africa, and he was increasingly active in promoting

independence, development, and trade unionism as means of achieving these goals.

In 1954, while the AFL began its North African activities, Granger focused on sub-

Saharan African territories like Nigeria. Nnamdi "Zik" Azikiwe was one of Granger's first

contacts. Azikiwe was a leading figure in Nigeria's independence struggle and the Eastern

Nigeria Region's Premier. While Azikiwe was also not a labor official, the two partnered to

seriously discuss ways in which U.S. and African labor could collaborate. They talked about a

U.S.-supported Nigerian co-operative movement. Azikiwe wrote, "No doubt the establishment of

a workers' co-operative in our part of the world, with the cooperation of the American labor

movement, is bound to be [in] our best interests, because the Co-operative Movement is fast

gaining ground in Nigeria."[349] At the time of Azikwe's letter, Granger was already planning a

trip to Africa. Azikiwe hoped Granger would add a stop in Eastern Nigeria to his trip's itinerary,

which he did. Granger's trip to Nigeria did not produce any final arrangements, but it was

symbolically significant. For U.S.-Africa relations, it marked the beginning of an era. The

following year, 1955, Maida Springer would make her own initial visit to Africa and begin U.S.

labor's sub-Saharan Africa forays in earnest.

Springer, like Granger, had been a life-long activist in both civil rights and labor

circles.[350] Born in Panama in 1910, Springer arrived in New York City in 1917. She began

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[349] Azikiwe to Granger, 23 August 1954, GMA, Jay Lovestone Files, NY Office, Subject Files: Africa, RG18-003, Box 2, Folder 1.

[350] Springer's life and career are best documented in two books by Yevette Richards: *Maida Springer* and *Conversations with Maida Springer: A Personal History of Labor, Race, and International Relations* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

working in the garment industry at a young age and joined the ILGWU in 1933. Springer was a

member of Local 22, one of the ILGWU's most influential and active locals. At the time, the

ILGWU had a reputation for fighting against union segregation and pay differentials based on

race, and Local 22 was one of the reasons why.[351] Led by Charles Zimmerman, Local 22 actively

recruited minority members and promoted them to leadership positions.[352] In 1933, for instance,

black and Hispanic women were elevated to positions such as shop chairperson, committee

heads, and seats on the local executive board. Springer was one such minority woman cultivated

for leadership. Zimmerman quickly became one of Springer's early mentors and lifelong allies.

Through her work in the ILGWU, Springer crossed paths with prominent black labor and

civil rights figures like Randolph, Frank Crosswaith, and Granger.[353] Their influence on her

political ideology and trade union beliefs was significant. She embraced a vision for powerful

but democratic trade unions, racial equality and social justice, and a dedication to both anti-

imperialism and anti-communism.

Springer held fast to this vision as she rose through the ILGWU's ranks. Her work in the

ILGWU eventually came to the attention of both Dubinsky and Lovestone. Lovestone

appreciated Springer's abilities to educate members and navigate the politics of trade union

leadership. Over time, Lovestone and Springer became not only union allies, but personal

friends. Lovestone frequently dined with Springer and her mother at their home, where they

talked about labor unions, politics, and Springer's mother's early involvement in the Marcus

Garvey Movement. As Lovestone gained increasing power and influence in U.S. labor's foreign

policy, he and Dubinsky brought Springer into the fold.

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[351] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 34, 43, 47.
[352] Katz, *Altogether Different,* 141.
[353] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 37.

In 1945, the AFL sent Springer on a labor-exchange trip to England.[354] It gave Springer an opportunity to connect with pan-Africanists and nationalists like Tanganyika's Jomo Kenyatta, Trinidad-born intellectual George Padmore, and Guyanese-born activist Ras Makonnen.[355] Like Randolph, Crosswaith, and others, these pan-Africanists and nationalist figures influenced the ways in which Springer understood African labor and politics. Anti-colonialism and development would be the lodestars of her vision for labor's activism in Africa. Because of this, she would be more willing than some to tolerate African deviations from the U.S. blueprint in international orientation, development and labor models.

Ten years after her England journey, Springer made her first trip to Africa. The AFL-CIO sent her to Accra to serve as an ICFTU seminar observer. She was, as often was the case, the only woman in attendance. Yet Springer established a rapport with several emerging African political and labor leaders, like Maynard Mpangala, Assistant General Secretary of the Tanganyika Federation of Labor (TFL), Julius Nyerere, head of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), and Tom Mboya.[356]

In ways similar to early Israeli-African relations, Mpangala, Nyerere, and Mboya had a level of trust for Springer and U.S. labor they did not share for Europeans. The AFL-CIO's African American representatives seemed to better understand their plight. They too had experienced living as second class citizens. And since the U.S. did not have a history of African colonialism, their anti-colonialist rhetoric seemed more sincere than any rhetoric from Western Europe. Springer added to these appealing attributes her wealth of experience in trade union organizing and negotiation. On a more personal level, she also cultivated close, long-lasting

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[354] Ibid., 77.
[355] Richards, *Conversations*, 80-81.
[356] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 100-103.

relationships because of her warm, even matronly demeanor. Young African leaders, like John

Tettegah and Mboya, over time developed an almost familial relationship with Springer.

Granger, Springer, and other African Americans' early contacts with African labor and

political leaders created a promising foundation for U.S.-African labor relations. By 1957, the

AFL-CIO could boast of bilateral ties with several of the largest trade unions south of the Sahara:

The Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC), the KFL, and the TFL. The AFL-CIO's Africanists,

like Springer and Irving Brown, envisioned an array of U.S. labor programs and training centers

in Africa that they believed would attract and empower a new generation of workers and political

leaders. In Tanganyika, for example, Springer proposed organizing a garment workers' union

and establishing a garment workers' training center.[357] After these early connections and forays

into Africa, AFL-CIO leaders believed they were poised to cultivate an important, initial wave of

African free trade unions.

Cracks in the Foundation

Springer's next trip to Africa, though, made it apparent that fruitful relations between

African and Western labor, even with the U.S., were not a given. In newly independent African

nations, the relationship between state and labor was evolving, and it threatened to veer directly

away from the West's free trade unionism. Calls for a "purely African" trade union movement

were growing louder. Implicit in such a movement was African labor's disaffiliation from the

West and its ICFTU.[358] When Springer arrived in Accra in 1957, she landed in the midst of a

developing storm.

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[357] Maida Springer, "The Needle Trade Potential in Africa," 1957, GMA, Lovestone Papers: New York Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.
[358] Opuku Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism: The Case of the AATUF* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 120.

Sub-Saharan Africa's first steps away from Western free trade unionism and toward disaffiliation began a year earlier, in francophone West Africa. Ahmed Sekou Touré, Guinea's first prime minister, led the charge. Touré, who had risen through the ranks of both labor and politics, embodied the transition away from Western free trade unionism. His career began in labor, as a postal worker. He was a founding member of the Postal Workers Union in 1945 and was quickly elected its first general secretary.[359] Ten years later, in January 1956, Touré oversaw the creation of a larger, regional trade union federation, the General Confederation of African Workers (CGTA). The CGTA embodied Touré and French West Africans' desire to break away from trade union centers the French colonial regime had established. It was, Touré announced, the continent's "first autonomous, African-led, Pan-African trade union federation."[360]

While Touré climbed to the top rungs of West African labor, he simultaneously emerged atop French Guinean politics. In 1952, he became leader of the Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG). When Guinea gained independence in 1958, Touré was elected president. He was both head of state and secretary general of Guinea's primary labor union. For Touré, it was a perfect marriage. He saw party and labor as different parts of the same body. Labor and government would have to work together seamlessly, he believed, to keep the locomotive of African autonomy and development moving forward.

Touré and the CGTA alarmed Western labor. The Guinean's position as both labor leader and head of state, and his merging of union and party, violated Western principles of free trade unionism. To make matters worse Touré spearheaded the expansion of his labor federation into a still-larger, Pan-African and neutralist trade union organization. In January 1957, Touré's CGTA

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[359] Green, *Epitaph for American Labor,* 60.
[360] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism,* 120.

held a regional conference in Contonou. The CGTA, West African branches of the French

Confederation of Trade Unions (CGT) and several smaller, independent unions from the region

established the General Union of Negro African Workers (UGTAN).[361] UGTAN was even more

strident in its autonomy and African-ness. Member unions were barred from affiliating with any

non-African labor internationals, including both WFTU and ICFTU.[362] For conference

participants, UGTAN seemed the logical extension of African independence. Creating their own,

fully African labor federation would enable them to finally and completely rid themselves of

colonial and neocolonial remnants. Participants believed existing trade union centers established

by colonial regimes were fatally compromised. They also distrusted the internationals—like the

ICFTU—which were led by members from European imperial powers. For African labor to truly

be free and empowered, they believed, it had to break off on its own.

By the time Springer landed in Accra, even Western labor's closest African allies had a

laundry list of complaints against the ICFTU and the West. Leaders such as Mboya complained

about Africans' lack of educational and training opportunities, as well as ICFTU leaders'

paternalistic attitudes. On one occasion, ICFTU General Secretary Jacob Oldenbroek blocked

Mboya's plan to send Africans to Calcutta College for labor studies.[363] Mboya had raised grant

money for the program himself. Oldenbroek, however, insisted Mboya give the money to the

ICFTU. The ICFTU supposedly knew better than Mboya how to best spend it. Numerous

incidents like this one threatened to drive all of African labor in UGTAN's direction.

The AFL-CIO hoped Springer's presence could turn the tides. One of her main objectives

was to attend the ICFTU's first African Regional Conference (ARC) and ameliorate tensions

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[361] Ibid.

[362] Green, *Epitaph for American Labor,* 60.

[363] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 129.

between the ICFTU and African unions. The ARC was itself a response to events in Africa that alarmed Western trade unionists. Organizers hoped they could shore up African affiliates' loyalties by unveiling plans for a regional labor organization and an ICFTU school in Africa.[364] Though they had finally recognized their tenuous position, ICFTU leaders still underestimated its severity. The AFL-CIO's Africanists hoped Springer could prod the British, French, and other Western European labor leaders into deeds—not more words—and channel African discontent into constructive, not ostensibly destructive, means.

African leaders at the ARC demonstrated that they had not yet given up on the ICFTU, but the conference revealed serious cracks in the International's foundation. Mboya and Tettegah hoped the proposed African Regional Organization (AFRO) would give them more autonomy and more resources. Perhaps it could dissuade their unions from hitching onto the UGTAN wagon. They also hoped AFRO's establishment would mark a new beginning, one in which the ICFTU actually followed through on its promises.[365] At the same time, Mboya, Tettegah, and others were critical of the ICFTU's European leaders, their paucity of support and paternalistic attitude. Springer later described the conference as a one "on the brink of disaster."

Some of the loudest shots fired against the ICFTU and its European members, though, came not from African delegates. They came from Springer's U.S. labor colleagues, like AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer William Schnitzler. The second-highest ranking AFL-CIO official, Schnitzler addressed the conference and delivered a lightning-rod of a speech that signaled U.S. labor's frustrations and eagerness to distance themselves from Europe.[366] Schnitzler proclaimed

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[364] Richards-Jordan, "African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle over International Affiliation," 310.
[365] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 131.
[366] Ibid.

that the battle for independence in Africa was a struggle for "basic human rights."[367] He leveled

heavy criticism at "colonial regimes, whether they be of the Soviet communist type or the old

style [European] brand," and said it had become clear to American labor "that a strong [African]

free trade union movement is the most effective instrument in the struggle for national

independence, democratic rights, and human well-being." Schnitzler assured African workers of

U.S. labor's "solid support" and alluded to U.S. labor's recent support for Algerian independence

against "the clutches of French Colonialism."

Schnitzler's speech was more belligerent than any of the African participants' remarks.

According to Springer, African delegates found it "wonderful" to have such an outspoken

declaration of U.S. labor's support for the aspirations of African workers and independence

activists.[368] Ironically, U.S. labor's stinging criticisms of Western Europe and the ICFTU may

have helped retain the international labor federation's African affiliates.

While Schnitzler's speech garnered Africans' praise and admiration, it infuriated the

ICFTU's European officials. Western European labor leaders reprimanded the ICFTU Secretariat

for not vetting Schnitzler's speech. They accused American attendees of trying to instigate

African political action against them and even questioned the right of U.S. labor to attend the

conference. Springer reported that one French observer "found a way to tell the Americans

off."[369] Speeches like Schnitzler's may have benefited U.S.-African labor relations, but they also

increased Western Europeans' ire toward their American colleagues and made U.S. labor

activism in Africa that much more difficult.

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[367] "We Will Support African Unions," *Daily Ghanaian*, Accra, 15 January 1957, GMA, Lovestone Papers, NY Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.
[368] Springer: Report on All-African Regional Conference, Accra, 19 January 1957, GMA, Lovestone Papers, NY Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.
[369] Ibid.

Just months after Schnitzler's fiery ARC address, A. Philip Randolph dealt another blow to European colonialism and U.S.-European labor cooperation in Africa. In July 1957, he addressed the ICFTU's World Congress in Tunisia. The location was meant to indicate the ICFTU's intensified focus on African labor and development. Instead, the meeting quickly devolved into a platform for criticizing Europe's gradualist approach to decolonization.

Randolph was not new to that game. In 1952, he had called for the creation of a "world congress of Negro workers" that would fight against both colonial rule and communism.[370] Now at the Tunisia congress, Randolph again excoriated European colonialism. Like Schnitzler's ARC speech, Randolph's elicited a flurry of European complaints while drawing praise from African labor unions. In fact, rhetoric from Randolph's address resurfaced in African unions' speeches and publications materials, like those of the GTUC.

U.S. labor leaders' outspokenness at these gatherings was emblematic of their belief in American exceptionalism. Schnitzler, Randolph, Springer, and others believed that the U.S. and its labor movement were unique. They touted U.S. anti-colonialist and democratic traditions, the U.S.'s purported history as a melting pot, and its newfound position as the world's wealthiest and most innovative nation. They believed U.S. labor had much to offer Africa and a moral imperative to do so.

Springer expressed these sentiments in a memo after her 1957 trip to Africa. In *The American Labor Movement and Africa*, she wrote, "[U.S.] unions have a very special role to fill in the development of a stable and industrial economically free trade union movement in Africa." She boasted that "nowhere in the Western world" were there "as many racial groups welded into a work force as there is in the U.S." Because of U.S. labor's experience in helping shape the

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[370] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 5.

American democratic system and the world's most vibrant economy, Springer argued that U.S.

labor "could do a very challenging and rewarding work in Africa. We could hasten the

democratic process as urgently needed in these countries," she wrote, "[and] help raise standards

of human dignity."[371] Springer then proposed several ways to hasten this process. The most

significant, and later most divisive, was her proposal for an AFL-CIO Trade Union Scholarship

Program. The initiative was largely inspired by requests from African unionists themselves. TFL

General Secretary Rashidi Kawawa, for instance, implored Springer to find a way to send

African unionists to the U.S. for training.[372] The ICFTU provided some short-term trade union

seminars, but Springer and her African colleagues believed they were too few and far between.

Springer also thought that many European labor representatives were interested in the seminars

mainly as a way to vacation in their nations' colonial possessions. If the ICFTU was not going to

do its part, Springer and U.S. labor's African allies hoped the AFL-CIO would.

Randolph was another one of the scholarship program's main champions. During his

1957 summer tour of the continent, trade unionists in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Ghana convinced

him that they needed training in organizing, education, and negotiation, and that U.S. labor had

to step up where the ICFTU would not. Shortly after Randolph's return, he and Springer

persuaded the AFL-CIO Executive Council to approve the scholarship program. The AFL-CIO

would provide scholarships for ten to twelve African trade unionists to attend the Harvard Labor-

Management Industrial Relations Center. Scholarship recipients would also spend 13 to 26

weeks visiting with union and government officials around the U.S. Finally, they would return to

Africa and ostensibly comprise a cadre of young labor leaders spreading free trade unions across

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[371] Springer, "The American Labor Movement and Africa," 1957, GMA, Lovestone Papers: NY Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.

[372] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 130.

their continent, facilitating rapid but sustainable development in their nations, and helping mend fences between African labor and the ICFTU.

Initially, European ICFTU leaders seemed to approve the program, so Springer moved forward. She selected an initial slate of participants from Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, and countries of the Central African Federation.[373] Meany wrote to Oldenbroek, informing him that the AFL-CIO had appointed Springer as program coordinator, and that the AFL-CIO hoped to bring the first trainees to the U.S. labor federation's December 1957 convention. Things seemed to be moving forward smoothly.

When Springer traveled to London to confer with ICFTU leaders, however, the Europeans' true feelings about the program emerged. British TUC General Secretary Tewson complained about American "meddling" in European affairs. Officials in London were suspicious of Springer's desire to base her operations in East, not West, Africa.[374] They believed something sinister was at work. It played into British fears that the Americans were trying to supplant them in Africa. And to make matters worse, U.S. labor unions were sending African Americans. The racial bonds between black Africans and African Americans, they feared, threatened to undermine colonial rule and post-colonial influence across Africa.[375] Tewson reminded Springer that the AFL-CIO was not to duplicate ICFTU work. After the London meetings, ICFTU leaders began a quiet lobbying campaign to terminate the program.

The scholarship program was emblematic of deeper power struggles. Meany and Lovestone already had a deep-seated feud with the ICFTU. They believed it was incompetent when it acted and too often did nothing at all. Lovestone was adamant that the ICFTU was soft

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[373] Ibid., 133.

[374] In reality, Springer had better contacts in East Africa, and she believed the region's labor movements' needs were much more urgent.

[375] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 133.

on communism. The feud was even personal. Lovestone and Meany had a toxic relationship with the ICFTU's Director of Organization, Charles Millard. Lovestone regarded the International as "a nest of worthless anti-AFL intriguers.[376]

Lovestone's accusations about Europeans' "anti-AFL intrigue" were actually well-founded. During Springer's 1957 African tour, colonial officials harassed and antagonized her. The day before she arrived in Tanganyika, colonial police warned members of the TFL that they would be fired from their jobs and prosecuted if they held a demonstration upon her arrival.[377] When Springer landed, she found an airport barricaded by sandbags and "ringed with heavy duty emergency wagons and a full complement of African police and European officers." The following month, when Springer visited Uganda, she noted, "The police of Uganda took a very active interest in my program. They not only had the African informers alerted; they did not trust them entirely as the European officers of the special branch were busy."[378] Over the course of her trip, British officials tried to revoke Springer's visa, searched her hotel rooms, printed insulting newspaper stories, and pressured landlords not to rent her an apartment.[379] Springer was not the only AFL-CIO Africanist to receive such treatment. A year prior, Irving Brown had been deemed persona non grata by the French in North Africa. Now European officials targeted U.S. labor activists south of the Sahara. Springer, Brown, and McCray frequently worried that their letters were being read, their meetings spied upon, and that their passports could be revoked.

While Lovestone's accusations of "anti-AFL intrigue" were well-founded, so too were ICFTU fears that U.S. labor was supplanting them. Africans were comfortable venting to their

[376] Morgan, *A Covert Life,* 176.
[377] Springer to Anne Stolt, 7 November 1957, GMA, Lovestone Papers, NY Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.
[378] Maida Springer, Memorandum, 10 December 1957, GMA, Lovestone Papers, NY Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.
[379] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 135.

American allies about ICFTU inaction, and they made their preference for working with U.S. trade unionists well known. In October 1957, for example, John Tettegah wrote to Springer that the GTUC had been the victim of a smear campaign by the British press. He was tired of dealing with the Europeans. "In fact," he wrote, "I have told the ICFTU in Tunis that we would prefer you here as a representative instead of sending us officers who we suspect of vested interest in the Colonial policy of their own movement."[380] Similarly, Julius Nyerere, leader of TANU, expressed that he too was tired of dealing with the Europeans. Nyerere believed the U.S. had "the means and the democratic tradition" to effectively help Tanganyikans combat poverty and ignorance "without imperialist motive[s]."[381] Much like Israel and the Histadrut, U.S. labor stood apart from the rest of the West and appeared to be gaining Africans' attention and trust.

Yet when ICFTU leaders decided to muzzle U.S. labor's independent work in Africa, they had some sympathetic and influential American allies. Pressure from ICFTU leaders, combined with U.S. labor's own internal power struggles, compelled the 1957 AFL-CIO convention to compromise the union's Africa policies and terminate Springer's scholarship program. The "Atlantic City Compromise," as it came to be known, had been developing since the AFL-CIO's 1955 merger. The merger brought two, bitterly opposed factions into a shared leadership apparatus: Meany and Lovestone from the AFL, and James Carey, and Walter and Victor Reuther from the CIO. The grudge between Lovestone and the Reuther brothers began even earlier, during their days in the United Autoworkers union (UAW) in Detroit. In 1946, Walter Reuther captured the UAW presidency, but only after engaging in a destructive battle with incumbent president Homer Martin and his tactician, Lovestone. The Reuthers never buried

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[380] John Tettegah to Springer, 29 October 1957, GMA, Jay Lovestone Papers, NY Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 23.
[381] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 112.

the hatchet. They henceforth referred to Lovestone in derogatory terms, such as a "Machiavellian union splitter," and strove to foil his political machinations wherever possible. For his part, Lovestone never had any love lost for the Reuthers. Their feud made any chance at a coherent foreign policy slim. Aside from personal feuds, the CIO leaders' Cold War foreign policy outlook was much closer to that of their ICFTU colleagues. They believed the AFL and Lovestone's FTUC had been too rigidly, even recklessly, anticommunist. Lovestone's CIO detractors had successfully made the FTUC's dissolution a part of the 1955 merger. Springer's scholarship program was another chance to undercut Lovestone's influence on U.S. labor foreign policy.

The Atlantic City's battle over Africa began days before the 1957 AFL-CIO convention itself. Leading up to the meeting, Springer, Randolph, Lovestone, and several African labor and nationalist leaders wrote letters to other AFL-CIO officials, lobbying on the program's behalf. Mboya, Nyerere, and Charles Makayu, the Uganda TUC's General Secretary, tried to play on American labor's preoccupation with international anticommunism. They argued that such programs helped lay a democratic foundation against communism. The scholarship program's first participant, Arthur Ochwada, arrived in Atlantic City to plead his case directly. But after Ochwada arrived, so too did several European opponents of the program: Oldenbroek; ICFTU president Arne Geiger; Tewson; and British TUC fraternal delegates.[382] Unfortunately for AFL-CIO Africanists, Ochwada's presence and Africans' letters did not exert the same leverage as the presence of ICFTU and British convention delegates; their petitions largely fell on deaf ears.

The AFL-CIO passed the "Atlantic City Compromise" after a week of speeches, debates, and disingenuous procedural maneuvers. When the convention adjourned for the weekend, six

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[382] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 160.

AFL-CIO Executive Committee members huddled together with ICFTU officials to formulate a plan. AFL-CIO officials who sided with the ICFTU used parliamentary procedures and maneuvers to tilt the debate. They shut down meetings before advocates like Springer could speak. They blocked Randolph from participating in the meeting that ultimately terminated the program. The convention was tense. Springer observed, "This struggle was hot… The English, especially," she added, "fought the idea bitterly." And, for the time being, the English won.[383]

The compromise was something of a quid pro quo. For its part, the AFL-CIO would halt its selection of scholarship candidates, agree to work solely within ICFTU channels in Africa and give the program's intended resources to the ICFTU Solidarity Fund. For their part, ICFTU leaders agreed to allow two scholarship candidates to continue their program. The ICFTU also agreed to immediately establish its long-promised labor school in Africa, the African Labor College in Kampala, Uganda. AFL leaders, who were the most embittered, got one additional concession; Brown was allowed to continue operating in Europe and Africa, and he was designated as the alternate for ICFTU meetings that Meany or Walter Reuther could not attend.

In the long run, the compromise did little to repair the rift between the AFL-CIO's Africanists and the ICFTU. It papered over deep ideological divides that remained and would soon resurface. Randolph, for one, was not assuaged. Immediately after the compromise was announced, he delivered an impassioned speech comparing European colonialism and Southern racism. "In my opinion," he declared, "it is just as impossible to expect the BTUC, which is part of the British Empire, to lead the fight against colonialism as it is impossible to expect the State of Mississippi to lead the fight for civil rights."[384] For the time being, the AFL-CIO's Africanists

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[383] Ibid., 147.
[384] Ibid., 148.

would defend the ICFTU before African audiences, but behind the scenes, they would criticize it and look for ways to cast off its yoke.

The battle in Atlantic City also worsened the growing divide between the ICFTU and African labor. Scholarship recipient Patrick Mandawa found the compromise to be "shocking and dreadful news." The GTUC's executive board responded negatively to the news, too. Shortly thereafter, they ratified a decision to fraternize with all labor movements, including international communist organizations. The GTUC maintained that they were not communists, but they were now more willing than ever to send observers behind the Iron Curtain. Springer believed the African backlash was so strong that if she had truly wanted to create a split between them and the ICFTU, she could easily have done so.[385]

In the aftermath of Atlantic City, Springer penned a letter about her "troubled spirit" to a personal friend and political ally she believed would fully understand. Springer wrote that she was struggling "to maintain even a limited faith in the much vaunted pretensions of the Democratic West."[386] Springer believed the letter's recipient shared her vision for Africa and her desires for free trade unions and democratic development in Africa. On the receiving end of those letters was not another U.S. trade unionist, European, or African ally; it was one of Springer's long-time Israeli colleagues, Foreign Minister Golda Meir.

American and Israeli Labor's "Special Relationship" Moves to Africa

By the time of Springer's letter, in late 1957, U.S. labor's Africanists were familiar with their Israeli counterparts, the Histadrut, and its history in the Middle East. Springer and Meir had been friends since Springer's days in ILGWU Local 22, when Meir was still living in the U.S.

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[385] Ibid., 148-149.
[386] Ibid., 188.

The Histadrut's International Affairs director, Reuven Barkat, and Irving Brown had also been

associates for several years. The two corresponded in the mid-1950s, discussing the politics of

Africa and international labor and coordinating their respective federations' strategies. In 1955,

Barkat and Brown met in person at a labor conference in Stockholm. Together, they arranged a

trip to Israel for Meany and Dubinsky.[387] Brown finally made his own trip to Israel in 1956,

which he told Barkat was "extremely instructive." "I am convinced," he wrote, "of the excellent

work which [the] Histadrut is doing."[388] Over the next few years, Brown and Springer became

convinced that the Histadrut was doing great work not only in Israel, but Africa, too.

By the mid-1950s, the Histadrut's unique model and its ostensible role in modernizing

the Middle East had already garnered admiration and support from most U.S. labor leaders and

thousands of rank-and-file workers. It appealed to a triad of U.S. labor's ideological pillars: free

trade unionism, democratic values, and development thinking. The Histadrut went well beyond

America's "bread-and-butter" style of labor organization, which focused primarily on collective

bargaining, wages, and working conditions. Yet the Histadrut was still democratic and part of the

international free trade union movement. U.S. trade unionists had, since at least the 1940s,

viewed the Histadrut as an applicable model for development in the Middle East. By the late

1950s, they saw it as a natural and invaluable fit for Africa.

While the Atlantic City Compromise in 1957 hamstrung U.S. labor's ability to act

independently in Africa, during that same year the Histadrut ramped up its own."[389] The timing

and potential utility of this were not lost on Lovestone. He informed Springer that the Histadrut

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[387] Brown to Barkatt, 17 January 1955, GMA, International Affairs: Irving Brown Files, Paris Office Files: Israel, RG 18-004, Box 26, Folder 9.

[388] Brown to Barkatt, 8 January 1957, GMA, International Affairs: Irving Brown Files, Paris Office: Israel, RG 18-004, Box 26, Folder 9.

[389] Stoner, "We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy; but We Will Never Be Neutral," 244.

had established six scholarships for Ghanaian trade unionists to travel to Israel for training.

Lovestone believed such a program was a critical addition to Western labor's work in Africa. "I

am especially for it at this time," he wrote, "because…I am a bit disturbed as to the way Ghana is

going." Lovestone worried that Kwame Nkrumah was playing a disturbing game of "flirting with

Moscow." If Western labor did not step in and help build fraternal movements in Africa, newly

independent governments across the continent threatened toward "neutralism…and worse." The

Histadrut's launch into Africa neatly coincided with U.S. trade unionists' frustration with the

ICFTU and their desire to find alternative ways to do more in Africa. If they could not act,

perhaps they could help their Israeli allies do so in their stead.

While U.S. labor's Africanists criticized the ICFTU, they celebrated Israel, its first "Ten

Years of Progress," and the decades-long special relationship between their labor movements.[390]

The April 1958 issue of *AFL-CIO News*, for example, lauded Israel's "first decade as beachhead

of democracy."[391] Israel, the article argued, had weathered ten "stormy" years of tension and

war, boycotts, the "implacable hatred" of its Arab neighbors. Through it all, Israel had prospered

"beyond the wildest dreams of the dreamers who preceded the doers of this generation." Its

prosperity was, readers learned, in part attributable to Israel's historic relationship with U.S.

labor. Even before the establishment of the Israeli state, American trade unionists had taken a

"keen interest" in Jewish labor's efforts in Palestine. "[Now] Israel is dotted with material

evidence of American labor's faith in that country and in [the] Histadrut, her counterpart." This

included housing projects, factories, medical clinics, trade schools, and cultural centers all

underwritten by U.S. national and locals' financial support. The *AFL-CIO News* reflected on

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[390] AFL-CIO, *Ten Years of Progress: A Report on Israel*, September 1958, GMA, Country Files: Israel—Including Histadrut, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 10.

[391] "Israel Completes First Decade as Beachhead of Democracy," *AFL-CIO News*, April 1958, PLI, IV 219A 22.

"how deeply the valiant struggle of the new little country…has etched itself on the hearts" of American workers. But, previewing the ways in which the U.S.-Israeli labor partnership pivoted from the Middle East to the continent of Africa, the article's author looked forward. For U.S. and Israeli workers, "the future still has much to offer."

Later that summer, the Histadrut invited a high-level AFL-CIO delegation to celebrate Israel's ten-year anniversary. The delegation's report featured descriptions, rhetoric, and proposals that echoed over ten years of U.S. labor junkets to Israel. They praised Israeli leaders' "strong democratic philosophy" and commitment to "a free labor movement."[392] They touted Israel and the Histadrut's rapid development of agriculture, industries, and cities, and sharply contrasted them with the surrounding Arab communities and states. "Tel Aviv," they reported, "has been built up literally from the sand." They continued, "When the first Zionist pioneers settled there a few decades ago, it was merely a stretch of sandy beach."[393] Like most U.S. delegations to Israel before them, they lavished praise on the Histadrut's ideology and the role it served for both workers and the state. It was "one of the most vital democratic trade unions of the free world," they wrote. In short, these AFL-CIO leaders, like those before them, concluded that Israel's first decade demonstrated inspiring progress and development and the vital role labor could play in these phenomena.

The 1958 delegation's report was different, however, in that it hinted at the U.S.-Israeli partnership's pivot to the rest of the developing world, particularly Africa. Their meeting with Golda Meir, for instance, extended to issues beyond Israel and the Middle East. They discussed decolonization and development in Africa. Meir told her guests that Africans saw Israel as a

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[392] "Conference with Golda Meir," *Ten Years of Progress*, GMA.

[393] "A Visit to Histadrut," *Ten Years of Progress,* GMA.

fellow post-colonial, developing state that shared many of the same challenges and fears. Africans were "keenly interested" in any solution Israel had so far been able to work out.

The AFL-CIO leaders were themselves keenly interested in how this development might play into labor's global Cold War. If what Meir said was true, Israel presented an attractive, alternative model to communism for African states' rapid development. There was "a striking contrast," the U.S. labor leaders wrote, between the democratic spirit of Israel and the totalitarian thinking of the USSR. Russia's modernization and development was achieved "at the expense of freedom, the welfare and the living standards of the mass of its people." On the other hand, "tiny Israel," with its limited resources and burdened by its geography and climate had, in a single decade, made "unprecedented economic strides within the framework of democratic institutions and the democratic way of life." Israel, they concluded, provided a "day-to-day demonstration" that underdeveloped nations could choose both freedom and economic progress.[394]

During their visit the 1958 AFL-CIO delegation learned, like Lovestone had, that the Histadrut was working hard to make Israel's model visible and available throughout the developing world. It was "actively participating in the export of Israel's 'know-how,'" they reported. "Its methods and achievements are closely studied wherever there is an interest in the constructive potential of free trade unions operating in a democratic society." In providing this example, and in working with trade unions and other groups in new nations, Israel was "performing a valuable service for the free world in the global struggle against Communist infiltration."[395] According to these AFL-CIO leaders, Israel's first ten years facilitated

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[394] Ibid.
[395] Ibid.

impressive progress for democracy and free trade unionism in the Middle East. The next ten years, they hoped, would spur the same throughout the new nations of Asia and Africa.

A Moment of Crisis: The All-African People's Conference

As the AFL-CIO's 1958 delegation settled back into their offices in the U.S., the Federation's Africanists shipped off for the All-African Peoples' Congress (AAPC) in Accra, Ghana. It was the first conference organized and financed entirely by Africans for Africans, and labor unions and political parties from 24 different states and colonial territories sent delegations. Springer, who was part of U.S. labor's observer group, later reflected on the AAPC's weight, "It is difficult to communicate to one of the western world the impact of a conference held in the capital of an independent state upon African delegates who are still colonial subjects."[396] The AAPC encapsulated an uncertain moment in which some African labor centers seriously threatened to disaffiliate from the ICFTU and form their own international labor organization, something larger and more troubling to Western trade unionists than UGTAN.

Disaffiliation advocates waged their campaign before, during, and outside official AAPC proceedings. Delegates from the United Arab Republic (UAR), the conference's largest delegation, instigated the fracas. Though they were not members of UGTAN, the UAR group wanted to push African unions away from the ICFTU. During the final pre-conference assembly, disaffiliation advocates proposed a new Pan-African trade union congress. Unlike previous Pan-African labor organizations, this one would require prospective affiliates to withdraw from the ICFTU or WFTU before joining. Taking advantage of their attentive audience, UAR delegates

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[396] Maida Springer, "Observations of the All-African People's Conference held in Accra, December 5-13, 1958, and its Trade Union Implications," 13 January 1959, GMA, Jay Lovestone Files: NY Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, RG 18-003, Box 60, Folder 24.

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tacked onto the resolution critiques of Western labor and denunciations of Israel.[397] They singled

out Meany and U.S. labor as abettors of European and Zionist imperialism in Africa. As proof,

they referred specifically to U.S. labor's support of Israel during the 1956 Suez war.[398]

McCray, Brown, and Springer, who were all in attendance, rose to U.S. labor's defense.

Brown rejected the charges and offered to provide Meany's statements on the Suez War and the

ICFTU's position. Springer later reported that Brown did a "sterling job" as both interpreter and

defender of U.S. labor. It was a role Brown would have reprise throughout the AAPC.[399]

The disaffiliation struggle continued to dominate the agenda after the conference began.

It not only pitted different African nations' labor movements against each other, but also leaders

from the same countries. This was particularly true of the host nation, Ghana. Tettegah was still a

staunch ICFTU and AFL-CIO defender. By late 1958, he had also become a great admirer of and

close collaborator with the Histadrut. Thanks in part to Tettegah, the GTUC was reorganizing

itself in the Histadrut's image and sending several officials each year to Israel for training.

Nkrumah, however, took a different position. He was trying to lead a neutralist, Pan-African

movement and had designs on changing the relationship between state and labor.[400] He wanted to

formally enlist Ghanaian labor in the task of nation-building, making it an organ of Ghana's

ruling political party, the CPP. Earlier in the year, the Ghanaian government passed legislation

along these lines: The Industrial Relations Act (IRA).

The IRA was purportedly created to strengthen the GTUC. It made the federation

Ghana's only legally recognized union, provided buildings for its headquarters, and instituted an

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[397] Mary E. Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and the United States, 1957-1966," Ph.D dissertation, University of Maryland, 2004, 122.
[398] Springer, "Observations of the AAPC held in Accra."
[399] Ibid.
[400] Richards-Jordan, "African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle over International Affiliation," 319.

automatic check-off system for dues payments. Making the GTUC the only legally recognized union would prevent employers from creating "yellow unions" and reverse the decades-long colonial policy of proliferating small, decentralized unions.[401] But the act also forbade workers in "essential services" the right to strike.[402] This was an especially bitter pill for Ghana's Railway Union to swallow. During Nkrumah's pre-independence "Positive Action" campaign, they played a key role in disrupting the colonial economy and pressing for independence. The Railway Union's erstwhile ally, Nkrumah, had now created a tool to be used against them, in the name of nation-building and stability. Nkrumah's vision for state and labor, previewed in the IRA and evident in his positions at the AAPC, directly contradicted Western labor's crusade for "free trade unions."

Nkrumah's proposals placed him in an increasingly awkward and tense relationship with Tettegah, who manned the ICFTU's front-line defense. Tettegah, Mboya, and the KFL's Deputy Secretary-General (and former AFL-CIO scholarship recipient) Arthur Ochwada worked assiduously to head off the disaffiliation movement. They had not yet given up on the ICFTU. They had come to trust U.S. labor's Africanists, and although the ICFTU dragged its feet on African projects and frequently treated African leaders paternalistically, the organization still represented a massive source for material and experiential support.

While Springer, Brown, and McCray braced against the disaffiliation assault and tried to support their African allies, they found they were not alone. Ehud Avriel, Mapai party official and Israel's ambassador to Ghana, was also manning the West's ramparts at the AAPC. Tettegah, Mboya, and Ochwada were not just U.S. labor's closest African allies; they were

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[401] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism,* 144.

[402] Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 435.

Israel's, too. During the AAPC, Avriel collaborated with Springer and Brown in conference

meetings, and they debriefed and strategized together behind the scenes. They hoped that

together they might hold the line.[403] When things in Accra drew to a close, the ICFTU's

defenders' efforts seemed to have slowed, but not stemmed, the tide. The conference's final

procedures included a call for the creation of an All-African Trade Union Federation

(AATUF).[404] The GTUC, KFL, and other African unions remained ICFTU affiliates, but for how

much longer, no one was certain.

U.S. labor representatives were shocked by how narrowly disaffiliation was averted. The

near-disaster highlighted the ICFTU's failures in Africa and re-illustrated the need for American

labor to act.[405] In her report to Lovestone, Springer concluded, "It was painfully clear to

me…that the ICFTU is thoroughly unpopular among the African trade unions and that there is

urgent need for a complete reevaluation of the ICFTU's attitudes, relations and programs in

Africa."[406] If not for the AFL-CIO's presence and support, she believed the AAPC's outcome

may have been even worse. On one hand, the AAPC created an All African People's Solidarity

Committee that would be located in Cairo, a new entity that the British Foreign Office

derogatorily referred to as the "African Cominform."[407] U.S. and Israeli trade unionists certainly

viewed the development warily as well. But on the other hand, the AAPC had not resulted in

African trade unions' mass exodus from the ICFTU. The challenge was to change African

labor's momentum. "The American labor movement," Springer argued, "holds the key and can

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[403] Ephraim Evron to Jay Lovestone, January 1959, GMA, Jay Lovestone Files: NY Office, Subject Files: Histadrut, Box 40, Folder 21.
[404] Stoner, "We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy; but We Will Never Be Neutral," 245.
[405] Richards-Jordan, "African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle over International Affiliation," 316.
[406] Springer, "Observations of the All-African People's Conference held in Accra, December 5-13, 1958, and its Trade Union Implications," GMA.
[407] Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching," 122.

play the decisive role." Unfortunately, U.S. labor's Africa activists felt handcuffed by the ICFTU during this pivotal moment. If the AFL-CIO continued to restrict itself to official ICFTU channels, the outlook was not good.

A Period of Transition: 1959-1960

The Atlantic City Compromise and the events at the AAPC compelled U.S. labor's Africanists to reevaluate their strategy on the continent. The disaffiliation struggle was percolating to a boiling point, and African politics were skewing toward neutralism and one-party rule. To Lovestone, Meany, and other U.S. labor cold warriors, these phenomena were red flags in more ways than one. American labor's on-the-ground activists in Africa shared these concerns about the cold war and disaffiliation. However, Springer, McCray, Brown, and Randolph believed that if communism came to Africa, the West should blame itself; it would be attributable to the ICFTU's flaws and Europe's ambivalent anti-colonialism. After the events of 1957-58, U.S. labor's Africa activists of both minds reexamined the ICFTU and U.S. labor's place within it. They sought other channels for action, allies with whom to partner and means of changing the momentum. During 1959-1960, U.S. labor's Africanists embarked on an intellectual and physical journey in search of alternative means to fight for Africa. In some instances, and for some key players, like Lovestone, Meany, Dubinsky, and Brown, this led down a path toward increased U.S. labor-state collaboration. But for all of U.S. labor's foreign-policy-minded leaders and activists, the road led to Israel.

Springer embarked on this journey immediately after the AAPC. When the conference closed, she traveled across the Red Sea to Tel Aviv. As a guest of the Histadrut, Springer experienced Israel's tried-and-true itinerary for an international labor visitor: agricultural and consumers' co-operatives, vocational schools, trade union owned and operated industrial plants,

and newly developed workers' and immigrant housing. Springer's trip was fortuitously timed in conjunction with the Histadrut's first Afro-Asian Seminar on Cooperation. She toured the seminar's premises, spoke with its directors, and met some of its 60 Afro-Asian participants.[408]

Observing the seminar was bittersweet for Springer. It comprised much of what she and others had envisioned for the AFL-CIO's African scholarship program. While the AFL-CIO had quashed its own African initiatives, the Histadrut planned to expand its Afro-Asian Seminar and scholarship programs. U.S. labor decided to sit on its hands, but this one "embattled little nation," Springer reflected, "continues to lessen the tide of anti-western feeling."[409]

Springer's stay in Israel allowed her to see firsthand how another non-European nation and its labor movement engaged Africa, giving her new perspective and informing her evaluations of Western-African relations. In the months following her trip, she wrote a series of reports and proposals on the topic to top AFL-CIO officials like Dubinsky, Lovestone, and Meany. Her first report, written to Dubinsky, assessed Israel's relations with Africa. It was a relationship from which she believed the rest of the West, the U.S. included, could learn much.

Springer envied the fact that the Israelis were not caught up in the escalating ICFTU-African labor conflict. To her, the Israelis seemed more concerned with anti-colonialism and African development than arguing over international affiliation or waging an all-out cold war. While this was somewhat true, Springer missed the fact that the Israelis were engaged in a cold war of their own with Egypt. At the time, however, the Israeli-Egyptian battle in Africa did not have nearly the same divisiveness on the continent. Springer also admired Israelis' reputation for treating Africans fraternally, a stark contrast from Europeans. Israeli-African relations existed on

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[408] Maida Springer, "Israeli-African Relations," 13 January 1959, GMA.
[409] Ibid.

a level "wholly unrealized by Europeans," she noted, despite the fact that Europe had been in close contact with Africans "for generations." She believed Israelis shared their technical know-how "with such sincerity and humility" that Africans could accept it "with a sense of partnership." Africans viewed Israeli labor assistance as rapid, applicable, and devoid of strings.

This was quite the contrast from Springer's recent experiences with the ICFTU in Africa. Western labor was losing its friends, she wrote, "by default" or complacency. To make matters worse, some of the U.S.'s European allies, like Belgium and Portugal, continued colonial oppression that further poisoned Western-African relations. There was an "urgent need for rapid change" in U.S. labor's orientation on African affairs. "Unless there are some immediate shifts in our approach," she wrote, "our lack of understanding and consequent inaction will contribute to the very things we fear—that the emerging African nations will swing to the Soviet bloc."

Fortunately, Springer's visit to Israel introduced her to a model for success. It also served as a timely balm to heal some of the wounds inflicted on her psyche. She wrote to Dubinsky, "The pessimistic views that have been haunting me in our African-Western activities seemed more positive and hopeful in this one small area." Springer saw great potential in Israel's Africa initiatives and a potential U.S.-Israeli labor partnership there. "The Israelis have set the example," she wrote. "I hope we will see the wisdom of this approach before it is too late."[410]

By 1959, other U.S. trade unionists most concerned about Africa began connecting dots in the same ways. Brown, Lovestone, and Randolph began working more closely on Africa policies with their Israeli counterparts. They encouraged Africans to participate in Israel's labor and co-operation seminars and conferences, and they advised them to accept Histadrut aid and experts in Africa. Lovestone and Brown, for example, encouraged Ochwada and Mboya's 1958

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[410] Ibid.

and 1959 visits to Israel.[411] They were happy to hear about the Africans' experiences and supported their plans for implementing what they had learned in Israel.

The AFL-CIO's Africanists started sharing intelligence and coordinating Africa strategy with Israelis. They had done so to a lesser degree since 1955. But after the 1958 AAPC, U.S.-Israeli labor collaboration intensified. Brown, Springer, Lovestone, and Randolph kept close tabs on African developments, shared their insights, and strategized responses in conjunction with Israelis like Avriel, Histadrut Political Department director Ezra Hayut, and Histadrut International Relations Department director Yehudit Simhoni. Their correspondences evince a great degree of familiarity and affinity. "Our young friend who needs guidance," Avriel wrote in one letter to Springer, "needs even more." In that particular letter, it went without mentioning that their "young friend" was Tettegah. In the company of U.S.-Israeli labor allies, names and places did not need specifics; shorthand and shared terminology sufficed.

"Spearheads of Democracy?"—Development Diplomacy, Labor, and Africa

As American labor leaders and activists became attuned to and supportive of Israel's African initiatives, the U.S. government began to more closely observe both members of labor's "special relationship." Officials and academics slowly perceived that, much like the prior case of the Israeli government and the Histadrut, the foundations American labor was building for U.S.-African relations were becoming ripe for the state's purposes. Already by 1958, just years after American and Israeli labor dove into Africa, U.S. government officials and academics started studying and debating labor's utility in Africa. In the White House, at Foggy Bottom, on university campuses and at various scholarly conferences, officials and academics analyzed the

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[411] Lovestone to Ochwada, 7 November 1958, GMA, Jay Lovestone Files: D.C. Office, Subject Files: Kenya, RG 18-003, Box 69, Folder 21; Mboya to Brown, 18 February 1959, GMA, International Affairs Department: Irving Brown Files, Paris Office Files: Tom Mboya, RG 18-003, Box 30, Folder 11.

labor-development model and its potential role in modernization and democratic nation-building in Africa.

During his 1957 Africa tour, Nixon had prophetically described Africa—and within that, labor movements—as the next epicenter of the Cold War and development. Two years later, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs J.C. Satterthwaite grabbed the baton and similarly championed labor's important role in both the Cold War and state development in Africa. In March 1959, Satterthwaite spoke before the Eastern Labor Press Conference at the Columbia University School of Journalism. "I believe it is safe to conclude," he stated, "that the free labor movements of Africa, spottily developed though they are, will have a strong voice in the direction which African development follows."[412] Satterthwaite believed the U.S. needed to quickly expand its development programs to train African trade union leaders and foster democratic nation-building. Continuing to ignore Africa and African labor would forfeit critical ground to the Soviet Union. Newly created nations, he warned, were "marked out by International Communism as special prey," and "classic communist doctrine" would appropriate African nationalism and labor movements and "amalgamate [them]…into the Communist Bloc."[413] At the time, Satterthwaite's words were not enough to move the needle much on Capitol Hill, but a growing number of U.S. think tanks and university research centers were producing scholarship and cultivating political connections that would make his speech seem prescient.

Arnold Rivkin was one such expert able to move the needle in ways Satterthwaite could not. A former State Department official and MIT professor, Rivkin had a lengthy and impressive

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[412] Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs J.C. Satterthwaite, "The Role of Labor in African Development," 20 March 1959, GMA, RG 18-001, Country Files: Ghana, Box 10: 2.
[413] Ibid.

resume connecting development studies, U.S. foreign policy, and the developing world. Rivkin

was a decorated World War II veteran who had been wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. The

"shortish, solid" Anglophile then attended Harvard Law School before joining the U.S.

government. Rivkin's first government assignment was with the State Department. In 1950, he

was posted in the French colony of Madagascar, where he coordinated Marshall Plan economic

aid.[414] According to Rivkin, his first stint in Africa made a lasting impact.

Rivkin left Madagascar instilled with a particular perspective on African society and a

devotion to the region's development. His first experience in Africa was filtered through a

certain lens: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Rivkin believed Conrad's "prehistoric man"

was "still very much in evidence in 1950" on the African island. But this prehistoric man also

lived alongside a "small but growing elite of educated Malagasy." The divide between these two

supposed African archetypes fascinated Rivkin, and he endeavored to help advance Africa's

transition. "Ever since [Madagascar]," he later reflected, "I have had both a professional and

personal interest in all things Africa"[415]

Rivkin returned from Africa and quickly garnered a reputation as one of the U.S.'s

foremost regional experts. From 1950-1956, he worked for the International Cooperation

Authority (ICA), U.S. AID's precursor. Rivkin's ICA stint enabled him to travel across Africa,

enjoying what he described as "a rich diet of reading and discussion of things African wherever

and whenever possible." By the late 1950s, American academics and U.S. government officials

believed Rivkin's African expertise was unrivaled. The U.S.'s first ambassador to Guinea, for

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[414] Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries,* 65.
[415] Ibid.

instance, thought that from 1950-58 "there was probably no American who had more intimate economic, political, or cultural knowledge of African than did Arnold Rivkin."[416]

Rivkin's reputation made him a prime recruit for one of the U.S.'s most prominent modernization experts, Max Millikan, and his team of regional and development scholars at MIT. In 1957, Millikan offered Rivkin a joint appointment as director of the Center for International Studies' (CENIS) African Economic and the Political Development Project.[417] Rivkin quickly dominated academic discourse on development and Africa, publishing articles in *Foreign Affairs*, speaking at academic conferences and before think tanks. He also began to hold court with prominent U.S. foreign policymakers. Walt Rostow brought Rivkin in for consultations during President Kennedy's transitional task force on Africa. If leading U.S. political figures like Kennedy turned to Millikan and Rostow for expertise on Asia or Latin America, they turned to Rivkin when it came to Africa.

In April 1959, Rivkin published one of his first major studies on development and U.S. foreign policy in Africa. It was somewhat unique in the fact that Rivkin focused on trade unions' potential to connect development, diplomacy, and Africa. It was especially distinct because of another wrinkle Rivkin added to this foreign policy formulation: Israel. Rivkin's "Israel and the Afro-Asian World," published in *Foreign Affairs*, revealed a relatively unknown phenomenon for its readers.[418] Most of the academic literature produced on modernization and the Cold War framed an ideological, developmental competition between just two competing models: American capitalism and Soviet communism. Rivkin, however, described Israel's labor-

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[416] Ibid.

[417] "Rivkin to Head Africa Project at MIT," *Africa Special Report,* volume 2 (10), November 1957.

[418] Rivkin, "Israel and the Afro-Asian World," *Foreign Affairs,* volume 37 (3), April 1959, 486-495.

development model as an alternative that was even more appropriate for the Afro-Asian world than that of the U.S., yet still fit well within the parameters of the Free World.

Rivkin's article gave readers a glimpse of Israel's development model and a tour of Israel's activities and reputation across Africa. "A striking development in international relations," he wrote, "is the mounting interest with which more and more states in Africa and Asia, notably Ghana and Burma, are looking to Israel."[419] In Israel these developing states had found a model "with an advanced technology capable of extending assistance, providing technicians, entering into trade, and supplying investment capital without in any way compromising their sovereignty or threatening their independence."

Rivkin also contrasted Israel, with its "pioneer spirit" and "dynamism" with that of Israel's competitor in Africa: Egypt. While the Israelis did not threaten to impose on their African beneficiaries, Rivkin wrote, Nasser envisioned his nation's role as "a latter-day version of the 'white man's burden,' complete with references to Egypt's 'manifest destiny' and 'civilizing burden' in 'the interior or the Dark Continent.'" Rivkin's critique here is especially ironic given that he frequently noted the influence of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* on his own thinking, and his formulations of U.S. or Israeli development programs in Africa were little different from Nasser's supposed civilizing mission. Nevertheless, Rivkin's point was to make it clear to his uninitiated, non-trade unionist readers why and how Israel was so appealing a model for Africa.

Rivkin concluded "Israel and the Afro-Asian World" with an assessment of how Israel's model might serve U.S. foreign policy interests. He believed the prospects were very encouraging. "One of the most hopeful aspects of Israel's relations with Afro-Asian states," he

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[419] Ibid., 486-487.

wrote, "is that her economic methods, rather than those of the Communists, may serve as a model for underdeveloped areas."[420] Israel's model, Rivkin believed, could "prove to be a sort of economic 'third force'—an alternative differing from the Western pattern but certainly far more compatible with free world interests than any Communist model."

Rivkin was one of the first high-profile, influential academics to talk explicitly about Israel as a major component in the U.S.'s Afro-Asian development diplomacy. He would publish a number of additional articles and books on Africa, development, and U.S. foreign policy, occasionally discussing Israel as well.[421] The State-Department-official-turned-academic hoped his combination of professional experience, political connections, and academic expertise could change the U.S.'s approach to a number of foreign policy issues, but most importantly development, Africa, and U.S.-Israeli relations. As evidenced by U.S. government officials and prominent academics like Nixon, Satterthwaite, and Rivkin—not to mention CIA officials whose work was already well-underway—the American state began to take stock of labor's work in Africa.

1959 to 1960, The "Year of Africa"

The intensification of U.S.-Israeli labor collaboration—as well as Washington's increased attention to labor-led development in Africa—was timely, because developments in Africa ratcheted up quickly. Just a month after the AAPC, UGTAN finally held its first Constituent Congress. During the meetings, Touré outlined the organization's ideological principles and orientation. He argued that trade unions' structure, scope, and ideologies should spring from their particular context, not those they inherited or had foisted upon them from

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[420] Ibid., 493-494.

[421] Rivkin, "Arms for Africa?" *Foreign Affairs*, October 1959; "Point Four in Africa," *Africa Special Report*, volume 5 (5), May 1960.

without. "Class struggle," Touré argued, took a different form in Africa. The African class struggle was between the African masses and the colonial powers.[422] This meant it was imperative that African labor lineup alongside African political parties, not struggling against them. It also meant that UGTAN dedicate itself to disaffiliation from any and all non-African internationals.

In the months following this congress, the situation for U.S. labor's African allies and Western labor's reputation continued to deteriorate. Kenya's labor movement verged on the point of breaking. The instigator, Ochwada, had been a central ICFTU defender and close ally of Mboya during the AAPC, but his tune quickly changed. The KFL's Deputy General Secretary began sniping at Mboya, claiming that he was getting fat off his Western allies' financial largesse.[423] Ochwada insinuated that the ICFTU bought African leaders who would operate on their behalf. In September 1959, the KFL voted unanimously to expel Ochwada for slander. He responded by forming a rival labor movement, the Kenya Trade Union Congress (KTUC). To make matters worse for the KFL, his replacement, Gideon Mutiso, repeated the whole drama. Mutiso attacked the KFL for being "under American influence" and said Kenyan labor was "the victim of imperialism." He then announced that he too was joining the KTUC.[424] Kenyan labor, one of the West's earliest and most loyal allies, was internally divided.

Things looked even worse in Ghana, a nation that Western observers had long viewed as an African bellwether. In 1959, developments in Ghana signaled that African labor and politics were trending away from the West's free labor model. Post-independence, Nkrumah sought to

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[422] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism,* 123.

[423] As mentioned prior, it was true that Mboya and the KFL were receiving substantial sums of money from Western labor and government organizations, including the CIA.

[424] Ibid.*,*150.

reign in Ghanaian labor and put it in service to modernization and national development.[425] This was one of impetuses behind the Industrial Relations Act. Now Nkrumah wanted to use African labor as a vehicle in his campaign to lead Pan-African unity. In November 1959, the GTUC disaffiliated from the ICFTU and Nkrumah announced his nation would host an AATUF preparatory meeting in Accra.[426]

The following twelve months, dubbed "the Year of Africa," started with a bang, and Ghana's prime minister fired the first shots. In January, Tunis hosted the second AAPC. During the conference's early proceedings, Nkrumah initiated a putsch to remove Mboya from his position as conference chairman. Nkrumah's attempt failed materially, but not symbolically. It accelerated a series of high-profile and public attacks that badly damaged Mboya's standing and perpetually put him on the defensive. Following the second AAPC, the Ghanaian press assailed Mboya as "an imperialist stooge under the thumb of America."[427]

Things only got worse for Mboya. The AATUF published and circulated a pamphlet, "The Great Conspiracy Against Africa." In it, Gogo Chu Nzeribe claimed he had indisputable evidence that Mboya was the chief instrument of the ICFTU's "Great Conspiracy" to turn Africa into a neocolonial enclave.[428] Nzeribe, the Nigerian Posts and Telecommunications Workers' General Secretary, had allegedly procured a British Cabinet paper detailing the UK's Africa policies. The paper supported allegations that the AFL-CIO was directly, and Mboya indirectly, carrying out the interests of the U.S. State Department and the CIA. Nzeribe also claimed to have

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[425] Green, *Epitaph for American Labor,* 60.

[426] Stoner, "We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy; but We Will Never Be Neutral," 245.

[427] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism,* 131.

[428] Tettegah forwarded a copy to Mboya, urging him to change before it was too late. Tettegah to Mboya, 10 June 1960, GMA, International Affairs: Irving Brown Files, Paris Office Files: Tom Mboya, RG 18-003, Box 30, Folder 11.

British TUC letters and documents exhibiting attempts to bribe the unaffiliated Nigerian TUC.[429]

Mboya refuted the charges and exposed Nzerbie's alleged documents as forgeries, but the

pamphlet's damage was difficult to undo. He now had to deal not only with a growing anti-KFL

movement in Kenya but an anti-Mboya movement percolating around the continent.

As U.S. labor's Africanists observed these developments, they again felt constrained and

exasperated. Lovestone lamented the direction Ghana and Tettegah had taken, as well as the

recent developments in Kenya. Mboya's chief Kenyan rival, Ochwada, tried to supplant Mboya

as the AFL-CIO's Kenyan ally. He wrote to Lovestone in January 1960, trying to demonstrate

that he, not Mboya, was dedicated to free trade union principles and the rightful recipient of U.S.

support. Ochwada wrote, "It seems as if the AFL-CIO thinks that without Mboya nothing can be

done not only in the Kenya Labor movement but in the whole of Africa." Ochwada said he had

been criticizing Mboya not because he "simply hate[d]" him, but because Mboya's intentions

were "quite the contrary to his pronouncements and the trade union principles." He warned that

Mboya was "ambitious to become the first Kenya's [sic] Prime Minister." Even worse, he told

Lovestone that Mboya was "more interested in how many dollars we can get from some Africans

for our own personal gains" than world peace or improving working conditions of African

labor.[430]

The KTUC leader painted himself as Mboya's foil. He would not "become useless or

become a tool for someone or persons to achieve their personal objectives." Ochwada avowed he

was firmly dedicated to improving the working conditions and living standards of the Kenyan

people. He assured Lovestone that he was the real champion of free trade unionism. Political

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[429] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 209.

[430] Ochwada to Lovestone, 18 January 1960, GMA, Jay Lovestone Files: D.C. Office, Subject Files: Kenya, RG 18-003, Box 69, Folder 1.

ambitions and struggles for independence, he declared, "should not bury the main purpose for which labor stands…a trade union movement which will continue to fight to improve the workers living standard. The way we are being led," Ochwada warned, "does not seem to fact that way at all." Implicit in Ochwada's letter was that U.S. labor needed to send those "many dollars" to the KTUC and him.

Ochwada's actions and proposals, though, made his avowals ring hollow. After waxing about the cause of labor and the troubling trend of party over labor in Kenya, Ochwada tipped his hand. "My sincere and honest suggestion to the Americans and the USA government," he wrote, "is to go along with Nkrumah." The irony of such a statement could not have been lost on an astute observer like Lovestone. "Nkrumah," Ochwada continued, "has the whole of Africa behind him, and the future of Africa is definitely what Nkrumah says now." In reality, what Nkrumah was saying and doing contradicted many of the principles Ochwada had just avowed.

Ochwada's words had little effect on Lovestone and the AFL-CIO. Both U.S. labor's top brass and Washington were vehemently against "Nkrumahism," especially as Ghana trended toward the left and began courting the support from the Eastern bloc. Lovestone would not participate in Ochwada's Mboya-bashing. He was "extremely sorry" to hear about the rift. "This break is to be deplored," he told Ochwada.[431] U.S. labor's Africanists would instead hunker down with the shrinking number of African trade unions and labor leaders they could still lean on, including Mboya.

While Lovestone read Ochwada's assessment of African labor and politics, Brown traveled to another frustrating and divided gathering ironically named the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference (AASC). The April 1960 meeting, held in Conakry, hosted 200 delegates from 50

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[431] Lovestone to Ochwada, 12 January 1960, GMA, Jay Lovestone Files: D.C. Office, Subject Files: Kenya, RG 18-003, Box 69, Folder 21.

different nations and organizations. According to Brown, the AASC "had an ambitious agenda and little productive discussion."[432] The communist bloc, which was "well-represented," demanded the U.S. withdraw troops from Southeast and Northeast Asia. The Arab bloc "was out in force," as well. Led by Youssef el-Sebal, the Egyptian Secretary-General of the conference, they tried to steer the AASC's agenda toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. El-Sebal and the AASC's Arab bloc scored a symbolic victory when they forced conference chairman Isabel Touré to request that Israel's delegate leave the gathering. The conference then issued a resolution noting that Israel "continued to defy all UN conventions on the Palestinian Arabs." Between the efforts of the communist and Arab blocs, Brown reported that the AASC felt more like an Anti-Western Solidarity Conference.

Brown did not blame Africans for their increasingly apparent anti-Western tenor, nor did he credit international communism for widening the Western-African rift. He blamed the West itself. Europe's colonial and former colonial powers still had not addressed Africans' justified demands for full autonomy, development, and improved standards of living. "Whenever an underdeveloped country has become economically and then culturally involved in the Soviet bloc," Brown wrote, "it has been in large part the fault of the West." Newly independent states faced an urgent need "to employ the maximum possible-manpower on the minimum possible material." Africans, Brown believed, had not created this dire situation themselves. "It is the West," he argued, "that has created this situation of economic tutelage." Instead of acting, however, European governments were pleased with themselves just for granting Africans their independence. After witnessing yet another African gathering turn sour, Brown was near his wits' end with U.S. labor's European allies and the ICFTU.

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[432] Irving Brown, "Report on the Second AASC at Conakry," April 1960, GMA, Jay Lovestone Files: D.C. Office, Subject Files: Africa, RG 18-003, Box 68, Folder 03.

George McCray was even more exasperated. While Brown was in Conakry, an emotionally exhausted McCray wrote a memorandum to the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Department Director, Mike Ross, about Africa's state of affairs.[433] McCray felt that both U.S. labor and government's Africa policies were hamstrung by ties to Europe. He firmly believed that as colonialism exited Africa, the U.S.'s presence "becomes imperative." But if the U.S. was to be effective, both labor and government would have to shake their shackles. The AFL-CIO had been "restrained" by its association with the ICFTU, an organization that "simply cannot act decisively in Africa." For its part, McCray believed the U.S. government's commitment to its NATO allies and its Cold War prerogatives in Europe were undercutting what should have been America's outspoken, anti-colonialist role in Africa.

McCray proposed a more active, "positive and independent role" for both U.S. labor and government. His prescriptions for U.S. policies in Africa evinced his adherence to both U.S. labor exceptionalism and embrace of modernization and development thinking. First, he believed U.S. labor unions had a role to play and opportunities distinct from Europe. McCray thought American trade unions and the U.S. government could strengthen "the fact, the presence, the personality of America in Africa" by acting "unselfishly, helpfully, and fraternally with African peoples in the solving of immediate problems and in the achievement of basic long-range objectives…namely, the United States of Africa." McCray, like Brown and many other U.S. labor Africanists, also believed that colonialism's material legacies—underdevelopment and poverty—had to be aggressively dealt with in order for Africa to move in a stable, democratic direction. McCray's prescriptions were in line with the era's modernization and development thinking. "We need a Marshall Plan for Africa," he told Ross. African nations needed massive

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[433] McCray to Mike Ross, 14 August 1960, GMA, Country Files: Uganda, RG 18-003, Box 13, Folder 18.

infusions of financial, technical and educational assistance. McCray's vision was especially

colored by the U.S.'s New Deal-era Tennessee Valley Authority. He imagined "planned regional

development resources: water, river, forest, mining, agriculture." U.S. labor's Africanists, like

McCray, believed they knew what had to be done; they just had to find a way to do it.

"The Year of Africa" proved to be the most tumultuous one yet for Western labor's

position and interests in Africa. Africa's rival trade union blocs, affiliated with the AATUF and

ICFTU, hashed it out in a series of high stakes conferences and meetings at Tunis, Accra, and the

Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in Conakry. Once stable trade union movements like the KFL

threatened to implode while former African friends and allies, like Tettegah and Mboya, assailed

each other in conference halls and the pages of daily newspapers.

The year 1960 did, however, provide U.S. labor at least one ray of hope. Across the Red

Sea, dozens of current and future African labor and political leaders were preparing to learn the

benefits of democratic development and free trade unionism. They were eagerly studying how to

organize, collectively bargain, and improve their working conditions and standards of living.

They were learning methods for building a stable, developed society and economy. In 1960, the

Histadrut transformed its Afro-Asian seminars into a permanent, Afro-Asian Institute for Labor

Studies and Co-operation. If U.S. labor was still hamstrung in Africa, they would act via Israel.

The Afro-Asian Institute and U.S. Labor

In late 1960, Jacob Maleka, a South African political exile, sent a letter to the "General-

Secretary" of the AFL-CIO. He wrote:

> My age is 28 and I am an African born in the Union of South Africa. At present I
> am in Tanganyika as a political refugee. I hereby beg to apply for a scholarship to
> study trade union work in the United States.[434]

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[434] Jabob Maleka to "The Secretary General of AFL-CIO," 8 November 1960, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 10.

Maleka's letter was passed onto Maida Springer. She informed Maleka that the AFL-CIO did not maintain such a scholarship program, but as a member of the ICFTU, they helped provide for training at the Kampala Labor College in Uganda.[435] Significantly, though, Springer mentioned that an Afro-Asian "labor college" had recently opened in Israel. Two weeks later, Maleka wrote to Springer again, providing her with further information. He belonged to an all-black African trade union in South Africa. South Africa's apartheid government, however, refused to recognize the union and had thrown the union's president in prison.[436]

After reading Maleka's second letter, Springer decided to bypass the ICFTU and arrange for Maleka to participate in Israel's Afro-Asian Institute. She had observed the Histadrut's Afro-Asian seminars firsthand just two years prior. It seemed to her a perfect fit for an African trade unionist whose work and education was being stifled by a colonial regime. She contacted the Histadrut's U.S. representative, Isaiah Avrech, to arrange Maleka's journey. The AFL-CIO, the Histadrut, and the Israeli Foreign Ministry worked together to iron out travel logistics and passport arrangements. The Israelis would host Maleka and provide for his courses and lodging. The AFL-CIO would pay for travel expenses and Maleka's basic needs, like shoes and clothing.[437] Working quickly together, they sent Maleka on his way to Tel Aviv.

Maleka's story and his destination illustrate how closely-knit U.S. and Israeli labor's partnership in Africa had become by late 1960. When the Afro-Asian Institute was formally established, in October 1960, U.S. labor—from the top brass to the grassroots—found something they wanted to get fully behind. Over the next several years, U.S. labor leaders served on the Institute's board of directors. AFL-CIO Africa representatives recruited and helped send

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[435] Springer to Maleka, 22 November 1960, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 10.
[436] Maleka to Springer, 5 December 1960, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 10.
[437] Springer to Maleka, 20 March 1961, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 10.

Africans to Israel, and labor unions across the U.S.—national, regional, and locals—donated tens of thousands of dollars to support the Institute's operations.

The Afro-Asian Institute, like Israeli labor itself, appealed to U.S. trade unionists for both ideological and practical reasons. The Institute's stated mission was to combine free trade union and democratic principles with Israel's labor-based development model.[438] Akiva Eger, a German-born kibbutznik and the Institute's first principal, described it as having a "three-pronged educational program." First, the Institute stressed the comprehensive character of national development. This required a coordinated program to develop industry, recreation, schools, health care, building projects, and farms. In addition to this holistic development, the Institute emphasized organized labor's vital role in mobilizing workers and developing national economies. The Histadrut's all-encompassing nature gave Afro-Asian leaders an appealing alternative to trade unions that had been created by their former colonial rulers. Finally, the Institute stressed the major potential of co-operatives.[439] African leaders from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanganyika had already praised Israel's agricultural, consumers', and financial co-operatives. The Institute enabled the Histadrut to share these models with larger audiences and for lengthier, more focused periods.

In the Institute's promotional materials and fundraising appeals, Histadrut officials deliberately played to U.S. labor's ideological proclivities to garner support. One fundraising memo described the Institute as something that "could serve as a window for creating better understanding between the Afro-Asian people and the Western democracies, particularly the United States."[440] The memo continued, "It will serve directly and indirectly against Communism

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[438]Pamphlet, "The Afro-Asian Institute for Labor Studies and Co-Operation," GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 08.
[439]Henry C. Fleisher, "The Shaping of Afro-Asian Leaders", GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 08.

and it will develop an elite of men and women who may play an important part in the preservation of ties between the free world and their own people." The memo concluded with a request for hundreds of thousands of dollars to help maintain the Institute's budget and an invitation for American labor leaders to join the Institute's faculty.

The Institute not only aligned seamlessly with American labor's ideological vision for the Afro-Asian world; it also filled a void that an increasing number of U.S. trade unionists saw in Western-African labor relations. By late 1960, even many of the AFL-CIO officials who championed the Atlantic City Compromise were beginning to change their minds about the tack U.S. labor should take in Africa. Until they could formulate a new approach, though, the AFL-CIO would expend some of its resources on Israel's good work.

Although it was an Afro-*Asian* institute, the overwhelming majority of participants were African. In its first three years, the Institute hosted 741 students from 57 nations. 566 were African. The Institute's courses covered topics of particular interest to African labor and cooperative leaders, such as a "first semester on the co-operative movement," a "seminar of farming co-operatives," and "trade unionism and cooperation." After completing classroom studies, students were attached to Histadrut institutions engaged in various specializations. Those working in agriculture, for instance, were taken to a kibbutz or moshav to gain hands-on experience. The Institute also arranged for students to spend time with Israeli families, sharing meals and celebrations in their private homes. The Institute's chairman, Elihu Elath, later recounted, "We thought it might somewhat lessen their feeling of homesickness and also give them a closer glimpse of how we live."[441]

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[441] Information file on Afro-Asian Institute, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 08.

Participation in the Institute left an indelible stamp on participants, and their experiences illustrated its potential to help bridge the growing divide between Africa and the West. Participants wrote letters to the Histadrut, their local press, or international publications extolling the program's virtues. O.E. Onugu, a trade union leader from Nigeria, felt that his time at the Institute was a transformative experience. He wrote, "The opportunity offered me to study here in Israel marks a turning point in my life."[442] Employers, Onugu explained, could no longer "play to my ignorance of this [cost of living] principle each time I demanded an increase in the wages of workers who are members of my union." For Onugu, the Institute was empowering.

The AFL-CIO played a crucial role in the Institute's establishment and operations. They lent it credibility and publicity. In late 1960, U.S. labor leaders such as Dubinsky, George Harrison, Jacob Potofsky, and Walter Reuther accepted positions on the Institute's Board of Directors. U.S. labor unions also underwrote much of the Institute's finances. In 1961, for example, the AFL-CIO Executive Board granted funds to cover half the Institute's budget.[443] Support for the Afro-Asian Institute was by no means limited to the upper echelons of U.S. union leadership. A number of local unions pooled their small resources together in solidarity with the Israelis' work. The Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks sent $3,000 for Institute scholarships.[444] Another $1,000 came from the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, whose president noted, "With every best wish for the continued success of this worthy project and with kindest personal regards."[445]

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[442] Henry C. Fleisher, "The Shaping of Afro-Asian Leaders," GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 08.

[443] Ibid.

[444] Jay Lovestone to Ben-Zion Ilan, 8 April 1964, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 08.

[445] John. J. Grogan to William F. Schnitzler, 13 April 1964, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 9.

The ties between American labor and the Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute were so intertwined that they often led to confusion regarding where one organization ended and the other began. This was certainly the case for outside observers. Sometimes it was even the case for the parties involved. An October 1960 *New York Times* article illustrates this point. The *Times* detailed the Institute's inauguration and described it as "a joint venture of Histadrut and the AFL-CIO." Meany was apparently under a different impression. He may have also been concerned that such a joint project, outside official ICFTU channels, would violate the Atlantic City Compromise. He quickly sent a letter to Avrech asking that the Israelis set the record straight.[446]

Avrech's response makes it clear that he too was confused, in this case by Meany's reaction. He wrote, "I must admit that we find ourselves rather uncertain just how to formulate in our publications the assistance given by the AFL-CIO to our Afro-Asian Institute. Wherever we refer to the Institute…we feel morally obliged to acknowledge the decisive part played by AFL-CIO in bringing this project into being."[447] Meany instructed Avrech to describe the Institute as "a Histadrut undertaking" to which "the AFL-CIO has voted generous support to provide scholarships for Afro-Asian students so that they may be trained to become effective fighters against Communist subversion and Soviet imperialism and thereby help promote human freedom, social justice, and world peace."[448] Such a description would lend the AFL-CIO's sponsorship of the Institute proper ICFTU cover, emphasize the Institute's Cold War utility, and downplay its concurrent role in aiding African development and training potential anti-colonialist leaders.

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[446] George Meany to Isaiah Avrech, 23 November 1960, GMA, RG 18-001, Box 10, Folder 8.
[447] Avrech to Meany, 28 December 1960, GMA, RG 18-003, Box 10, Folder 8.
[448] Ibid.

In the Israelis' descriptions of the Institute, they demonstrated their own perceived exceptionalism and highlighted some ideological distinctions from mainstream U.S. labor. Histadrut officials believed that their movement's scope and structure, combined with their nation's history, made them an exceptional fit for African and Asian emulation and an invaluable member of the international free trade union movement. They alone could bridge the gap between the West and Africa. Histadrut appeals to U.S. labor emphasized this point almost as often as their anticommunist cold war credentials. One memo described the Institute's establishment and argued that "the traditional trade union structure, as we know it in the great industrial countries of the West, is not the answer to the totally different needs and problems of the labor movements in Africa and Asia." It concluded, "The Histadrut…exemplifies to them a solution to this basic problem."[449] Histadrut leaders took pride in the fact that theirs was different from other Western models. It was also a primary reason they could argue for U.S. support.[450]

Even U.S. labor's most ideologically inflexible or conservative leaders eventually accepted and justified the Histadrut's marked ideological and practical differences. Meany was an early convert. The AFL-CIO president was no fan of socialism, but he lauded the Histadrut and its role in developing the state of Israel. It represented a free trade union movement and a democratic government system in a region apparently awash in autocratic regimes. He was much less eager to mention the fact that Israel's was a socialist economy and Histadrut a centralized labor union that operated well beyond the shop floor and the bargaining table. Yet these facets of Israel and the Histadrut were among its more attractive aspects to the peoples of Africa and Asia. And these were foci of the Afro-Asian Institute, on whose board of directors Meany now served.

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[449] Memorandum: Re: Institute for Training Leadership of Labor and Cooperative Movements in Newly Independent States in Africa and Asia," 12 September 1959, GMA, RG 18-003, Box 40, Folder 21.
[450] Address by Pinchas Lavon at the AFL-CIO Convention, San Francisco, September 21, 1959, PLI, IV 219A 48.

If the ends (Israeli socialism) justified the means (free trade unions, a democratic system, and development), trade union leaders like Meany were prepared to make an exception.

In June 1961, Meany delivered an awkward speech demonstrating these ideological gymnastics and the exception that moderate or even conservative U.S. labor leaders were willing to make for Israel. Meany addressed a testimonial dinner tendered him by the National Committee for Labor Israel (NCLI). The gathering was a combined celebration of the Histadrut's 40th anniversary and U.S. labor's long support. Meany began his speech with what had become boilerplate lines about Israel and the Histadrut. The Histadrut was a "builder of democracy." Israel was "a new nation with an old history." It was "the most Western-minded state of all Asia." Meany also made sure to address U.S. labor's role in nurturing Israel and the Histadrut's development. "We, of the AFLCIO," he proclaimed, "have gladly helped the workers of many countries build and strengthen free trade unions as effective instruments for achieving human well-being and democracy." The Histadrut, in particular, "has always had the generous support of American labor."[451]

Then Meany moved on to the topic of the Afro-Asian world and competing development models, vacillating between praising Israel's example and justifying or explaining away how it differed from AFL-CIO principles. He began with a somewhat backhanded compliment. "Despite all the great agricultural, industrial, scientific, and technological progress Israel has achieved," he started, "it is still a relatively underdeveloped country." Meany was confident, however, that the Histadrut would lead the charge in pioneering its "untamed" regions. More importantly, this would not only benefit Israel but serve as ammunition for the West in the Cold War era's development model competition. "Israel," argued Meany, "can teach Khrushchev a

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[451] Text of address by AFL-CIO President Meany at the National Committee for Labor Israel's testimonial dinner, Washington, D.C., *Views from the AFL-CIO*, 4 June 1961, PLI, IV 219A 48.

badly needed lesson as to ways and means by which he might turn into productive soil the Russian virgin lands about which he has been talking so much."

Meany felt it essential, however, to properly nuance this lesson. He admitted that the Histadrut "found it necessary to accept and advance" a mixed economy. "I have been told," he added," that socialism has advanced much further in Israel than anywhere else. I don't know whether that is so or not." Meany was not a fan of socialism; he was a champion of America's capitalist system. "We of American labor believe in the free enterprise system," he affirmed. But many U.S. labor leaders and activists, even Meany, had come around to the fact that America's economic and labor models did not necessarily fit, nor interest, the Afro-Asian world. He understood that leaders of newly independent states were eager for rapid development, and trying to emulate a more advanced, free-market system and business-unionism-style labor movement would not get them there. Fortunately, Meany believed, "they can learn much from the Israeli experience." Despite its deviations, Israel still checked off Meany's most important boxes. While the government controlled much of Israel's economy, "their state is not under the absolute control of one party," he explained. Though Mapai dominated both politics and labor, Israel still had a multi-party political system. When they spoke of socialism, Meany was confident that Israelis did not "have in mind the so-called socialism of Communist Russia, Communist China, or Communist Yugoslavia."[452]

Meany's rhetoric, at times hesitant and others enthusiastic, evinces how unnatural it was for some U.S. labor leaders to promote a development model for Africa other than their own. Yet, for Israel, they did. The Histadrut, Meany acceded, demonstrated to Africans that they could develop a nation while maintaining unions "free and independent from the government." He

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[452] Ibid.

concluded his NCLI address with words meant directly for newly independent nations and anti-colonialist movements around the globe. "I cannot repeat too often and too forcefully," he proclaimed, "the experience of the trade union movement and democracy in Israel can be of the greatest help to you in building your countries into virile democracies with healthy and vital trade unions and sound economies." In Africa, as they had been for the Middle East, adherents to U.S. labor's exceptionalism were willing to make an exception for Israel.

Meany's NCLI speech also highlights the degree to which U.S. trade unionists' believed modernization and development could solve most ills. Months earlier, in spring 1961, the AFL-CIO Executive Council issued a statement arguing as much. Perched on "the threshold of a new decade," with a promising new presidential administration (Kennedy's), the Council asked, "Will human genius find a way to forge the political and economic tools that will translate our wealth of knowledge and our vast material resources into a better life for all?"[453] They believed it was simply a matter of will. "The miracles of science," the statement read, "now make it possible to assure all the people of this planet of the essentials of healthful life—shelter, food, and clothing—and an ever-rising standard of living." The Executive Council proposed a 20-point plan imagining the ways in which U.S. development programs could end "spiritual and economic stagnation" at home. Their plans included housing programs, an increased minimum wage, increased unemployment insurance, public works programs, and a more progressive tax system. Their vision also expanded into proposals for more comprehensive labor legislation, atomic energy, civil rights, immigration reform, and developing more U.S. natural resources.

These proposals and Meany's NCLI speech were emblematic of the visions and values that drew U.S. labor to Israel decades earlier. This was just a new iteration, in which U.S. labor

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[453] Statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council, 5 January 1961, PLI, IV 219A 48.

promoted the Histadrut as a model for developing the Afro-Asian world. Contexts could change, but U.S. labor's embrace of modernization and development thinking, and the ways in this colored their views of Israel, largely remained the same.

The Beginning or the Beginning of the End? Israel, the U.S., and Africa, 1960-61

The years 1960-61 marked the culmination of U.S. and Israeli labor's new "special relationship" in Africa. It was the result of overlapping ideology, shared interests, and circumstance. It was also a natural outgrowth of the ties that bound U.S. and Israeli labor together in the Middle East. The U.S.-Israeli labor alliance for Africa was cemented with the Afro-Asian Institute, but it ran much deeper than some buildings and courses in Tel Aviv. U.S. and Israeli labor leaders collaborated at African political conferences and international labor meetings and seminars. Israelis like Ephraim Evron pledged to support the work of U.S. labor representatives in Africa. He once told Lovestone that he would request Histadrut support for Maida Springer's projects regardless of whether the ILGWU or AFL-CIO did.[454] For their part, U.S. labor leaders and rank-and-file workers across the U.S. voiced support for Israel's development programs in the Middle East and Africa, and they sent money from union coffers and personal bank accounts. Labor's "special relationship," which had helped develop Israel and the Histadrut both materially and symbolically, had now built a foundation for carrying their shared vision to Africa.

As subsequent chapters will detail, this foundation would soon be ripe for the states' appropriation. By 1960-61, U.S., Israeli, and African governments recognized, and began seizing upon, many of the things labor built. In 1958, for instance, U.S. government officials and academics had begun studying Israel's development model and debating its utility for developing

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[454] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 191.

nations, especially in Africa. Ties between the U.S. and Israeli governments had been frigid

during the Eisenhower administration. Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had

also preached a foreign policy mantra of "trade, not aid." But the incoming Kennedy

administration embraced modernization ideology and declared a "decade of development"—

things that seemed to bode well for both U.S.-Israeli state relations and development diplomacy

in Africa. Kennedy brought prominent modernization and development theorists, like Arnold

Rivkin, into his administration and gave them prominent places in formulating and executing

U.S. foreign policy.[455]

Kennedy administration programs like the Peace Corps (PC) in 1961 finally made

material ideas that many—including U.S. labor unions—had been advocating for years. In 1957,

for instance, Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) introduced a bill to create an "American Peace

Corps," which he promoted as a "genuine people-to-people program." Two years later,

Congressman Henry Reuss (D-WI) suggested a similar "volunteer corps."[456] Even before these

legislators, U.S. labor leaders, like David McDonald and Walter Reuther, had advocated for such

an initiative. With a new administration in office, government finally caught up to development

and modernization's popularity on university campuses, in academic journals, and the house of

labor. In August 1961, the first PC volunteers arrived in Ghana. Nearly half a decade after U.S.

labor's first Africanists set foot in Africa, similarly advocating for democracy, development, and

decolonization, the U.S. state had finally arrived.

The American state's prominent entry onto the African scene presented U.S. labor with a

quandary it would struggle to navigate. On one hand, this was a major financial boon to labor's

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[455] Mark Haefele, "Walt Rostow's Stages of Economic Growth: Ideas and Action," in *Staging Growth*, 86.
[456] Ibid., 117, 113.

Africa programs. The CIA covertly funded both AFL-CIO and ICFTU initiatives in Africa, and the State Department and U.S. AID eventually did so overtly. Like Israeli officials prior, some U.S. officials and strategists thought it was money well spent. They wanted to utilize American and African trade unions as "spearheads" for democracy, development, and U.S. foreign relations in places like Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. For a time, U.S. labor's Africanists, like Lovestone, Brown, Springer, and McCray encouraged U.S. government collaboration and invited the State and Labor departments to come alongside or underwrite their projects.

On the other hand, after a few short years the U.S. government's entry into Africa and its mission there began to appear quite different from those of the original spearheads—U.S. and African labor unions. U.S. government and labor may have shared some ideological concepts and interests in Africa, but they differed in important ways that threatened to dislodge labor from its original mission in Africa. Both were avowedly committed to development and anti-communism in Africa. But the U.S. government did not share labor's unwavering devotion to anti-colonialism. And Washington often subordinated African democracy to other "vital" national interests. The U.S. government hedged on African decolonization and supported some European colonial regimes' ability to repress independence movements. U.S. labor and the state would also find themselves at odds during certain major African political crises. U.S. labor's Africanists, for example, supported Alphonse Kithima, whose trade union movement backed Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. The CIA, meanwhile, played a pivotal role in Lumumba's overthrow and assassination. Jay Lovestone and labor's hardline anticommunists may have hoped Lumumba would fall, but Brown and Springer worried that opposing Lumumba was a major mistake and that portraying him as a "Kremlin-backed dictator" was deceitful.[457]

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[457] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 212.

U.S. government and labor may have collaborated or had overlapping missions, but their

relationship in and views on Africa were much more complicated and, at times, conflicting.

Additionally, the U.S. government still did not share labor's "special relationship" with

Israel—either in the Middle East or Africa. Israeli leaders and their U.S. allies' appeals for a

partnership in Africa ran up against a hostile Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) in the State

Department, who feared exporting the Arab-Israeli conflict to Africa or ruining the government's

"impartial" approach to the Middle East.[458] Israelis hoped that the combination of the Cold War

in Africa and the White House's dedication to the "Decade of Development" might open a

backdoor for closer U.S.-Israeli relations. Unlike U.S. labor, however, Washington remained

unmoved. The U.S. government's only open partnership with Israel in Africa came in 1964,

when State and Defense Department officials encouraged Israelis to train Congolese

paratroopers. But it was a one-off decision, meant to help protect American military facilities in

the Katanga province and stabilize a U.S.-friendly regime. It was not intended as the beginning

of a protracted partnership nor was it based upon shared ideologies and comprehensive

missions.[459]

In the early 1960s, U.S. trade unionists most attuned to and active in Africa found they

shared a common mission—ideologically and pragmatically—not so much with their own

government or their Western European counterparts, but with Israel and the Histadrut. From the

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[458] Israeli officials and their sympathetic audience in the State Department's African Bureau (AF) wanted the U.S. to underwrite many of Israel's technical and development aid projects in Africa. From 1961 to 1964, the AF and the NEA engaged in perpetual debates and bureaucratic battles over Washington's official stance. Under Kennedy, the White House tried to find a work-around, one in which the U.S. encouraged Israel's initiatives, made sure they had adequate funds to sustain them, but also kept some semblance of plausible deniability. In fall 1961, for instance, Kennedy told Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion that, while the U.S. approved of their efforts, Point Four funding for Israel's activities "might deprive Israel of its most important asset—freedom from the stigma of imperialism." Instead, Kennedy assured Ben-Gurion that the U.S. would continue to provide Israel with "large-scale aid so that Israeli funds could be freed for technical aid to Africa" [Memorandum of Conversation from the President's Deputy Special Counsel to President Kennedy, 26 May 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-63, Volume XVII: Near East, 1961-62].
[459] Levey, "Israel's Involvement in the Congo, 1958-68," 25.

late 1950s to the early 1960s, U.S. and Israeli labor's "special relationship" extended to Africa, where its participants tried to make their partnership and their shared labor development model a prominent force in African labor and nation-building. In 1961, as the Afro-Asian Institute's U.S. and Israeli sponsors turned the page on that center's first session, they hoped it was the beginning of a new chapter in international solidarity and democratic, labor-centered nation-building.

Chapter 5:

"On a Razor's Edge," U.S. and Israeli Labor in Israel and Africa, 1961-64

In spring 1963, AFL-CIO President George Meany delivered a speech assessing "American Labor on the World Scene." Reflecting on the past two decades, he argued that "American labor has become even more intimately and intensely concerned" with international events. Speaking to an audience of 200 U.S. trade unionists, Meany dismissed any notion that U.S. labor had ever been "isolationist." American labor's natural proclivity was global activism. , As he scanned the global landscape, the AFL-CIO president highlighted decolonization among U.S. labor's top priorities. "No American voice addresses the newly emergent nations with greater effect than the American trade union movement," Meany claimed.[460]

Significantly, Meany tied the status of "American Labor on the World Scene" to that of another: Israel and the Histadrut. U.S. labor may have addressed these newly emergent nations with great effect, but they did not and could not do it alone. "It is in this effort," Meany reflected, "that American labor reaped rewards for its long and loyal support of Israel's Histadrut." The Histadrut enjoyed a "special status" among the post-colonial states and presented them with a "constructive alternative" to international communism. It behooved the U.S. and the American labor movement to continue supporting their Israeli allies. If American labor was to succeed in its global mission of ensuring "the survival of democratic society," it would continue to require the support of its "special" ally.

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[460] Copy of Meany's speech, "American Labor on the World Scene," enclosed in a letter from Maurice Specter to Gus Tyler, 24 April 1963, KCA, RG 5780-052, Box 12, Folder 1.

At the time, Meany's claims about Israeli-African relations were well-founded. A speech about "Israeli Labor on the World Scene," particularly in Africa, would have been a long and optimistic one. African trade unionists and co-operative farm workers inundated the Israeli labor federation with requests for technical experts, educational materials, and scholarships to the Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute. While the ICFTU, and to a degree the AFL-CIO, fell out of favor in a place like Ghana, the Histadrut still often received international labor's equivalent of "most-favored nation" status. Ghana's Trade Union Congress (GTUC) may have disaffiliated from the ICFTU in 1961, but GTUC leaders and Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah hoped it would have no bearing on their ties to Israeli labor.

While the U.S. government vacillated over its relationship to Israel's international activities, U.S. labor unions experienced no such ambivalence. This was partly because U.S. trade unionists' believed their stock in Africa was declining while Israel's was still on the rise. In 1961-64, the ICFTU's African membership rolls were shrinking, while Israel's bilateral ties and the Histadrut's African partners continued to grow. Israel's Afro-Asian Institute, inaugurated in 1960, was bursting at the seams—it had to turn away dozens of African requests each year, because its enrollment was already beyond capacity. Viewed from the other side of the Atlantic, Israel and its labor movement seemed to have a successful formula that U.S. trade unionists were compelled to study, support, or even emulate.

When U.S. trade unions mulled how to "go it alone" and recalibrate their Africa policies in the early 1960s, they looked to the Histadrut's example and examined the reasons for its "special status." As in previous decades, a steady stream of U.S. trade unionists made pilgrimage to Israel and returned home to spread the good news. They conducted official and unofficial fundraising campaigns to support the Histadrut's work in the Middle East and Africa. They

partnered with Israeli labor's representatives working on the African continent or, as in the case

of the United Autoworkers (UAW), they studied the Histadrut's Africa initiatives to instead

emulate them. In the early 1960s, major American unions like the UAW looked to the Histadrut,

not the ICFTU or its European member unions, in hopes of saving U.S.-African relations.

Unbeknownst to both Israeli and U.S. trade unionists, however, by the mid-1960s the Histadrut's

"special status" and the labor model it represented were precariously balanced on a razor's edge.

Causes for Concern: the ICFTU, the AFL-CIO, and African Labor and Politics, 1961-63

The early 1960s brought major changes in African government-labor relations and

African labor's international orientation. Political parties that had led their nations to

independence now reoriented their primary focus to consolidating power, jump-starting their

economies, and casting off any remnants of European control. They viewed indigenous labor

unions, once their invaluable ally, as potential threats to stability, national development, and

even their own political authority. Meanwhile, many African trade union movements believed

true independence necessitated a complete break with outside international labor organizations,

like the ICFTU. In the first years of the 1960s, these developments in African politics and labor

sparked internal and international conflicts. African labor movements splintered into rival unions

and competing international organizations, while, in some cases, they fought for their autonomy

or very survival against newly entrenched governments. Western-African labor relations

increasingly threatened to be a casualty of these conflicts.

Ghana, already the epicenter of so many African developments, once again led the way.

In 1961, the GTUC disaffiliated from the ICFTU and its government, under Kwame Nkrumah,

was turning into an autocratic, one-party state.[461] Ghana's once strong, independent labor

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[461] Richards-Jordan, "African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle over International Affiliation,"
323.

movement was losing more and more of its autonomy, now conscripted into the causes of rapid development and economic stability. Nkrumah and the GTUC's General Secretary, John Tettegah, were influential players in the All-African Trade Union Federation's (AATUF) formation in 1961. The AATUF was a Pan-African labor federation designed to strengthen African labor unity across the continent and protect African trade unions from outside manipulation and exploitation. Nkrumah invited the AATUF to establish its headquarters in Accra, and from there Tettegah served as AATUF General Secretary and managed the organization's bimonthly journal, *The African Worker*. The AATUF, its leaders, and its official publication immediately went after the ICFTU and its African allies, persistently attacking the ICFTU for its "subversion" in Africa and accusing its African affiliates of being imperialist stooges.[462]

For Westerner labor leaders, these events were already alarming enough, but in 1961 they found even more cause for concern in Ghanaian developments at the national level. The GTUC, once put forward as an exemplar of African labor's potential, became fully subordinated to party and state. Nkrumah's government, focused on African autonomy and rapid national development, demanded major sacrifices from GTUC unions.[463] Nkrumah's massive public expenditures were also part of his expensive continental rivalry with Nasser. Many Ghanaian workers instead saw a yawning gap between party leaders' socialist ideology and their increasingly lavish lifestyles. Workers were told to sacrifice for the nation while those telling them to do so were enriching themselves. Nkrumah's ambivalence did little to assuage the situation. In April 1961, he delivered a "Dawn Broadcast" on the radio in which he castigated political leaders' self-interestedness, attacking those who "by virtue of their functions and

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[462] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism,* 162.
[463] Ibid., 170.

positions are tending to form a separate new ruling class of self-seekers and careerists." Yet, he did little, if anything, to reign in these leaders' corruption. Instead, Nkrumah encouraged workers' patience and more sacrifice.

In the fall 1961, Ghana's railway and harbor workers decided they had had enough. While Nkrumah was touring the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, the Sekondi-Takoradi Railway and Harbor Workers—the same workers who had catalyzed Nkrumah's "Positive Action" campaign—took action against the CPP.[464] When Nkrumah returned to Accra, he felt compelled to act. He purged the CPP of several leading figures on charges of corruption. The strikers, however, were not content. Nkrumah and remaining CPP leaders decided the strike was taking an increasingly dangerous and insurrectionist turn. It seemed to challenge the very legitimacy of Nkrumah's regime. Part of their fears were related to the CIA's involvement. U.S. intelligence officials tried to seize the occasion and launch a coup against Nkrumah, replacing him with his Finance Minister K.A. Gbedemah.[465] Instead, Ghana's government forcefully stamped out the strike.

Nkrumah's government met worker militancy with equal force. The state created new machinery to punish and coerce Ghana's trade unions. Amenable union leaders were bribed into complacency and others were rounded up and thrown into detention centers for five months to two years. After the 1961 strike, Ghana's government made sure to change the very nature of the nation's labor movement. Its primary mission was no longer geared toward trade unionists' aims and grievances but instead to serve as a vehicle for national interests and social stability.[466] What was good for the state was supposedly the larger good for Ghana's workers. Developments in

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[464] Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 153.
[465] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism*, 173-174.
[466] Ibid., 175.

Ghana, the 1961 strike and its aftermath, dramatically changed the nature of labor and politics in sub-Saharan Africa's trend-setting nation.

The fireworks in Ghana were the start of a continent-wide battle between African labor and governments. In 1961-62, Nkrumah, Tettegah, and the newly formed AATUF tried to influence politics and labor across the continent. In Tanganyika and Kenya, two of U.S. labor's earliest and closest African allies became embroiled in clashes between state and labor or rival trade union movements. Tettegah and Nkrumah had been trying to influence Tanganyika's political-labor relations since Ghana passed its Industrial Relations Act (IRA) in 1958. Shortly after the IRA's passage, the GTUC invited the Tanganyika Federation of Labor's (TFL) General Secretary, Michael Kamaliza, to visit Ghana and observe the GTUC's newly centralized labor model. Kamaliza was persuaded. In 1960, Kamaliza proposed that the TFL emulate the GTUC, creating a centralized structure and finance system and linking itself more explicitly with Tanganyika's ruling political party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). However, Kamaliza still lacked enough support within the TFL for such a move. Instead, his proposal only spurred intra-union opposition from those who thought the GTUC model would sacrifice labor's autonomy. Tettegah offered Kamaliza additional support. The following year, he repaid Kamaliza's visit and traveled to Dar es Salaam. Tettegah met with TFL leaders and tried to persuade them, outlining the benefits of emulating the GTUC's single trade union structure.[467]

By 1962, Ghana's influence and outreach exacerbated growing divides within Tanganyikan labor and politics. Tettegah helped spark the year's turmoil. In January 1962, he published an article in the Tanganyikan labor magazine, *Spearhead*. Tettegah's article, "The African Proletariat," promoted Ghana's shift towards party-labor collaboration as a model for the

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[467] Ibid., 178.

African postcolonial era. Tettegah's article had a sympathetic Tanganyikan audience. TANU

leaders had already been arguing for a closer relationship between state and labor. Kamaliza led

the TFL's pro-TANU faction, backed mainly by the Transport and General Workers Union. In

addition to their desire to merge party and labor, Kamaliza's TFL supporters were disaffected

with the ICFTU and favored disaffiliation. Christopher Tumbo led the other side of the TFL

divide. Tumbo's faction, comprised mainly of railway, postal, and public employees' unions,

opposed any close association between labor and TANU. They were loyal ICFTU allies. As the

year 1962 reached its midway point, the TFL became a divided and weakened version of its

former self.[468]

Julius Nyerere's government stepped into the fray in June 1962. TANU leaders

introduced the Trade Union's Ordinance Bill, which settled the contested relationship between

Tanganyikan politics and government once and for all. The bill brought trade unions and their

finances largely under government control. In the name of national development, the bill also

compelled TFL affiliates to acquire legal recognition and revoked their right to strike. TANU

leaders' goal was to "contain" labor and prevent workers' actions from interfering with national

development.[469] A number of TFL leaders and members felt betrayed by their government.

Tumbo resigned from his post as the TFL's Assistant General Secretary and joined TANU's new

rival party, the People's Democratic Party. Now in Tanganyika, as in Ghana before it, African

labor was far from a free trade union movement.

In Kenya, Tom Mboya continued to feel the heat from national and international

opponents. Arthur Ochwada, who left Mboya's KFL and formed its rival, the Kenya Trade

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[468] Ibid.

[469] Paschal Mihyo, "Industrial Relations in Tanzania," in Ukandi G. Damachi, et al, *Industrial Relations in Africa* (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1979), 247.

Union Congress (KTUC), peppered Mboya and the KFL with attacks in the press. Ochwada

blamed the AFL-CIO and Western labor for Kenyan labor's troubles, and his criticisms only

became stronger after Ochwada was invited on a tour of Eastern bloc nations.[470] KFL leaders

responded. They claimed that Ochwada and the KTUC were formulating an "elaborate plan" to

break the KFL and compel its constituent members to disaffiliate.[471] Meanwhile, Jaramogi

Oginga Odinga attacked Mboya, the KFL, and their Kenya African National Union (KANU)

allies in the political arena. In particular, Odinga charged that the KFL was not a movement built

and supported by Kenyan workers, but "heavily promoted and financed from outside Kenya,"

especially "the American-dominated ICFTU."

In the spring 1962, Kenya—like Tanganyika and Ghana before it—erupted into clashes

between trade unionists and political parties. A series of strikes broke out in Nairobi and other

urban centers in March. Mboya and the KFL's Assistant General Secretary, Peter Kisibu,

claimed the strikes were instigated by Odinga and his separatist allies. They were an apparent

attempt to wreak havoc between the KFL and the state and bring down Mboya, who had just

been appointed Kenya's Minister of Labor. Kisibu also charged that the unrest was instigated

from abroad. In particular, he claimed that Ghana had launched a "lavish spending" campaign to

splinter the KFL and mold Kenyan labor and politics into its own image.[472] Kisibu's charges

seemed more credible when Tettegah suddenly announced a visit to Kenya.

The Ghanaians did have a clear hand in Kenya's turmoil. CPP and GTUC leaders

converted a major Kenyan periodical, *Pan-Africa*, into a partisan, pro-AATUF journal. In the

midst of the KFL-KTUC and Mboya-Odinga battles, *Pan-Africa* published a series of alleged

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[470] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 326.
[471] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism,* 180-181.
[472] Ibid.

exposés like "ICFTU: The Facts about Dollar Trade Unionism" and "Exposure ICFTU: The Confessions of an American Agent."[473] The articles insinuated that the KFL and its top leaders, including Mboya and Kisibu, had been purchased to serve as neo-imperialist agents for the ICFTU and its Western designs. These incendiary charges further inflamed Kenya's political and labor infighting and severely weakened another close ally of the U.S. and Europe.

U.S. labor's Africanists feared the events of 1961-62 portended that the ICFTU would soon be on its way out of Africa.[474] Some U.S. labor leaders were also ready to write off Ghana and any other African nations—former allies or no—that sided with Nkrumah. This attitude was apparent at the AFL-CIO's 1961 annual convention in Florida. Convention delegates passed a resolution that castigated Nkrumah and Ghana's government for their response to the 1961 Sekondi-Takoradi strike. "We have seen in this past year," the resolution stated, "that the fight for freedom goes on even after national independence has been achieved. The strike which has been so cruelly repressed in Ghana…has aroused and alerted all loyal trade unionists in Africa to the need of maintaining the independence of the trade union movement from political party or government control."[475] AFL-CIO leaders would not tolerate African states' growing proclivity for one-party rule and the marriage of state and labor. They were also most certainly displeased by Nkrumah's recent travels to the USSR. With a number of states threatening to head in a similar direction, U.S. labor leaders' inflexible attitude would mean a turbulent future for U.S.-African labor relations.

U.S. labor's Africanists, like George McCray and Maida Springer, were not yet ready to give up on Ghana, the GTUC, or even Nkrumah.[476] They were more sympathetic than other U.S.

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[473] Ibid., 181-183.
[474] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 330.
[475] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism*, 175.
[476] Stoner, "'We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy; but We Will Never Be Neutral,'" 246.

labor leaders to the "double bind" facing new African nations and their trade union movements.

These African leaders often had to navigate competing aims of jumpstarting a national economy

and maintaining the integrity and independence of trade unions. Springer, in particular, viewed

African politics and government through the lenses of anticolonialism and development. She

believed a period of one-party rule and curtailed civil liberties were perhaps necessary evils to

help Africa transition from colonialism onto its own feet.[477]

While they may not have been ready to give up, Springer, McCray and other sympathetic

U.S. trade unionists' overall perception of African political and labor developments was

unsettled. McCray and Springer, for instance, worried about the behavior and future of African

allies like Mboya. In March 1961, McCray told Springer he feared the Kenyan labor leader's

political ambitions were compromising his KFL work.[478] McCray correctly predicted Mboya was

angling for a prominent government position and that he would leave the labor movement to

accept it. In the meantime, McCray complained that Mboya's political ambitions rendered him

"not…much good to the general African situation for about a year." At the same time, Mboya

was shunning the ICFTU's African Regional Organization. He neglected to attend the

organization's third regional meeting. By late spring 1961, McCray confided to Springer that he

perceived Mboya, now Kenya's Minister of Labor, was distancing himself from the West.

Springer also worried about Mboya and the KFL. She was particularly irked by Arthur

Ochwada's turn away from his American allies and toward the Eastern bloc and his splinter

union, the KTUC. Ochwada told Springer, "If Kenya turned red, it could be no one else to blame

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[477] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 324.
[478] McCray to Springer, 20 March 1961, GMA, RG 18-003, Country Files: Uganda, Box 13, Folder 18.

except AFL-CIO and USA." Springer replied, "If, as you imply, the unions in Kenya turn 'red,' it will be because of the selfish opportunism on the part of some leaders."[479]

In the wake of the 1960 Congo crisis, the AATUF's formation, and the political turmoil in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanganyika, U.S. labor's other most prominent Africa policymakers, Lovestone and Brown, shared McCray and Springer's pessimism. After Lumumba's assassination and the concurrent wave of anger directed at the U.S., Brown feared it was already too late for the U.S. and U.S. labor to make amends in the Congo.[480] Lovestone resigned himself to African neutralism but was exasperated at the rising tide of anti-Western organizations and proclamations emanating from places like Accra. He ranted to Brown about Tettegah and the AATUF, "If they are really sincere in rejecting the Western influence, they should stop using soap, getting industrial help and technical assistance. We have to find an opportunity to explain that to them."[481] Both Brown and Lovestone were anxious that Africa—specifically its party systems, labor movements and relations with the West—was quickly trending in the wrong direction.

Over the course of 1962-63, McCray, Springer, Lovestone, and Brown had reason to believe that many of their fears were becoming reality. Springer, once a perennial VIP in Ghana, was now on the CPP and GTUC's list of "unwelcome people."[482] More than that, she was troubled by the public break between her and Tettegah. The GTUC's General Secretary had once been like a son to Springer. Now he attacked her frequently and viciously in the press. The AFL-CIO as a whole came under intense fire in African periodicals. The most repeated charge—which had a degree of truth to it—accused the AFL-CIO's international representatives of

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[479] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 326.
[480] Ibid., 327.
[481] Stoner, "We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy; but We Will Never Be Neutral," 246.
[482] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 330-331.

working as CIA operatives. The AFL-CIO did receive CIA funds for many of its international activities. Lovestone, in particular, had a long-standing relationship with the CIA, and so too did Brown. McCray and Springer, however, were not active participants in this partnership, and U.S. trade unionists' interest in and support for Africa extended to earnest, grassroots movements and initiatives. Such nuance was either lost on or inconsequential to U.S. labor's growing number of African detractors.

Things were not faring any better for the ICFTU, despite the organization's belated efforts to counter the AATUF's organizational pull. In January 1962 in Dakar, the ICFTU's African unions, members of AFRO, met to form the African Trade Union Confederation (ATUC), an organization to counter the AATUF.[483] AFRO's journal, *African Labor News*, ran a series of scathing editorials against the AATUF, charging that it was co-opted by international communism. AFRO warned labor unions against becoming "enmeshed in the communist web."[484] Like the AATUF's charges against the AFL-CIO and ICFTU, there was a degree of truth to AFRO's claims. Financially hamstrung AATUF leaders and affiliated unions had begun courting Eastern bloc financial assistance. In 1963-64, their efforts paid off; the AATUF started receiving secret funds from the Soviet-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). AATUF leaders' rhetoric suspiciously became more sympathetic to the WFTU afterward. While Tettegah could claim, with some veracity, that the ICFTU and AFL-CIO served as tools of the CIA and U.S. imperialism, McCray and Western labor's defenders could likewise argue that their opponents were "WFTU stooges."[485]

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[483] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 333.
[484] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism,* 168.
[485] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 333.

Despite the belated efforts of the ICFTU, AFRO, and the ATUC, it all seemed too little, too late. At the end of 1962, the once steady rise in Africa's ICFTU affiliates came to a screeching halt. The organization instead began to experience an African exodus. Relatedly, the ATUC failed to become much more than an organization in name only. It faced an uphill struggle against the political currents of disaffiliation, Pan-Africanism, and African neutralism, and it lacked the financial resources to overcome them.

Cause for Concern? The Casablanca Conference, Israel and Africa, 1961-62

While U.S. labor leaders fretted about the ICFTU and AFL-CIO's status in Africa, their Israeli counterparts experienced their own initial turbulence. In January 1961 heads of seven African nations—Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Morocco—met in the Moroccan port city of Casablanca to discuss ideas for African political federation or unification. Participants in this Casablanca Conference believed a more integrated Africa would finally and completely free the continent of colonialism and block the advent of neocolonialism in its wake. Kwame Nkrumah believed this would require even more dramatic measures. During the conference, he called for the creation of a Pan-African army. Nkrumah argued that such a force could permanently expel colonial powers from the continent and depose the white minority regimes in southern Africa.

The Casablanca Conference did not just condemn European colonialists and white minority regimes in Africa; it issued a declaration condemning Israel for serving as "the pillar of imperialism in Africa" and for "depriving Palestinians [of] their legitimate rights."[486] The resolution was not entirely shocking to many Israeli officials, given the conference's participants. It was not the first time a gathering with Egyptians or Libyans in attendance made such a

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[486] Levey, "Israel's Strategy in Africa, 1961-67," 72.

statement. But Ghana, Mali, and Guinea were all currently partnering in Israeli development programs. Israeli government and labor leaders had considered Nkrumah and Malian president Modibo Keita among their African allies.[487] The fact that they signed onto such a declaration undermined the theory that Israel's development programs and labor partnerships would inoculate its African relations against UAR influence.

The Casablanca Conference resolutions stung the Israeli public, in particular. In a short period of time—since 1957—they had grown quite proud of what they believed was their noble, self-sacrificing assistance to Africa. When they heard about the events in Morocco, however, the Israeli public and press expressed outrage at some "ungrateful" Africans' "perfidy."[488] The backlash was strong enough to compel the Foreign Ministry into action—at home. They launched a domestic informational (*hasbara*) campaign to lower the public's expectations for African gratefulness from "instant gratification" to something more measured.

Prominent advocates for Israel's African programs, like Foreign Minister Golda Meir, tried to publicly downplay the Casablanca event. Speaking before the Knesset, Meir claimed that the resolution did not reflect the entire "political balance sheet" of Israeli-African relations. She still believed that Israel's outreach to Africa would block Nasser and Egypt's "lying propaganda, pressure, blackmail, and subversion" from isolating Israel in the region.[489] Mapai's monthly magazine, *Jewish Frontier*, sounded a similar note. The 1961 April issues featured an article, "Israel and Africa," assessing Casablanca's significance. Author Ron Tamari believed the conference resolutions should be taken with a very large grain of salt, because "the pro-Western bloc of African nations was not invited."[490]Additionally, Tamari noted, even within the anti-

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[487] Ron Tamari, "Israel and Africa," *Jewish Frontier*, April 1961, 10.
[488] Levey, "Israel's Strategy in Africa, 1961-67," 38.
[489] "Meir Outlines Foreign Policy Problems," 20 March 1961, Jerusalem, FBIS-Foreign Radio Broadcast (FRB).
[490] Tamari, "Israel and Africa,"10.

Western bloc, Israel had influential friends and allies. Within a week of the conference, for instance, Nkrumah's "right-hand man" and Minister of Agriculture Kojo Botsio, "loudly praised Israeli-Ghanaian co-operation through a speech made at the inaugural opening of an Israeli exhibition in Accra." Tamari, Meir, and the majority of Israel's government and labor leaders understood the Casablanca conference resolutions as an unfortunate, but not unexpected exception to a much more positive, larger picture.

During the following months, Israel's African "balance sheet" definitely appeared to lean the way Meir had described. In spring and summer 1961, the Histadrut hosted labor and government leaders from Kenya and Nigeria. J.J. Musindi, a farming co-operative leader from Kenya, was among them. Musindi toured Israel in April. He came away, like most before him, highly impressed and motivated to cultivate closer Kenyan-Israeli relations. By 1962, the words and actions of African visitors like Musindi seemed to dispel the notion that the events in Casablanca were indicative of more troubling trends.

Musindi's perceptions of Israel, during and after his trip, were shaped by his devotion to African socialism and aspirations for African development. Coming from Kenya's farming co-operative movement, he was particularly impressed by Israel's agricultural projects. Israelis' ability to develop a stronger and more successful co-operative movement than that of Kenya, in such rugged and dry terrain, "was a challenge" to Musindi. Following his visit, he painted what was by then a time-honored portrait of Israel as a vibrant, pioneering state that straddled the past and future. It was a "miraculous country" in which "tremendous development" had been achieved "through sweat and toil of committed men and women."[491]

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[491] J.J. Musindi to Yehudit Simhoni, 6 April 1961, PLI, IV 219A 28C.

Musindi hoped that such a miraculous country could bridge the gap not only between the developed and developing worlds, but also between the East and West. The whole world, he told the Histadrut's International Department director Yehudit Simhoni, "knows that the present civilization sprang from your country and penetrated to other parts of the world." Musindi was hopeful that history repeated itself. "This may be the time for your country to save the crumbling Civilization by training people of the great continent of Africa and Asia so that we do not make the same old mistakes which have confused the entire world," he wrote.[492]

Musindi returned to Kenya hoping to serve as something of a bridge himself. He wanted to bring what he learned in Israel back to Kenya. He requested film strips on the Histadrut's "various agricultural settlements" to use in presentations around his country.[493] In the meantime, he traveled around Kenya sharing his experiences and interpretation of the Histadrut's cooperative societies. "Many people have been tremendously impressed by all that I have to tell about Israel's development," he wrote to Histadrut Political Department director Ezra Hayut.

Musindi's vision of a steady, two-way stream between Kenya and Israel looked quite different from the Casablanca group's depictions of Israeli imperialism. Musindi wanted more Kenyans to spend time in Israel. "I am convinced," he told Hayut, "that by now our people should be getting the privilege of coming to your country for educational studies." He confidently stated, "No doubt we will be importing some of your technical know-how and be able to obviate the standard of co-operative and farming in this country." Musindi also wanted more Israelis in Kenya. He believed Israelis' presence and assistance would not just benefit Kenya, but convince other African nations that Israel was a fraternal ally, not a threat. "It is such hearts as that of your foreign minister," Musindi wrote, "that win Africa."

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[492] Ibid.
[493] J.J. Musindi to Ezra Hayut, 12 April 1961, PLI, IV 219A 28C.

Shortly after the Casablanca Conference, Israeli-Nigerian relations grew closer as well. In June 1961, East Nigerian Premier Michael Okpara and his Minister of Commerce, Chief J.U. Nwodo, embarked on a trip to Israel. It was part of a two-nation journey, including India, during which they hoped to find solutions to the challenges of Nigerian development. Okpara and Nwodo were both members of the East Region's governing party, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The NCNC had been founded by Nnamdi Azikiwe, who already had an intimate knowledge of the Histadrut. He was one of Nigeria's first contacts with Israel. Azikiwe and East Nigerian labor had already established several working partnerships with Israel and the Histadrut, including the Nigersol construction company. Okpara and Nwodo were thus following a well-trodden path.

It was not surprising then, that the day before his departure, Okpara expressed his lofty expectations for what Israel's model and assistance could offer. He told a crowd of supporters that the NCNC government was about to initiate a development program so spectacular that other parts of the Nigerian federation would clamor for NCNC leaders.[494] Within a few years' time, he promised, every able-bodied person in Eastern Nigeria would be able to find employment. Okpara believed his NCNC colleagues expected him to bring home Israeli "miracles," and he did not expect to disappoint.

Okpara and Nwodo were particularly interested in Israeli agriculture, the Histadrut and its worker-owned and operated industries. They believed labor relations and national development were the most pressing issues in East Nigeria. During an honorary luncheon for him hosted by the Histadrut, Okpara explained, "Nigeria has several competing labor organizations with conflicting claims and the formation of a trade union federation like the Histadrut could provide

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[494] "East Plans Jobs for All: Premier Now in Israel," *Nigerian Outlook*, 22 June 1961, PLI, IV 219A 28B.

the answer for one of our country's outstanding problems."[495] The Histadrut's model seemed to promise labor unity and strength, and the potential for trade unions to drive national development. The NCNC leaders were given ample opportunities to observe the Histadrut in action. They toured factories in Tel Aviv and Haifa, visited kibbutzim and moshavim agricultural co-operatives across the country, and talked about labor issues and operations with the Histadrut's Central Committee. The Nigerian visitors were not disappointed.

Okpara, like Musindi, found things in Israel that he wanted to bring to Africa. He was convinced that Israel had created "a new and unique concept of trade unionism" that the Nigerians needed to emulate.[496] He particularly valued the ways in which the Histadrut coordinated trade unions, co-operatives, and agricultural settlements within "one overall federation." Israeli labor, he argued, "has shown how labor could become the arm of a nation in the up-building of its country" and that "nothing of its kind" existed in the U.S. or Europe. After his return, Okpara told the Nigerian press that the NCNC government would try to send trade union leaders to Israel so they could study the Histadrut in more detail.[497] Nigerian labor would learn to move beyond "only focusing on agitation for increased wages" and discover how to cooperate with the state in building "the new nation of [the] Government's dream."

Prominent African visitors like Okpara seemed to symbolically and literally dispel Israelis' post-Casablanca anxieties. On his final day in Israel, reporters asked Okpara to react to that conference's anti-Israel resolutions. Specifically, they asked him if Israel served as a bridgehead for imperialism in Africa. "My very presence here," the premier asserted, "shows that I do not agree with this declaration." Okpara continued, "For many years I have devoted my life

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[495] "Nigerians Feted by Histadrut," *Jerusalem Post*, 20 June 1961, LPA, Collection Number 2.914.1961.63.
[496] Ibid.
[497] "Okpara on Trade Union Leadership," *Nigerian Outlook*, 22 June 1961, PLI, IV 219A 28B.

to fighting against imperialism. I can well recognize imperialism when I encounter it, and I have

not encountered it during my visit to Israel."[498] Okpara's presence, his desire to foster closer

Israeli-Nigerian relations, and his direct statement against the Casablanca resolution quickly

relieved the anxieties of Israel's Africanists.

By 1962, Israel seemed to experience what George Meany later described as a "special

status" among African nations, even in the places where the ICFTU and AFL-CIO struggled. In

late 1961, for instance, Mboya had begun shunning the ICFTU. The AFL-CIO's Africanists

worried that he was distancing himself from the West. Yet in early 1962, Mboya honeymooned

in Israel and decided to transform his beloved KFL in imitation of the Histadrut.[499] Mboya's

motivations for such a change echoed those of John Tettegah and the GTUC four years prior. He

believed the Histadrut's structure and functions were "more adapted to the needs and

requirements of Kenya and East Africa" than the British TUC, after which the KFL had

originally been modeled.[500] Mboya also announced that the KFL would launch a series of joint

partnerships with the Histadrut: cotton textile mills, fish canning factories, co-operative

marketing organizations, and a hospital and dispensary facility.

The Histadrut's unique structure and extensive functions, Israeli labor's tolerance for a

more liberal definition of "free labor," and Israelis' more tolerant position on international

orientation enabled them to weather many of the storms buffeting the ICFTU and U.S. labor.

Mboya demonstrated this in Kenya, but it was especially evident in Ghana. In 1962, AFL-CIO

Africanists like Maida Springer were accused of being CIA operatives and were no longer

welcome in Accra. The Histadrut's Benjamin Kaminker, meanwhile, served as a personal adviser

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[498] "Dr. Okpara Discusses African Problems," 21 June 1961, FBIS-FRB, Jerusalem, Israel Domestic Service.
[499] "Mboya to Copy Israel," *Express*, 2 February 1962, Lagos, Nigeria, LPA, 2.914.1962.38.
[500] "Ship Line Carries Aid to East Africa," 7 February 1962, FBIS-FRB, Jerusalem.

to Tettegah and was invited to address the GTUC's first biennial convention in March 1962.[501]

Kaminker concluded his convention speech with promises for the Histadrut's continued material

and moral support. He announced plans for five new trade union scholarships and expressed the

Histadrut's "complete identification" with the GTUC's dedication to "the complete and final and

speedy liberation of all of the peoples on the African continent."

It is ironic, but also symbolic, that Kaminker affirmed Israeli labor's anticolonialism in

the same nation whose Prime Minister recently condemned Israel as imperialist. For the time

being, the Histadrut's reputation and hard-earned goodwill were enough to transcend the Israeli

government's more challenged bilateral relations. The Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute was

thriving and its administrators turned their focus to East Africa. By 1963, the Institute enrolled

51 representatives from trade union and cooperative movements explicitly from East and Central

Africa.[502]

Meanwhile, the Israeli government continued to reap the diplomatic fruits of the

Histadrut's labor. Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir visited Kenya on the eve of its

independence. She met with Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, and Kenya African Democratic Union

(KADU) leader Ronald Ngala to discuss how the Israeli government and Histadrut could assist

the soon-to-be-independent nation in its development.[503] After an abrupt setback in Casablanca,

Israel and the Histadrut seemed to have regained their unique standing in Africa.

The Sincerest Form of Flattery: the UAW, U.S. Labor, and the Histadrut

While Israel and the Histadrut enjoyed this "special status" in Africa, the ICFTU's

ineffective and belated efforts there pushed the AFL-CIO's Africanists beyond the pale. George

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[501] Text of Kaminker's Speech, March 1962, PLI, IV 219A 20B.
[502] "Afro-Asian Institute," 7 January 1963, Jerusalem, Israel Home Service, FBIS-FRB.
[503] "Meir in Kenya," 21 January 1963, Jerusalem, Israel Home Service, FBIS-FRB.

McCray blamed Africans' "genuine feelings and acts to disaffiliate" from the ICFTU on that International's "long years of mal-administration, unrealistic ICFTU policies in Africa particularly, and [its] failure to develop a positive policy which would be in harmony with the expanding needs of African states."[504] In a 1963 letter to George Meany, McCray said the ICFTU's AFRO was "utterly useless." It was a poor competitor for the AATUF and, more than anything else, its presence was an embarrassing reminder of that fact. The International should "liquidate" it. He lauded the ICFTU's African Labor College in Kampala, but believed that was the "outstanding exception to this generally depressing picture."

McCray felt the only way to save the ICFTU's presence in Africa was an American takeover. He implored the AFL-CIO president to push for a new ICFTU Assistant Secretary for African Affairs: Irving Brown. Brown had the "wide acceptance required" in both French-speaking and English-speaking Africa, McCray argued, and "the Africans would rally around him." McCray also proposed that, after being appointed, Brown should be given the power to pick his own staff in Africa and in Brussels, the ICFTU's headquarters. "If we wait much longer," McCray warned Meany, "not even Irving will be able to stop the stampede."[505]

By 1963, even the ICFTU's most loyal U.S. trade union leaders, like Walter and Victor Reuther, began to see the writing on the wall. As described in Chapter 4, the UAW president and his brother, who directed the union's Education and International Affairs departments, had been two of the Atlantic City Compromise's strongest advocates in 1957. At the time, they had advocated that the AFL-CIO limit its Africa programs to ICFTU channels. Four years later, however, even the Reuthers viewed the ICFTU as a proverbial sinking ship in Africa. In early

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[504] George McCray to George Meany, 29 August 1963, GMA, RG 18-003, Country File: Tanzania, Box 13, Folder 19.
[505] Ibid.

1961, they agreed with AFL-CIO officials who decided to overturn the Atlantic City Compromise and relaunch the AFL-CIO's bilateral programs in Africa.

In 1962-63, certain U.S. trade unions started to "go it alone" in Africa, independent of the ICFTU and sometimes independent of other AFL-CIO unions. The Reuthers' UAW was among them. The Reuther brothers saw international affairs very differently from Jay Lovestone, who directed much of the AFL-CIO's extant African policies. The Reuthers and other UAW leaders decided to expand their unions' own "international solidarity program" into a more ambitious, and Africa-focused, bilateral agenda. Yet, while the UAW and other U.S. labor trade unions endeavored to act more unilaterally in Africa, they sought a deeper partnership with and closer emulation of Israel's Histadrut. As Meany articulated in his 1963 speech about U.S. labor on the global stage, American trade unionists believed that Israel had attained a "special status" in Africa that could help keep their own relations afloat.

The UAW's connection to Israel and the Histadrut began almost haphazardly. In May 1962, the UAW held its annual convention in Atlantic City. Before the convention, organizers planned to launch "an intensive International Solidarity Fund campaign." In preparation, Victor Reuther sent his assistant director, Lewis Carliner, on a mission to the ICFTU's European offices. Reuther envisioned modeling the UAW's revamped International Solidarity Program and its campaign materials on parallel ICFTU examples. Carliner would meet with ICFTU leaders and European metal work unions "for [the] purpose of compiling information, pictures, and films which will be used as [the] basis of UAW films and publications on [the] Solidarity Fund."

Incidentally, Victor Reuther thought about sending Carliner to Israel, as well. He wrote to Histadrut's U.S. representative, J. Avrech, "Since [Carliner] will be in Europe, it occurred to me that it would be worthwhile if he continued on to Israel and spent a brief period at the Afro-Asian

Institute."[506] Perhaps due to such short notice, Carliner did not make the trip before the UAW's

May convention. But UAW leaders' interest in the Histadrut and its Afro-Asian initiatives,

though perhaps still secondary to the ICFTU's, continued.

In July 1962, the UAW finally sent Carliner on a ten-day trip to Israel. He was certainly

not the first UAW official or member to make the journey. Walter Reuther had visited Israel

several times over the previous two decades. But Victor wanted Carliner to study some of the

Histadrut's practices that might be relevant for the UAW's International Labor Solidarity

program. Specifically, Carliner would meet with the Histadrut's film and education department

specialists. Carliner wrote to Avrech months before his trip, requesting an audience with

Histadrut experts "especially in the areas of international solidarity activities and, if possible, to

pick up any existing film which illustrates the Israeli effort, for incorporation in a film I am

doing for the UAW."[507]

After its May 1962 convention, the UAW's international aspirations went well beyond

educational films and fundraising campaigns. The union's board of directors and education

department began discussing the creation of a UAW International Labor Solidarity *Institute*.

Israel's Afro-Asian Institute, UAW leaders believed, could comprise the perfect example.

Carliner told Avrech he wanted to spend time there "so that I can report on the details of its

methods to our own Board and our Education Department, which are considering a somewhat

similar program within the UAW." Carliner hoped to get behind-the-scenes and hands-on

experience at the Institute. He requested to partake in a "teaching program" so that he could "get

a sense of the quality of what goes on by direct involvement rather than as a visitor."

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[506] Victor Reuther to J. Avrech, 24 April 1962, PLI, IV 219A 48.
[507] Lewis Carliner to J. Avrech, 20 July 1962, PLI, IV 219A 48.

Carliner's visit was just the beginning of the UAW's interest in Africa and the Histadrut's

Afro-Asian initiatives. This was attributable to both the growing significance UAW leaders

attached to Africa and their increasing knowledge about and admiration for the Histadrut. The

union was, according Victor Reuther, becoming "more and more aware of the important role in

shaping the character of Africa's industrial societies and political institutions."[508] Reuther saw

Africa as an imminent battleground in U.S. labor's crusade for freedom and democracy, and it

was the focus of "a vitally expanded UAW international solidarity program." Like George

Meany, Victor Reuther now believed Israel and the Histadrut had a special status in Africa from

which U.S. labor could learn, emulate, and/or support.

In fall 1963, the UAW decided to disperse three teams of autoworker delegations across

the African continent. For 15 months, UAW members would partner with their African

counterparts on "all levels of industrial life." UAW leaders hoped the mission would not only

help their union establish bilateral contacts and give them a better understanding of African

workers' specific challenges. They also hoped the mission would "sustain and enlarge" UAW

members' interest in Africa. In order to accomplish these tasks, the UAW's three teams would

fan out in northern, western, and eastern Africa. The first group would visit Egypt, Algeria,

Tunisia, and Morocco. The second team would travel to Ghana, Guinea, the Congo, and Nigeria.

The final group would spend their 15 months in Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda.

UAW leaders selected a diverse group for the nine-member mission, individuals they

hoped would eventually carry out much of the union's future Africa programs. Victor Reuther

oversaw the mission's three teams. Joining him were eight mostly mid-level UAW officials,

drawn mainly from the UAW's Midwestern strongholds: Chicago, northern Michigan, Ohio,

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[508] "U.S. Labor Mission to Africa Will Visit Israel," U.S. Information Service, American Embassy, Tel Aviv, 14 November 1963, PLI, IV 219A 152C.

Indiana, and one from the UAW's southern region.[509] The nine-member mission's racial

composition was its most prominent feature.[510] UAW leaders selected four African Americans

and one Lebanese-born member from the union's auditing staff for the mission's roster. The

group's multiracial character was probably attributable to several factors. However, it could have

been as simple as the fact that the UAW was one of U.S. labor's most liberal and politically

active unions. If any major U.S. labor union could nominate four African Americans to such an

important mission and not have done so out of sheer tokenism, the UAW was one.

The UAW's nine-member mission would not fly directly back to the U.S. from Africa.

Before returning home, their trip culminated in a week-long visit to Israel's Afro-Asian Institute

in Tel Aviv. After visits by Walter Reuther, Carliner, and others, UAW leaders knew the

Institute to be a hub for Afro-Asian trade union visitors. Victor Reuther hoped that, at the

Institute, the group would be able to "see the type of work being done by Afro-Asian trade union

officials and to exchange views with them."[511] Additionally, they would see the type of

relationship U.S. labor leaders before them had built with the Histadrut. Walter Reuther would

fly in and join the UAW delegation at a ceremony dedicating a new youth center in his honor.

Histadrut officials saw the visit just as beneficially as their guests. Internal memos during

the Histadrut's trip planning highlighted the UAW's importance, specifically in terms of its size,

reputation, and political influence.[512] In 1964, the UAW had more than one million members.

Histadrut officials gathered that the UAW was "considered to be one of the most dynamic and

liberal of labor movement formations" and had "taken a leading role in labor movement political

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[509] The mission's roster included: Victor Reuther, Bardon Young, Joseph Berry, Horace Williams, William Beckham, Daniel Casey, Bert Bothe, Kenneth Robinson, Warren Jennings, Leon Baths [Memo, "UAW Study Mission with Histadrut," PLI, IV 219A 152C].
[510] The delegates' ethnicities are denoted in a Histadrut memo.
[511] "U.S. Labor Mission to Africa Will Visit Israel."
[512] Histadrut internal memo on the UAW, 1964, PLI, IV 219A 152C.

action, mobilizing support for progressive candidates and in support of social action in

municipal, state, and national politics." The Histadrut had a long history of close relations with

the AFL-CIO and many of its affiliates, especially those with a large proportion of Jewish

American members. While Walter Reuther was a personal ally of Israel and the Histadrut, direct

relations between the UAW and Histadrut were still fairly novel. But Histadrut officials saw

great potential. Not only did the UAW's domestic ideology seem to align with the Histadrut's,

but Histadrut officials noted that "in international affairs, [the] UAW has always taken an

enlightened stand on world-wide issues including practical support of activities…in developing

countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America." Even more promising, "[The] Afro-Asian Institute

of Histadrut has benefited from scholarship grants from [the UAW international solidarity] fund

during the current year." While UAW leaders hoped to learn from the Histadrut's Afro-Asian

programs, Histadrut officials hoped to cultivate financial support to keep said programs afloat.

The UAW delegation's tour was a slightly modified version of the typical U.S. labor

visit.[513] They met with senior Histadrut and Israeli Foreign Ministry officials. They visited a new

"development town" in Dimona and a Community Development Center in Haifa. The UAW

delegation spent a night at Kibbutz Kfar Blum in the Galilee region and saw "the holy places" in

Nazareth and Jerusalem. The more tailored aspects of their tour related to UAW workers'

industrial and technical expertise. Due to the Histadrut's all-encompassing nature, there were

plenty of sights to impress the autoworkers. They visited the Weitzmann Institute of Science in

Rehovot, an automobile factory in Haifa, a pipeline pumping station in the Upper Galilee, and

the Ort Vocational Training Center in Natanya. Rounding out their trip, and capping their 15-

month international journey, the UAW delegation visited the Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute.

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[513] "UAW Study Mission with Histadrut," memo and itinerary, 1964, PLI, IV 219A 152C.

They spent a day talking with the Institute's principals, staff, and Afro-Asian participants. Histadrut officials hoped that the group's jam-packed itinerary would leave UAW delegates inspired and wanting to see more.

The Reuther brothers quickly confirmed that their visit accomplished both of these aims. In mid-February, 1964, both Walter and Victor wrote letters to their hosts, praising the Histadrut, its trade union programs and development initiatives at home and in the Afro-Asian world. Writing to Yehudit Simhoni, the Histadrut's International Department director, Victor Reuther affirmed, "Our visit proved the wisdom of scheduling a stop-over in Israel at the end of our African tour, because the visit to Israel gave real meaning to the experiences of our delegation during their stay in Africa."[514] He also thanked Akiva Eger, the Afro-Asian Institute's director. Victor Reuther gave Eger and Institute's staff high praise for what he believed were their keen insights into African labor and development. It was the "universal conclusion of all in our group," he told Eger, that after their 15 months in Africa, "your observations came closest to hitting target center."[515] As tokens of thanks, Victor Reuther sent to both Simhoni and Eger a large bound volume of paintings depicting the historical struggle of labor in the U.S. He hoped the volumes would be "of special interest to the trainees who come from the different countries of Africa and Asia."

For Walter Reuther, too, the UAW delegation's visit reaffirmed his belief that Israel and the Histadrut were some of the most perceptive, successful, and invaluable "Free World" ambassadors to the Afro-Asian world. He wrote to Simhoni, "Each time I come back from a visit to Israel I return with my spirit refreshed and much inspired by what I have seen and heard."[516]

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[514] Victor Reuther to Yehudit Simhoni, 11 February 1964, PLI, IV 219A 70A.
[515] Victor Reuther to Akiva Eger, 11 February 1964, PLI, IV 219A 70A.
[516] Walter Reuther to Yehudit Simhoni, 14 February 1964, PLI, IV 219A 70A.

Reuther's "far too brief" trip strengthened his view that supporting Israel and its African initiatives was vital to addressing the "current unrest" in Africa. He thought it was especially advantageous that he and the UAW's delegation spent time in Israel after touring several African countries. "The more I saw of agricultural problems in African villages," he wrote, "the more I realized the importance of the world of the Afro-Asian Institute."

Although he was now an ocean away from his Israeli counterparts, Walter Reuther assured Simhoni that they remained near to his thoughts. After returning to the U.S., Reuther headed to Miami, where he would participate in an AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting. He planned to lobby on behalf of Israel and the Histadrut during the council meeting as well as informal AFL-CIO leadership gatherings. Reuther was planning a luncheon, for instance, that included the Histadrut's U.S. representative, Ben Zion-Ilan, and "a number of our friends in the AFL-CIO" in an effort to raise even more funds for Afro-Asian Institute scholarships. Several weeks later, it was Simhoni's turn to thank Reuther. She expressed gratitude for "the wonderful support [Reuther] demonstrated at the AFL-CIO Executive Council on behalf of the Afro-Asian Institute. I cannot tell you how grateful we are," Simhoni continued, "for your untiring efforts."[517]

In 1964, the UAW was not the only American trade union to admire, support, or emulate the Histadrut and Israel's Afro-Asian initiatives. The ILGWU and ACWA, for instance, continued their own independent initiatives and partnerships with the Histadrut. Ties between the Histadrut and the AFL-CIO's central leadership also remained strong, and the AFL-CIO continued to be the Afro-Asian Institute's most generous sponsor. In June 1964, the AFL-CIO invited Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to address its general membership. Israelis valued

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[517] Yehudit Simhoni to Walter Reuther, 14 April 1964, PLI, IV 219A 70A.

U.S. labor's friendship "not only in the broad question of survival and progress," Eshkol said. "We are daily reminded of it through the institutions you have established in Israel."[518] Besides the AFL-CIO's support for the Afro-Asian Institute, Eshkol rattled off several other U.S. labor-funded projects in Israel: the Dubinsky hospital in Beersheba, the Reuther Youth Center in Holon, and a "great stadium rising in Nazareth to bear the name of George Meany, which will serve the Jewish and Arab workers of the region." Israel and the Histadrut's expanded influence, now seeming to affect the entire African continent, was only more reason for the AFL-CIO and its top leaders to continue their special relationship.

A much less prominent—but just as important—motor continuing to drive U.S.-Israeli relations was the American Trade Union Council (ATUC) of the National Committee for Labor-Israel (NCLI). As detailed in Chapters 1 and 2, the NCLI had been among the earliest Histadrut allies in the U.S. Many of its founders and early leaders were prominent Jewish American trade unionists, drawn especially from the ILGWU and the ACWA. Over time, though, the NCLI— and the Histadrut, along with it—cultivated non-Jewish leaders, members, and allies across the U.S. and from among a more varied collection of trades. Its honorary officials included prominent U.S. labor leaders like Reuther, Meany, and Dubinsky. The NCLI's influence was not limited to trade unionists. NCLI membership rolls and conference participants often included prominent political leaders, government officials, and academics from around the globe. In short, the NCLI's was much like a microcosm of U.S.-Israeli labor relations; their ideological influence and gravitational pull extended beyond the house of labor.

In the early 1960s, NCLI members believed their organization's existence and aims were as important as ever. The state of Israel was in the midst of an economic recession, and the

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[518] Address given by Levi Eshkol to AFL-CIO, 3 June 1964, KCA, ILGWU President's Records, Box 253, Folder 2.

Histadrut's budgets felt a significant pinch. At the same time the NCLI, like most of Israeli

labor's U.S. allies, believed the Histadrut was just tapping into its potential influence in the

Middle East and the Afro-Asian world. In 1960, the NCLI launched a special drive to recruit

more local U.S. trade unions and hopefully lend the Histadrut additional moral and financial

support. Executive Director Gregory Bardacke informed the NCLI's regional directors that the

drive was intended "to bring the story of Histadrut to broader areas and establish more concrete

and stable mailing addresses where our literature could be sent and our educational activities

facilitated."[519]

The NCLI's campaign was an apparent success, perhaps too much so. Bardacke and

NCLI leaders had to curtail it in 1963. The AFL-CIO's central leadership deemed the drive

"improper," as they wanted U.S. labor's support for Israel and the Histadrut to run through

official AFL-CIO channels, not directly to the Histadrut or through a third party. The fact that the

AFL-CIO had to make that clear to the NCLI, however, insinuates the drive's success.

In 1963-64, the NCLI held two major conferences and endeavored, again, to launch an

ambitious new "Histadrut Campaign." The organization's 1963 conference centered on the

theme: "Israel and American Labor." Over 200 delegates met at the ILGWU's Unity House to

hear speeches from the U.S. Undersecretary of Labor John F. Henning, ILGWU Vice President

Gus Tyler, *Middle Eastern Affairs* editor Benjamin Schwadran, the Histadrut's U.S.

representative Ben-Zion Ilan, and Israeli Foreign Ministry Official Eliahu Elath. Conference

sessions covered topics like "Israel as an Outpost of Democracy" and recent progress of the

Afro-Asian Institute. NCLI leaders hoped the conference would inspire attendees to return to

their various locals and spread the message. The following summer, in 1964, the NCLI held

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[519] Gregory Bardacke, "Memo to all regional directors of ATUC-NCLI," 1 October 1963, GMA, RG 18-001, Country Files: Israel—Including Histadrut, Box 10, Folder 9.

another conference, this time themed, "The Role of Free Labor in Economic Development as Exemplified by the Experiences of Israel." ILGWU Local 10's president, Moe Falikman, delivered one of the meeting's keynote addresses.

Over the course of the early 1960s, Falikman, like most NCLI members and conference attendees, was even more convinced that the Israeli model for labor and state-building was key to the challenges of the Cold War and Third World development.[520] And like many U.S. trade unionists, Falikman adhered to common aspects of modernization and development ideology. In his conference speech, he explained that there was a gap between the developed Western world and new nations. These new countries had "one overriding goal: to industrialize as rapidly as possible." The leaders in most of these new nations, Falikman continued, had little interest in free enterprise and saw the "capitalistic method of development as unsuited to their conditions, too slow and morally undesirable." Some states thought China and Russia offered a model for rapid development, but Falikman believed their citizens would quickly learn this would come through totalitarian means. For development-minded U.S. trade unionists like Falikman, these realities only heightened the value that Israel and the Histadrut represented. He explained:

> "Israel in our estimation offers a possible example…Here is a country which was itself recently underdeveloped, but whose people is now approximating to western standards of living—and this achievement has come about without any sacrifice of political freedom or democratic institutions."

After touting Israel and the Histadrut's potential for the Afro-Asian world, Falikman turned to the Middle East. The topics were not unrelated. Since the earliest U.S.-Israeli labor relations, the majority of the Histadrut's U.S. admirers saw the Middle East through the lens of modernization

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[520] Transcript of Moe Falikman's speech, Unity House, 29 May 1964, KCA, ILGWU records, Local 10, Manager's Correspondence, Box 7, Folder 13.

ideology. They believed Israel's development would lift the entire area and correspondingly

usher in regional peace.

By 1964, Israel had existed for sixteen years with little to show for this theory. Yet

Histadrut allies and Israel's admirers, like Falikman and the NCLI, held out hope for Israel and

the Middle East, because of developments in the Afro-Asian world. Perhaps Israel's assistance to

Afro-Asian nations might accomplish what its modernization efforts at home had not. "Interest

of new nations in Israel's experience," Falikman theorized, "and Israel's concern with

developments in Asia and Africa…may well introduce a new dimension in the relationship of the

Arab world to Israel." According to his logic, Arab nations would see that Israel was "an outpost

not only of western democracy, but of science and technology and a social dynamism that could

be the springboard of fruitful and constructive cooperation for peace and justice in the Middle

East." This perspective, unfortunately, reduced the aspirations and concerns of the Middle East's

diverse Arab populations—or whatever population to which it was applied—to materialist

desires and making "progress" along an arbitrary development spectrum defined by the West.

These ideological blind spots served to limit Israeli and U.S. labor's international

solidarity to those who wanted to imitate the West and were willing to disregard "backwards"

cultural traditions and "traditional" mindsets. Relying on modernization and development as a

catch-all solution for domestic and international turmoil was also a recipe for disappointment and

even disaster. In a few short years, those displaced or discriminated against due to modernization

ideology or its potential, darker corollaries—racism, "neo-imperialism," and "neo-racism"—

found their voice in challenging this ideological edifice and found allies in the U.S., Israel, and

the Afro-Asian world alike.[521] In the early 1960s, however, development ideology was still

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[521] Here the terms "neoimperialism" and "neoracism" are drawn from Thomas McCarthy's *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). McCarthy defines neo-imperialism as

ascendant. U.S. and Israeli trade union leaders, exemplified by Moe Falikman and the 1964

NCLI conference, believed they had found the ideological means to bring democracy,

development, and dignity to workers around the globe.

Balanced on "a Razor's Edge"

Despite their diplomatic successes, Africanists in Israeli labor and government were not

naïve about their "special status" in Africa or oblivious to its vulnerabilities. In 1961, for

example, they publicly wrote off the anti-Israel Casablanca Conference resolution as irrelevant

but privately observed that it had real repercussions. Soon after the 1961 resolution, two of

Israel's closest Ghanaian allies—Trade Minister Kojo Botsio and Finance Minister Komla

Gbedemah—assured their Israeli friends that the resolution had no bearing on Ghana's affinity

for their nation.[522] Months later, however, Botsio and Gbedemah were both sacked. After the

chaos of the 1961 Sekondi-Takoradi railway strike, Nkrumah dismissed the two from his cabinet.

He began filling his government with more trustworthy and politically radical CPP allies—

Ghanaians much more likely to see statements like the Casablanca resolution as more than empty

rhetoric.[523] Israeli labor and government leaders quietly responded in kind, cultivating closer ties

to Nkrumah's potential rivals, like the General Secretary of Ghana's Agricultural Workers Union

"Benny" B.A. Bentum.

Internal reports from David Hacohen and Ben Kaminker in 1962-63 demonstrate that

Israeli labor and political leaders perceived that their position, as well as African politics and

labor, was in many places delicately balanced on the razor's edge. Few Israelis were more

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"a way of maintaining key aspects of colonial domination and exploitation after the disappearance of colonies in the legal-political sense." Neo-racism is "a way of doing the same for racial domination and exploitation after the displacement of 'race' in the scientific, biological sense" (5).

[522] During the 1961 Sekondi railworkers' strike, the CIA hoped to instigate a coup that would replace Nkrumah with the much more West-friendly Gbedemah.

[523] Levey, "Israel's Strategy," 39.

experienced and influential in Israeli-African relations than Knesset Member, Histadrut official, and Mapai member Hacohen. He was Israel's first ambassador to Burma in the mid-1950s. In early 1962, Hacohen took part in an SI reconnaissance mission to Africa. He and Norwegian socialist party representative Paul Engstad visited over a half-dozen English-speaking African nations, with the ostensible mission of establishing new SI contacts and partnerships. Hacohen also used the tour as an opportunity to assess African labor and politics and the status of Israeli-African relations in both arenas. After his visit, Hacohen submitted his "Journey to Africa" report to Mapai leaders.[524]

The report was sobering. Hacohen viewed Africa through a mixture of Marxist and contemporary development ideology. On the one hand, African "underdevelopment" could be attributed to colonial exploitation. "Ever since the white man's entry into Africa," he wrote, "economic development was aimed solely towards their own enrichment, with little thought to the black farmer or laborer." White settlers and colonialists hypocritically derided Africans' "lack of ability" while "overlooking the fact that it is they who are responsible for the lack of education and training in modern economic methods." Hacohen viewed African culture and traditions as riddled with tribalism and emotionalism. Africans were "emotionally" attached to tribes, which hindered their loyalties to the state. They were "superstitious." And because of his or her "abject poverty…the African was physically weak and enfeebled and this is probably the reason why he is unaccustomed to bodily exertion and falls victim to illnesses and diseases." According to Hacohen, these factors combined to create "the main causes for the economic backwardness" of Africa, "practically unequaled in any other part of the globe."

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[524] David Hacohen, "Journey in Africa," Internal Report, February 1962, LPA, 2.914.1960.301.

On the other hand, Hacohen saw the potential for African national development and strong workers' and socialist movements. "Nearly all the large parties—which are the ruling ones in these States—support Socialism and at times unequivocally came themselves socialist parties," he observed. Hacohen also saw in Africa "a longing for cooperative development and social security and for the strengthening of the trade unions." The challenge, he argued, was that most Africans were illiterate and devoid of proper educational materials. Africans wanted socialism, development, and democracy, but he wondered: did they fully understand what these meant and how to make them reality?

Without sufficient assistance and guidance, Hacohen could already foresee Africa plunging into the abyss. No African state, he argued, "without exception," had the internal means for its own development. "Economic improvement cannot come about by the waving of a magic wand or crying U-hu-ru," he wrote. Instead, the developed nations of the West had to act quickly and decisively. Otherwise, Africans' political freedoms and material well-being would deteriorate even further. "Owing to the vague ideas of what democracy really means and the lack of any experience in true democratic life," Hacohen explained, "it is not difficult for a party or leader to entrench themselves and subjugate the nation to a demagogic dictatorial rule." Hacohen feared that, without proper assistance or guidance, newly independent African states would quickly devolve into party dictatorships and strong man regimes, while Africa trade unions would be "muzzled" by the state. Israel, along with any other real socialist or democratic nation, would quickly be expelled. Ultimately, developments in African labor and politics supported some of Hacohen's forewarnings.

Mapai and Histadrut leaders saw the most alarming signs, for both Africans and Israeli-African relations, in Ghana. Histadrut official Ben Kaminker had much more than a bird's eye

view. Kaminker was entrenched in Ghanaian politics and labor, serving officially as an editorial adviser to the GTUC and unofficially as personal adviser to John Tettegah.[525] Kaminker's on-the-ground perspective gave Israeli labor leaders a clear window into state-labor relations in Accra. They did not like what they saw.

From May to August 1962, Kaminker documented and analyzed the "dizzy pace of events" taking place in Accra. His writings illustrate Israeli Africanists' desire to distinguish between African labor movements and states as well as how, over time, the increasingly blurred lines between the two made that task nearly impossible. Kaminker traced the origins of Ghana's "mercurial" situation to 1958.[526] That year, the GTUC moved "from largely independent trade unions to increasing control and influence of the central Congress structure, the idea of the 'New Structure.'" Kaminker's readers would have already known that the "New Structure" was Tettegah and the GTUC's interpretation and emulation of the Histadrut. But Kaminker portrayed the Ghanaian interpretation as fundamentally flawed.

Tettegah's vision and enthusiasm were apparently matched with a "foggily described" outline of the New Structure and missed much of the nuance between Histadrut and Israeli politics and government. According to Kaminker, the New Structure initiated a short era of "enthusiasm and vigorous activity" in which the GTUC introduced a promising "labor economy." But Ghanaians had done things far afield from the Israeli example. In 1958, the CPP passed Ghana's Industrial Relations Act, which gave exclusive legal status to the GTUC. After the 1961 Sekondi-Takorandi railway strike, Nkrumah's government feared outside powers (like the U.S.'s CIA) could partner with domestic dissidents (like labor unions), destabilize Ghana and

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[525] G.A. Badogun, Director of GTUC International Department, to Yehudit Simhoni, 10 September 1962, PLI, IV 219A 20B.
[526] Memorandum Report, "Ghana's Trade Union Congress in May 1962," PLI, IV 219A 83.

overthrow his government. Nkrumah cracked down on militant labor leaders and trade unionists, jailed dissidents and expelled their supporters from his government. From Kaminker's viewpoint, Ghana's labor movement became subservient to the state and victim to the imperatives of stability and national development.

Tettegah, once viewed privately as the Histadrut's "prophet" in Africa, was now on his way out of power. Under his watch, Ghanaian labor had posed a threat to the state's authority. "Though still nominally Secretary General of the TUC," Kaminker observed, "Tettegah has become the principal victim of the trend of events here." Tettegah had made an ill-fated attempt to delve into Ghanaian politics, supporting figures that Nkrumah and his loyalists viewed with suspicion. He had also strengthened and centralized the GTUC, giving himself additional power and influence. Now, however, the labor leader was deposed. Kaminker believed Tettegah had become little more than a "traveling salesman of the commodity labeled AATUF—another form of Nkrumah's African Personality prescription."

Kaminker's presence and rhetoric at the GTUC's 1962 convention belied the shaky status of the Histadrut and its allies in Ghana. Kaminker still served as an adviser, but no longer for Tettegah. The former GTUC General Secretary had been "banished" to the union's African Affairs department.[527] S. Magnus-George replaced Tettegah, moving from Deputy Acting Secretary to the union's head. Kaminker believed his position with Magnus-George was "quite secure," but the new GTUC General Secretary's status was not as certain. Ghanaian state-labor relations had not improved; in fact, they were continuing to devolve. "Since a strike or demonstration is considered in the official circles as a plot to overthrow the regime rather than a result of real problems unsolved, the strong arm and threats are resorted to," Kaminker wrote.

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[527] Ben Kaminker to Yehudit Simhoni, 1 June 1962, PLI, IV 219A 83.

Kaminker saw his time and usefulness in Ghana winding down, and speculated that, despite

GTUC requests that he remain, he would return to Israel after one more year.

Two months later, however, Kaminker was asked to leave. This time, even he was caught

off guard and a bit shocked. During the preceding weeks, every time Kaminker had drafted a

report for his Histadrut higher-ups, he had to quickly scrap it and start over. "You must by now

be utterly confused and confounded by the contradictory letters from [the] GTUC and its

departments you have had lately about me," he wrote. "The truth is that we were also taken by

surprise."[528]

Kaminker tried to explain. He had initially been instructed by Moshe Bitan to ride out the

chaotic and unpredictable events. "However distasteful we may have felt objectively about the

meaning of the changes in terms of trade unionism," Bitan advised Kaminker to now assist the

"new horse," Magnus-George. The old horse, however, had not yet given up. Tettegah was in

charge of the GTUC's foreign affairs, while Magnus-George ran domestic policies. The two

leaders engaged in a power struggle, "each a sworn enemy and detractor of the other." Tettegah

was also not ready to give up his direct connection to the Histadrut or his Israeli adviser,

Kaminker. He contended that Magnus-George had never asked for the Israeli's assistance, and

held that Kaminker had been sent to advise Tettegah personally, not just any GTUC official.

Ultimately, however, it was Tettegah who suggested Kaminker leave Ghana.[529] He was

ashamed that an esteemed guest was forced to witness the GTUC's "washing of dirty linen" and

did not want to involve "our friends the Histadrut" in the unpleasantness. Tettegah also did not

want the Histadrut to support the direction in which Magnus-George was trying to take the

GTUC. He claimed that the Executive Board had never consented to the new General Secretary's

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[528] Ben Kaminker to Yehudit Simhoni, 7 August 1962, PLI, IV 219A 83.
[529] John Tettegah to Ben Kaminker, 30 August 1962, PLI, IV 219A 20B.

"productivity program" and that, by assisting its implementation, Kaminker would become involved in a bitter internal battle. Israel and the Histadrut's earliest and closest African ally, and the first African labor union to completely remodel itself in the Histadrut's image, now seemed to be collapsing. As he prepared to depart Ghana, Kaminker lamented, "The poor GTUC is a center of confusion, intrigue, inaction, and contradiction."

Months after Kaminker was asked to leave Ghana, the All-African People's Solidarity Conference in Tanganyika issued its denunciations of Israel in February 1963. Unlike in 1961, when Botsio and Gbedemah quickly refuted the Casablanca declarations, there were no longer Ghanaian labor leaders of any real stature to reject the statement. Tettegah and Magnus-George may have both still wanted Histadrut advice and support, but they dared not rock the boat that Nkrumah and the CPP clearly captained.

African Labor and the Desire "to Be Able to Do"

The Histadrut still held particular appeal for many new African nations' leaders for one primary reason: development. Following Meir's visit and Kenya's independence in 1963, Mboya and other labor and political leaders desired additional partnership programs with the Histadrut. Their initial purpose, political independence, had been achieved. Now they worked toward economic independence, national self-sufficiency, and improving African peoples' quality of life. Israel's African admirers, like Mboya, believed that having their own Histadrut-style institutions—in construction, agriculture, youth organizations, and co-operative movements— would enable them to achieve "jet-propelled" development and accomplish the next stage in the African struggle.

The drive for rapid development complicated many African labor leaders' devotion to free trade unionism. Mboya is an illustrative example. After Kenya's independence, Mboya was

still one of Africa's staunchest supporters of free trade unionism. But he slowly compromised many of its orthodoxies in service to state-building and development. Like many African trade union leaders, Mboya decided government and labor needed to partner more closely to build the nation and jump-start the economy. His professional trajectory embodied this. After Kenyan independence, Mboya was elected to Parliament and appointed Minister for Economic Planning and Development. The KFL leader now found himself standing simultaneously in the spheres of government and labor.

The purest adherents of free trade unionism would have seen this as a clear conflict of interest and violation of principles. Most African leaders, however, did not. African workers' interests, they argued, were inherently intertwined with those of their new nations; as the nation modernized, its economy would rapidly improve and its citizens—organized or not—would all reap the benefits. Writing to the Histadrut General Secretary Aharon Becker, Mboya explained: "We are now working hard for stability and development."[530] For the time being, these new nations might require labor to make sacrifices for the national good.

Mboya's rhetoric and new positions were a natural outcome of his long-held views on African development, labor, and politics. Since the late 1950s, he had championed free trade unionism but also emphasized the need for labor's close cooperation with the state in nation-building and development. Mboya had articulated this vision in articles he wrote for U.S. audiences in 1959 and 1960. In a 1959 article for *Time* magazine, he argued that "the African Revolution" was "primarily…an economic revolution." Africa was now "awake to the need" for a more diversified economy and "speedier industrialization."[531] The African people desperately needed to invest in and develop education systems, healthcare, technical training, and "general

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[530] Tom Mboya to Aharon Becker, 7 February 1964, PLI, IV 291A 127B.
[531] Tom Mboya, "The African Revolution," *Time*, 1959.

community development." African labor movements had helped drive independence movements. They were now called to join the struggle for development.

In January 1960, Mboya wrote again on this topic, this time for the AFL-CIO's *Free Trade Union News*.[532] The ways in which he tried to navigate labor-state cooperation in nation-building illustrate how this was often an exercise in threading a needle. On the one hand, Mboya reaffirmed his belief African nations needed free trade unions to help preserve democracy. "It is absolutely vital," he wrote, "that [unions] should retain their own freedom of action" and "the first job" of trade unions was "to fight on the industrial front for improved wages and conditions for the workers whom they represent." Yet on the other hand, Mboya believed the imperatives of nation-building and development required much more from trade unions. Labor's first priority may have been wages and working conditions, but in "newly developing countries," he argued, they "cannot confine their role to that." African labor unions had to partner with the state in drafting and implementing "economic and social development plans." Labor would have a stake in the game, and they would also ensure these plans were prepared "in a way that is in the interest of all people." Workers' living standards, he asserted, would only improve if the nation's economy and national income did likewise. Mboya's position in 1964 as both labor leader and government minister was an embodiment of this vision.

By 1964, Mboya's vision was quite common among African labor and political leaders, including other prominent free trade union advocates. That year, Clement Lubembe and Michael Kamaliza both articulated an increasingly blurred relationship between labor and state. Lubembe was both ideologically and professionally parallel to Mboya. He had, in fact, risen through the KFL's ranks to replace Mboya as general secretary. After independence, Lubembe also joined

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[532] Tom Mboya, "Free Labor and Democracy," *Free Trade Union News*, PLI, IV 219A 48.

Mboya in Kenya's Parliament. In April 1964, Lubembe issued his own call for labor to "shift its objectives and its emphasis" and join the causes of nation-building and development.[533] Africa's political struggle, he argued, was now over. Africans now faced economic challenges. Like Mboya, Lubembe believed unions' interests and roles needed to go well beyond the shop floor; they should be the driving force for nation-building and modernization. He envisioned African labor as the cultivator of national identity, citizenship, and a more modernized African culture. "Our unions can and should play a key part in the training of our people to become better citizens, he wrote." They could "go a long way towards breaking down tribalism in our society as a whole."

Lubembe, like Mboya, was not unaware of the tenuous line between his professed free trade union principles and a complete blurring of state and labor. He too tried to thread this needle. Lubembe admitted that the KFL had ostensibly given up some of its freedoms in service to the state. They had "recognized the need to cooperate with [the] government in stabilizing our economy," he explained, and signed a tripartite agreement including a one-year moratorium on "various union prerogatives," such as wages negotiations. However, Lumembe assured readers, and perhaps himself, that these moves had not precluded the KFL "from spearheading or taking the initiative in rapidly guiding and leading its membership in the goal of African Socialism and developing a classless society."

Michael Kamaliza, another free trade union champion and U.S. labor ally, articulated a similar vision for Tanzanian labor and state relations. He too had also risen through labor's ranks, serving as the TFL general secretary. Kamaliza, like Mboya and Lubembe, transitioned

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[533] Clement Lubembe, "Trade Unions and Nation Building," *East Africa Journal*, April 1964, 19-21.

into government after Tanzanian independence. When he delivered a speech on "Tanganyika's View of Labor's Role" in early 1964, Kamaliza had become the nation's first Labor Minister.[534]

Kamaliza believed that in developing nations, like Tanzania, labor's priorities were threefold: to benefit the individual, industry, and the nation. He believed labor could address all three of these goals by enlisting itself in the causes of nation-building and development. Like Lubembe, Kamaliza argued that African labor partner with the state and employers "in planning and developing plans for national development." He also advocated that African labor continue the trend of unions' centralization and affiliation with the state. Rifts within trade unions and the creation of splinter groups only enabled employers' "unfair exploitation" and allowed "ambitious union leaders" to battle against one another for power at workers' expense.

In early 1964, Kamaliza helped the new government establish the National Union of Tanzanian Workers (NUTA), the TFL's replacement and the nation's only legally recognized trade union. Kamaliza believed NUTA's unified structure and its dues "check off" system would enable it to expand the scope of labor's operations and contributions to national development. "Through its activities," Kamaliza wrote, "the Tanganyika trade union movement will thus become, in essence, an employer." NUTA and its 250,000 members would "be geared as instruments of national development and social progress." Kamaliza believed this was in the larger interests of Tanzania's workers. It was also certainly in the interests of Tanzania's new government and its ruling political party, TANU. The Tanzanian government now had the power to appoint trade union leaders, and NUTA was required to follow the state's lead in national planning and implementing TANU policies. Additionally, it had "been deemed desirable" to

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[534] Michael Kamaliza, "Tanganyika's View of Labor's Role," *East Africa Journal*, November 1964, 9-16 (the article is a reprint of a speech Kamaliza delivered).

curtail NUTA workers' right to strike or employers' to lock them out. The NUTA Act provided a system of compulsory arbitration.

Such a partnership between party, state, and labor certainly promised stability. But it also called into question workers' freedoms and seemed to indicate Kamaliza had abandoned pretenses to free trade unionism. Kamaliza, like Lubembe and Mboya, was cognizant of the dangers inherent in this blurry partnership to the interests of African workers. One of the government's "most difficult tasks" in a developing nation, he noted, "is to balance the legitimate aspirations of the wage earners against the conflicting needs of the economy."[535] He believed Tanzania's government and NUTA, despite their unification, still preserved that balance. NUTA's subservience to state and nation-building imperatives "does not mean the end of democracy in [the labor] movement," he argued. The government, not the labor unions themselves, would protect workers' voices at the state level or on the factory floor.

Mboya, Lubembe, and Kamaliza all illustrated the direction in which much of the African continent was trending. As a second wave of countries attained independence in the early-to-mid-1960s (particularly Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda), political and government leaders encouraged or coerced African labor movements to reconceptualize their role and shift from a militant, activist, vanguard element to a submissive partner. Many African labor leaders were already on the same page. Mboya, Lubembe, Kamaliza and others ascended the ranks of African labor but, post-independence, they were elected to parliaments and appointed to prominent government positions. They did not see a conflict of interest. As illustrated in their writing, to one degree or another they saw labor and state's interests and plights as intimately intertwined.

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[535] Ibid., 13.

According to African political scientist Opoku Agyeman, new African governments and ruling political parties, especially after the 1961 Sekondi-Takoradi strike in Ghana, wanted to turn labor from engagement to demobilization—from revolutionary purposes to protecting new leaders' privilege and power.[536] Perhaps a more accurate term is "remobilization" or "repurpose." New African governments wanted to repurpose trade unions from independence agitators to drivers of development. By 1964, even the foremost African champions of free trade unionism agreed, to varying degrees, that a partnership between state and labor was imperative. Aware of this symbiosis's inherent dangers, they pressed ahead. It was now left to their U.S., European, and Israeli allies to decide which iterations of this model were a bridge too far to support and to observe whether such a balance between state and labor could truly be found.

Some of U.S. labor's most attentive observers believed African socialism and the relationship between state and labor had already gone too far. Jay Lovestone was one. In January 1964, he lamented the status of African politics and labor in a letter to Dennis Flinn of the U.S. embassy in Uganda. Lovestone wrote, "I only wish so-called African socialism were only a vague will-o-the-wisp."[537] Instead, he believed it was "a far more sinister instrument in the hands of some individuals and a magnetic catch-all for too many people to whom it means anything and everything." Much like "neutralism" and "non-alignment," Lovestone did not believe there were grey areas and nuance in the Cold War era. There had to be something, some hidden motivation or rationale, behind African socialists' methods and ideas. The subsuming of labor to state and party, in Lovestone's view, were hard evidence of African socialism's potential "sinister nature."

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[536] Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism*, 207.
[537] Jay Lovestone to Dennis A. Flinn, U.S. Embassy Kampala, 17 January 1964, GMA, RG18-003, Country Files: Tanzania, Box 13, Folder 19.

Others, like Maida Springer, were far more tolerant of these less than ideal methods for African development and nation-building. "The desire 'to be able to do' is the most important motivation in Africa today," Springer reminded Lovestone.[538] U.S. labor had to stay the course and play a long game that "transcends political developments and momentary instabilities of government." Springer had always been more sympathetic to the African perspective than Lovestone or U.S. labor's more hardline and devout cold warriors. She was anticommunist, but was more interested in assisting African independence (and now development) than waging war against communism. Springer was an adherent of free trade unionism, but she, like many of her African counterparts, was willing to tolerate violations of its principles for the larger goals of African autonomy and development.

Springer argued the case for Africa as an exception to U.S. labor's model and free trade unionism's rules. "In formulating a policy which will guide our activities in Africa," she told Lovestone, "we must recognize that traditional trade unionism—recruiting the unorganized, collective bargaining, union recognition, workers' education, and the like—for a time may play a limited role." African unions, she noted, served less than 5% of the population. If they appeared to place their own interests above those of the nation's other 95%, they threatened to become an antagonistic, self-interested clique. With these numbers, Springer argued, "the classical trade union organization and techniques tend to come into conflict with the government of the day." Traditional trade union demands might need to be, for a time, subordinated to desires and interests of the nations' other 95%.

Springer recognized the dangers inherent in this line of thinking, but she weighed it against the challenges of the U.S.'s African allies and landed mostly on their side. Springer

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[538] Maida Springer to Jay Lovestone, 17 February 1964, GMA, RG 18-003, Jay Lovestone Papers, New York Office, Subject Files: Maida Springer, Box 60, Folder 26.

acknowledged that African unions' greatest threat was preserving their right of freedom or association. But she also acceded, "Perhaps we have not always realized the odds against which [African leaders] must work to build a functioning and developing social, political system." Newly independent governments had to prioritize "the need for rapid and intensive economic development," and this required labor's close cooperation "to the point of subservience in some cases to this priority goal." Weighing these factors, U.S. labor had to make a decision about its priorities and response. Springer posed the question: "How can we best function without sacrificing what we believe to be the fundamental objectives of the labor movement?"

Springer seemed to advocate meeting African governments and labor movements at least halfway. The AFL-CIO should "voice our concern," she argued, "but as friends we should be aware of the economic stagnation and unemployment which is enveloping them." Springer suggested that U.S. labor and African labor and political leaders find common ground. "Can we not," she asked Lovestone, "as a legitimate trade union activity, expand our work to include the broader aspects of the trade union and country's needs?" Springer suggested, for example, industrial skills training and worker housing projects. In effect, Springer suggested assisting African trade unions in a manner that extended well beyond U.S. labor unions' purview, into the realms of nation-building and development. It was far more comparable to the Histadrut model than the bread-and-butter style of Springer's home federation, the AFL-CIO. In doing this, Springer toed her own careful line between supporting African leaders in their decision to deviate from the West's free trade union principles and compromising U.S. labor's original mission in the developing world.

Springer was not alone among U.S. labor's foremost Africanists in her suggestions. George McCray and Irving Brown, for example, recognized that African labor's aims and needs

went far beyond the traditional bounds of U.S. trade unionism. They too accepted a model in which African labor and state partnered in development. McCray had by now long-envisioned a "Marshall Plan for Africa," in which the U.S. government partnered with African states, labor unions, and U.S. labor to plan regional development projects in areas such as: irrigation, mining, agriculture, trade union organization, processing and manufacturing.[539]

By 1964-1965, Brown articulated a position echoing Springer's nearly verbatim. Most African nations had, by then, achieved political independence. The "more and more important" struggle, Brown observed, became economic in nature, under the purview of "nation-building." Brown, like Springer, recognized that this "new economic chapter" in Africa affected the needs and very "nature of the African trade unions, their organization, their role in the nation and their relationship to the outside world." In an early 1965 memo he drafted on U.S. labor's African American Labor Center (AALC), Brown asserted, "There is a need for something more than the traditional types of trade union solidarity to help in [African] organization and education. The needs go beyond the traditional limits of trade unions and must be supplemented by new measures and means."[540]

After their lengthy tour of Africa and Israel, UAW leaders came to similar conclusions. In June 1964, Lewis Carliner delivered a presentation on "Labor and Education for Development." Carliner perceived a "crisis in trade union leadership" around the globe. The ICFTU was "intransigent and unmindful of trade union and political developments in Africa." Its stubborn inactivity was "creating hostility with the new nations of Africa." Thanks to the UAW's time on the ground in Africa, and its studies of the Histadrut and its Afro-Asian Institute,

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[539] George McCray to Mike Ross, 14 August 1960, GMA, RG18-003, Country Files: Uganda, Box 13, Folder 18.
[540] Irving Brown, "AALC," 10 February 1965, GMA, RG18-003, Jay Lovestone Files, New York Office, Subject Files: AALC, Box 2, Folder 10.

Carliner was confident U.S. labor did not have to make the same mistakes. Like Brown and Springer, he recognized that "our type of trade union education and methods in Africa, based on a wage, is not needed or applicable." African labor and politics required something beyond these traditional boundaries.

Developing their own Decline?

By 1964, U.S. labor's most influential Africanists decided to play the long game rather than stubbornly clinging to ideological purity and U.S. particularism. To varying degrees, they were willing to tolerate deviations from the free trade union model and the "traditional" limits of labor. They believed the African context necessitated its own particular responses, including closer government-labor relations and trade unions' enlistment in the causes of nation-building and development. Fortunately, they believed Israel and the Histadrut demonstrated an acceptable and successful iteration of this formula that would improve workers' lives and material well-being, protect democracy, and perhaps help U.S. labor attain something close to Israel's "special status" in Africa.

However, as David Hacohen and Ben Kaminker observed, even the Histadrut was balanced on a razor's edge in Africa. The following chapter will explain this in more detail, but the Histadrut and Israel's labor-development model were in an increasingly tenuous position in Africa for a number of reasons, international and Africa-specific. Egypt's efforts to gain influence and undercut Israel's African relations were starting to pay dividends. Nasser offered African independence leaders diplomatic protection and support in Cairo, and by 1962 activists from at least 15 African countries had responded. Egypt's "Voice of Cairo" radio programs, first broadcast in 1953, reached across East and Central Africa by the early 1960s, including a slate of

programs in Swahili.[541] As Egypt and other Arab nations in North Africa cut into Israel's sub-

Saharan influence, African labor and political leaders became less vocal defenders of or partners

with Israel and the Histadrut.

Additionally, some African nations began to either discover that Israel's labor-

development model was not so reproducible or they lost much of its nuance in translation.

Israelis' proud examples in agricultural development, the kibbutzim and moshavim, for example,

obscured the fact that Israel began statehood with a largely literate and more relatively skilled

workforce. This was a stark contrast to most African nations' initially subsistence-based,

agricultural societies. In Israel, organized labor comprised the majority of the country's

population. For a time, labor and state seemed to share the same interests and goals. By contrast,

when most African nations achieved independence, organized labor was a powerful but largely

unrepresentative domestic constituency. When nations like Nigeria and Kenya put the Israeli

labor-development model into practice, they were often disappointed with the results.[542]

Additionally, much of the Histadrut's organizational nuance was lost on its African

imitators. The Histadrut was "one big union," but its leaders were elected from a variety of

different political parties. Though Mapai generally dominated these elections, it still had to

compromise with and pay attention to the interests of its rivals, like Mapam. In African states

like Ghana, however, the CPP was the only game in town. With only one labor union and one

real functioning political party, the Histadrut model translated into something far from free trade

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[541] James Brennan, "Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953-64," 5.

[542] One example of this was the failure of the KFL-Histadrut created co-operative and wholesale society, Kenbir Trading Company. The Histadrut and KFL agreed to create Kenbir in August 1962. Kenyan traders and farmers, however, opposed Kenbir. Unlike in Israel, Kenyan farmers and traders were not typically affiliated with the Kenyan labor federation, and they saw Kenbir as a dangerous competitor that would drive them out of business. Only two Kenbir shops opened. In 1964, the KFL ended the program ("KFL 'Pilot' Co-op is Closed," *Daily Nation*, Nairobi, 22 July 1964, PLI, IV 219A 127B).

union ideals. Mboya, Lubembe, Kamaliza and others recognized the risks involved. But for the causes of nation-building and African development, they were willing to gamble.

Ironically, U.S. labor leaders' willingness to deviate from free trade union orthodoxies and encourage their allies to commit labor to nation-building and development may have helped undermine their original mission and long term position in Africa. African governments would increasingly use the imperatives of development and nation-building to justify additional control over trade unions. Former labor leaders like Mboya and Kamaliza made decisions and created policies that favored state interests over the specific needs and concerns of labor. Once the spearheads of African independence and agency, labor unions were slowly becoming a tool of the state.

Chapter 6:

Things Fall Apart, States Come Together

On September 4, 1965, the Histadrut's U.S. representative, Ben-Zion Ilan, wrote a farewell letter to Jay Lovestone. Ilan was leaving his post. He informed his American friend and ally, "I have thrown in my lot with the Mapai insurgents. I shall not be active in the Histadrut election which will take place on September 19, but I shall devote one month to electioneering during the parliamentary campaign."[543] A rift that had been developing within Israel's predominant labor party (Mapai) for several years had reached its breaking point. In 1965, a splinter group—led by former Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and supported by Shimon Peres, Moshe Dayan, and other *Tseirim* (literally, "young ones")—left Mapai to form a new party, Rafi (Israeli Workers List). Ben-Zion Ilan had decided to join this labor party insurgency.

Ilan's farewell letter is but a small window into the larger developments unraveling much of what the U.S.-Israeli "special relationship" had built. Mapai, the Histadrut, and the U.S. trade union movement had been embattled for various reasons since the 1950s. Things reached a tipping point in 1965-66, fracturing labor in the U.S., Israel, and Africa. Israeli and U.S. labor's efforts in Africa began screeching to a halt. While labor had once been at the forefront of African independence, politics, and national-development, things dramatically changed during the middle years of the "Decade of Development." Many African nations experienced the unfortunate advance of military coups, one-party rule, and the overall deterioration of African democracy. Labor unions were typically the first to be subdued by these authoritarian regimes. U.S. and

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[543] Ben-Zion Ilan to Jay Lovestone, 4 September 1965, GMA, RG 18-001, Country Files: Israel—Including Histadrut, Box 10, Folder 12.

Israeli labor unions, which had themselves been at the forefront of their nations' outreach to Africa, now found they too were forced to the sidelines. U.S. and Israeli labor's advocates for democratic, free trade union movements had little in common with Africa's new wave of military strongmen and autocratic regimes.

While U.S. and Israeli labor fractured at home and lost much of their influence abroad, states ascended. The U.S. and Israeli governments were much more willing and capable of dealing with military dictators and authoritarian regimes. Government officials reconfigured the channels through which U.S.-Israeli and Western-African relations operated. African development and democracy seemed to have fallen short of their lofty expectations, and African governments became more concerned with consolidating their power than developing their societies, economies, and political systems in ways that reached the broadest segments of their populations. They wanted arms, military training, and sufficient financial resources to keep their pockets lined and their populations in check. In response, U.S. and Israeli governments curtailed plans for massive, civilian-based development projects and focused on maintaining a few strategic areas of influence and allies. Ambitious and idealistic initiatives like the Peace Corps were overshadowed by military contracts. American and Israeli trade unions, once heralded as the keys to Africa by figures such as vice president Richard Nixon, found themselves sidelined by U.S. and Israeli defense departments.

At the same time, Ilan's letter to Lovestone illustrates the ties that had bound, and would continue to bind, American trade unions and the Histadrut: the original U.S.-Israeli "special relationship." Since the 1920s, trade unionists in the U.S. and Jewish Palestine (later Israel) shared similar visions, partnered in the Middle East and Africa, and even developed close personal relationships that united their movements. Lovestone and Ilan's friendship embodied

this. "May I say now Jay," Ilan wrote, "how I appreciated and enjoyed our friendship and cooperation. I relished all our meetings—both for their personal and intellectual stimulation and for the helping hand you always extended in critical moments." Ilan and Lovestone, like their respective trade union movements, cast the same vision for international labor. Ilan believed he and his American counterpart shared "a basic rapport in our awareness of the essence of Communism and its long-range strategy, in our appreciate [sic] of trends manifest in the Middle East, and in the consciousness of the role of Israel and the Histadrut can play within the region and within the broader international scene." Ben-Zion Ilan may have been leaving his post as the Histadrut's U.S. representative, but he and Lovestone had no doubt that the foundations for U.S. and Israeli labor's special relationship were strong enough to survive Israel's political turmoil, let alone the departure of an individual official.

In the second half of the 1960s, many of the things U.S. and Israeli labor had built seemed to fall apart. Yet, at least one thing remained. Participants in U.S.-Israeli labor's special relationship were able to take some solace, because during the late 1960s they finally witnessed their "bond of wage earners" translate into the state-centered, U.S.-Israeli "special relationship" that would last for decades.

Trouble at Home: U.S. and Israeli Labor, 1960-65

Ben-Zion Ilan's departure and the splintering of Israel's labor party had been a long time coming. Mapai's first decade and a half of leading both state and labor came at a price. Like many of its Afro-Asian counterparts, Mapai had to navigate the complicated transition from independence movement to governing party. Along with statehood came myriad challenges that exposed and exacerbated Mapai' internal rifts. The party debated how to deal with strained financial budgets, massive immigration, perpetual national security threats, and constant political

challenges from its rivals. Mapai was also in the awkward position of governing the state and leading the nation's labor federation. Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, party leaders and officials tried to reconcile the interests of Israeli labor with the overriding imperatives of state-building and national development. Over this period, they often made decisions serving the latter at a cost to the former. By the early 1960s, many Israeli workers perceived that the labor party and Israel's labor federation were no longer choosing the correct side. As Israeli labor and political leaders fretted about trends in Africa, they became consumed by their own. Even the model "Workers' State" had difficulties reconciling the tensions between trade unionism and the modern nation-state.

By the early 1960s, Mapai was also experiencing a generational transition in party leadership. The party's original cadre of leaders, like Ben-Gurion, neared the end of their careers and competing factions began battling over who would claim their mantle. A second generation of Mapai leaders championed Ben-Gurion's turn toward state-centric, not labor, ideology. This new iteration of Tseirim saw themselves as realistic and pragmatic "activists" or "doers," technocrats who stood above their elders' socialist orthodoxies and petty class-based interests.[544] The Tseirim had largely risen through the military's ranks, not through the Histadrut or the Mapai party's internal bureaucracies. After the wars of 1948 and 1956, as well as smaller scale operations and cross-border reprisals, Tseirim like Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres had already made names for themselves.[545] By the 1960s, national security was central to Israeli politics and

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[544] Cohen, *Zion and State*, 220.

[545] Yoram Peri wrote an illuminating study of civil-military relations in Israel and the transition that occurred from labor to military as Israel's primary vehicle for nation-building and "the most significant channel of mobility" in Israeli politics [Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots: Israeli Military in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 5]. Ben-Gurion was at the helm of this paradigm shift. By the late 1940s-1950s, he envisioned military service, not the labor movement, as the most valuable and effective instrument for molding Israelis' national identity and developing the state (45-48). He also used military appointments to try and shape Mapai's future leadership.

society; those who were most experienced and supposedly the most adept at military matters had

a powerful political lever to wield.

The "young ones" were therefore free to attack their rivals' primary support base—the

Histadrut—without seeming to undercut their own political influence. They repeatedly argued

that Golda Meir, Moshe Sharett, Pinchas Lavon, and other senior Mapai and Histadrut officials

were entrenched in labor, party, and government bureaucracies. The old guard supposedly

prioritized particularism—trade union interests and socialist orthodoxies—above the universal—

national interests and the Israeli people as a whole. These Tseirim represented the labor party and

helped run the labor federation, but they saw these entities primarily as means to assist the state.

Dayan attacked the Histadrut as a vested interest that encouraged economic inefficiency. He

called for wage freezes and the nationalization of additional Histadrut functions, like its Kupat

Holim healthcare system.[546] The Tseirim were devoted to the state, not a "workers' state." By

1960, Mapai and the Histadrut were already riven with a power struggle between the statist

Tseirim and the older, more ideologically dedicated guard of socialist leaders.[547]

Matters in Israeli labor and politics came to a head as the Tseirim and old guard battled

over power, influence, and the fate of Kupat Holim. Histadrut membership enabled Israelis'

access to Kupat Holim's vast array of clinics, hospitals, labs, rest homes, and other facilities. It

was an obvious attraction for joining the labor federation, and losing it would severely dent the

Histadrut's membership rolls, finances, and political clout. In 1960, Kupat Holim covered over

75% of the Israeli population. Since Mapai dominated the Histadrut, it was also apparent that

Kupat Holim was a political gift that kept on giving to the labor party. Ben-Gurion, Dayan, and

the Tseirim, however, wanted the system placed under government auspices. The old guard

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[546] Cohen, *Zion and State*, 222.
[547] Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots*, 74.

controlled the Histadrut and Mapai party institutions. The Tseirim held the most prominent

positions in the military and government. Placing Kupat Holim under the state's purview would

undercut the Tseirim's party rivals.[548]

Old guard leaders like the Histadrut's General Secretary Pinchas Lavon responded.

Lavon commented that Dayan, Peres, and other statist "technocrats" sounded more like General

Zionists (a non-socialist, centrist party) than Mapai members. They were unfit to lead the party

or labor, let alone jump over those like Lavon, who had served their time and slowly climbed

labor and party ranks. The Tseirim countered by arguing that the old guard was a dogmatic,

lethargic bureaucracy that knew much about theorizing and talking and little about "doing."

Dayan's rebuttal demonstrated the bitterness of this divide in Israeli labor and politics. He

responded to Lavon's comments with a biting portrayal of the old guard as office-dwellers and

bureaucratic ideologues. "The people who crawled with their rifles among the rocks of Israel for

the past twenty years," he argued, "know as much about their country's needs as those who have

spent their time sitting on the fifth floor of the [Histadrut] headquarters."[549] The relationship

between state and labor, ideology and material challenges, rent a damaging fault line within the

upper echelons of Israel's Labor party and trade union federation.

The old guard was at an inherent disadvantage in this internecine struggle, because even

they had ultimately committed labor to the primary causes of nation and development. During

Mapai's 1960s infighting, Lavon and his allies struggled to find a coherent ideological

framework in which the state did not ultimately take precedence over the role or interests of

labor. On one hand, they attacked statism and criticized Tseirim for ideological heresy. Lavon

warned that the "spread of the dangerous philosophy of 'statism' among certain circles in the

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[548] Cohen, *Zion and State*, 252-254.
[549] Ibid.

state" threatened to replace the free activities of voluntary bodies, like trade unions, with state-run entities and movements. On the other hand, the old guard assured their countrymen that the Histadrut was voluntarily adapting to the new post-statehood reality.[550] The labor federation had accepted the Israeli education system's nationalization, its defenders noted, which demonstrated the Histadrut's commitment to national, rather than narrow class interests. Apart from personal and positional rivalries, it became increasingly difficult to parse out the core differences between the Tseirim and the labor party's old guard. Accordingly, Israeli labor continued its drift toward demobilization and subservience to the state.

As Israel's labor movement cracked within its highest circles, it also began to suffer a major "crisis of confidence" from below. A growing number of Israeli workers believed the Histadrut and Mapai's loyalties lay more with the national interest and state development than those of the working class. The Histadrut's top leaders had, they observed, repeatedly proclaimed that the labor federation was not struggling for "class-based" interests but those of the Jewish State.[551] Many Israeli workers no longer trusted their labor party and trade union leaders to address the nation's expanding economic inequalities. They decided to act on their own. Major strikes broke out in 1956 and 1957, and workers across the country launched series of "wildcat" strikes in 1962. The Histadrut did not authorize or support any of these strikes. By 1966, 20% of Israeli workers said strikes broke out in their shops despite Histadrut opposition. Nearly half of them, 47%, said it was a good thing for workers to act without Histadrut approval. More alarming for Histadrut leaders, surveys that same year showed that a majority of Histadrut members said they believed the rank and file did not have any influence over the Histadrut's central authority.

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[550] Ibid., 254.
[551] Ibid., 253.

By the second half of the 1960s, Israeli labor came under increasing attack in the press, on the shop floor, in Mapai meetings, and in the Knesset. Ben-Gurion and his cadre of young insurgents portrayed the Histadrut as a special interest group, not a universal movement representing the workers and Israel's national identity. Israel's growing Mizrahi populations viewed Mapai and the Histadrut as little more than vehicles for Ashkenazi privilege, and too many of the labor movement's Ashkenazi members perceived labor as an ossified, entrenched bureaucratic elite.[552] After just a decade and a half of statehood, Israeli labor seemed to have demobilized and transformed into just another bureaucratic arm of the state.

While Histadrut and Israeli Foreign Ministry officials were touring Afro-Asian nations, touting Israel's example in bringing party, labor and state together, their movement and model were actually in a serious moment of crisis. The Histadrut and Israeli Foreign Ministry espoused a labor development model abroad, but were curtailing labor's role at home. While Israeli labor and government officials fretted about African labor and political trends, the Israeli labor movement exhibited some of the same characteristics. It increasingly became a statist movement, subordinating itself to the national interest and nationalizing many of its key institutions and functions. In short, Israeli labor pursued policies that helped subvert, rather than reproduce or strengthen, its own dominance. By the second half of the 1960s, Israeli labor's self-imposed subservience at home would be replicated in Israel's international relations. The state eclipsed labor in Africa and a new, state-centered U.S.-Israeli "special relationship" would emerge.

"The Decay of a Labor Union": U.S. Labor's Crisis of Confidence

In the early 1960s, Israel's main labor party and labor federation were not alone in experiencing internal divisions, weakening political power and influence, and a "crisis of

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[552] Mizrahi is a term for Jewish Israelis with Middle Eastern or North African lineage. Ashkenazim are Jewish Israelis with European descent.

confidence." Across the Atlantic, their U.S. trade union counterparts entered a turbulent, if not crippling, era as well. As in Israel, U.S. labor's challenges and decline derived from a combination of factors: dramatic economic changes, a rightward turn in domestic politics, and a growing perception of corrupt, entrenched, and self-interested "Big Labor." While the Histadrut and Mapai's public image and internal cohesion suffered from racial and ethnic divides, so too did the American labor movement. By the second half of the 1960s, these factors seriously destabilized and undercut U.S. labor's domestic and international power and influence.

Much like the Histadrut—though for different reasons—U.S. labor had trended toward bureaucratization and a growing distance between officials and the rank-and-file. Beginning in the late 1950s, many of U.S. labor's former allies and critics alike spoke of "Big Labor" that was firmly part of the "establishment." The U.S.'s major labor unions certainly became top-heavy. Especially after the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, U.S. labor unions had to navigate a growing array of unfriendly labor laws and political/employer challenges, including costly battles against "right-to-work" laws. They responded by hiring hordes of full-time officials, administrators, advisers, lobbyists, and technicians. As in Israel, a stratum of bureaucratic labor elite emerged, and they were increasing distant from the needs and interests of workers. By 1960, the average European union had a 1/2000 ratio of full-time union officials to rank-and-file workers. U.S. labor's ratio was 1/300.[553]

Along with caricatures of top-heavy, bureaucratic "Big Labor" came accusations that the U.S. trade union movement was becoming more insulated, self-interested, and even corrupt. During the late 1950s, a number of U.S. trade unions across the country were exposed for practices of nepotism, autocracy, and corruption. The issue reached public prominence in 1956,

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[553] Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, 142.

when a mafia hitman blinded labor journalist Victor Riesel with sulfuric acid. Riesel had been

reporting on union corruption in New York. The International Union of Operating Engineers

(IUOE)—the subject of Riesel's investigation—and its mafia ally, Johnny Dio, apparently

decided Riesel needed to be sent a message.

The attack on Riesel launched the topic of labor corruption to the front pages of U.S.

news and the top of Washington's political agenda. Investigators discovered that Dio and his

crime syndicate were linked to a much bigger fish than the IUOE; Dio had been assisting the

International Brotherhood of Teamsters' (IBT) Midwest Region leader, Jimmy Hoffa, in a vast

labor racketeering operation. The IBT was the nation's largest trade union and also perhaps the

most corrupt. As investigators revealed a growing web of mob ties and corruption, Congress

decided to act. In 1957, the Senate Committee on Government Operations and its chief legal

counsel, Robert F. Kennedy, launched an investigation. Led by Senator John McClellan (D-AR),

the newly formed "McClellan Committee" was comprised of seven legislators that all hailed

from "right-to-work" states. Not surprisingly, they jumped at the opportunity to uncover patterns

of crime and corruption in a number of unions and to wage an all-out assault on the labor

movement's political influence and public reputation.[554]

The McClellan hearings and the IBT case served as a wrecking ball to U.S. labor's public

image. Revelations of rampant corruption, crime, and union "bosses'" self-enrichment

undermined labor's claim that it was an efficacious movement for democracy, social progress,

and workers' rights. Anti-union politicians like Arizona Senator and 1964 presidential candidate

Barry Goldwater seized the moment and tried to drive a stake into the heart of the U.S. labor

movement. "Graft and corruption are symptoms of the illness that bests the labor movement, not

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[554] Ibid., 163.

the cause of it" Goldwater claimed. "The cause is the enormous economic and political power now concentrated in the hands of union leaders." A growing number of Americans seemed to agree. Just before the McClellan hearings in 1957, a Gallup poll surveyed Americans' perception of organized labor. An all-time high 76% of American viewed organized labor positively. By 1964-65, however, that number had already declined to 50%.[555]

By 1960, organized labor and its public image were not just under an anti-union, right wing assault. Left-wing activists, intellectuals, and college students criticized U.S. trade unions for abandoning their militancy and ideological principles. Labor unions' "pork chop solidarity"—the apparent focus on shop-centered, collective bargaining for wages and working conditions—was criticized as parochial and self-interested.[556] Unions were now at best a "liberal 'pressure group'" that simultaneously served as an agent of repression—it tamed workers and contained their attempts at insurgency. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, older leftwing intellectuals like Sidney Lens and young student radicals like the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and its leader, Tom Hayden, indicted unions for their failures in addressing poverty, international peace, and racial inequality.[557]

The Vietnam War and the civil rights movement served as cruxes for this criticism. On both fronts, labor's former left-wing allies assailed trade unions and their leaders for being part of the establishment and, thus, part of the problem. U.S. labor leaders like Reuther and Meany stood staunchly by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations while the war, and U.S. foreign policy in general, became more and more unpopular in liberal and left-wing circles—and

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[555] Ibid., 162-164.
[556] Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 29.
[557] Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, 158, 161.

increasingly from within labor's own ranks.[558] Meany and other AFL-CIO brass excoriated anti-war demonstrators, while the supposedly more progressive Walter Reuther remained publicly loyal to the administration and the war until the bitter end.[559]

Some AFL-CIO leaders went beyond vocal support for the government's unpopular foreign policies. In the 1960s, financial woes forced U.S. labor unions to increasingly rely on the state, particularly the CIA and State Department, to help them maintain any substantive presence abroad. The relationship was not new. Since the immediate aftermath of World War II, the CIA had covertly funded some of U.S. labor's international activities.[560] What was different by the 1960s was the scope and scale of this partnership. U.S. labor endeavored to ramp up its international activities at a time when its budgets were trending in the opposite direction. To create and sustain U.S. labor centers in Latin American (AIFLD) and Africa (AALC), American trade unions needed extraneous funds. The CIA and the State Department (through USAID) became the centers' main benefactors. They filled U.S. labor's foreign policy budget gaps here and elsewhere, even adding several millions on top.[561]

By the mid-1960s, American journalists uncovered this labor and state foreign policy collaboration. Reporters revealed a partnership in which hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars went from the CIA to the AFL-CIO for U.S. labor's activities in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. Meany and ILGWU President David Dubinsky denied the

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[558] Reuther stood publicly by these administrations and the war. In private company, he exhibited a much more ambivalent position, if not outright criticism of the Vietnam War (Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 43). John Bennett Sears has demonstrated the fact that U.S. labor leader's public pronouncements and unions' convention resolution did not necessarily match their members' views. Labor's "consensus" on the Vietnam War, and even the U.S.'s waging of the Cold War, were much more contested (Sears, "Peace Work: The Antiwar Tradition in American Labor from the Cold War to the Iraq War," *Diplomatic History* 34 (4), September 2010.
[559] Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, 188.
[560] David Langley, "The Colonization of the International Trade Union Movement," in *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, edited by Burton Hall (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Books, 1972), 307.
[561] Ibid.

charges, but scholars slowly corroborated and further connected the dots between the CIA, U.S.

foreign policy, and U.S.'s labor anti-communist crusade. These revelations enhanced accusations

that the U.S. trade union movement was a tool of American imperialism and that it was fully part

of the establishment. Rather than focusing on the well-being of American workers, labor was

abetting the American government's repression of workers across the world. These revelations

appeared to validate charges from U.S. labor's international detractors, like John Tettegah and

the AATUF. Most subtly—but perhaps most significantly—the AFL-CIO's international

collaboration with the U.S. government seriously undermined its championing of "free" trade

unionism.

"A Broad Pattern of Racial Discrimination and Segregation": U.S. Labor and Race

American race relations presented another major issue that chipped away at U.S. labor's

power, influence, and internal cohesion. U.S. trade unions' attempts to navigate or ignore

minority workers' demands for equality exposed wide chasms that existed between avowed

principles and practice. Even the ILGWU and the UAW, the unions most outspoken in support

of civil rights, became enmeshed in controversy by the early 1960s, calling their progressive

reputations into question and turning labor and its erstwhile allies against one another. More than

revelations of corruption and ideological criticisms from the left, the U.S. labor movement's

struggle to address racial discrimination within its own ranks hobbled the movement's ability to

expand or even sustain its influence at home and abroad.

The AFL-CIO's difficulties dealing with racial discrimination were evident from the start

and exacerbated by many of its top-leaders' responses. In 1955, when the AFL and CIO

negotiated their merger, A. Philip Randolph introduced a resolution that would have prevented

the united federation from issuing charters to any union that discriminated against workers based

on race. It also would have banned unions that allowed "any racist" to serve in its national

leadership. Randolph had particular unions in mind. As head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car

Porters (BSCP), he was quite familiar with the AFL's racist railway brotherhoods. These unions

still maintained the color bar that had forced Randolph to create the BSCP in the first place.

During AFL-CIO merger meetings, Randolph also pointed out the hypocrisy of white union

leaders who denied union charters to communist or gangster-led unions while giving a blind eye

to those led by KKK members.[562] Randolph's 1955 resolutions went unheeded, but that did not

deter the labor and civil rights veteran from continuing to push the issue.

In 1959, Randolph again endeavored to root racial discrimination out of AFL-CIO

policies. In July, he organized a meeting of black trade unionists to prepare for the AFL-CIO's

upcoming annual convention. The group comprised 60 black trade union leaders who

represented over one million black workers. They decided that, they would introduce a resolution

at the AFL-CIO convention to expel any union with a membership color bar or those that did not

integrate their locals before June 1960.[563] Randolph introduced the resolutions at the September

1959 convention in San Francisco. They elicited an immediate backlash from some of the AFL-

CIO's white trade union leaders. "Who the hell appointed you as the guardian of all the Negroes

in America?" Meany responded.[564] Meany and other white leaders' defensive, knee-jerk

reactions were a sign of major turmoil ahead.

Randolph and other African American trade unionists decided they could not change the

AFL-CIO strictly from within. In December Randolph, Maida Springer, and numerous other

black labor leaders met in Cleveland where they decided to build an organization dedicated to

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[562] William Jones, *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 124-125.
[563] Ibid., 130.
[564] Ibid., 131.

African American workers. The following year, in 1960, 1,500 black trade unionists formed the

Negro American Labor Council (NALC). The NALC organized a two-day Workshop and

Institute on Race Bias and Trade Unions, Industry and Government in Washington, D.C. They

invited workers to testify about union and employer discrimination.[565] Randolph himself wrote a

detailed account of segregation and discrimination among AFL-CIO affiliates, revealing racial

discrimination in training and promotional opportunities, job protection, and wages.[566]

Once again, Meany and some of the AFL-CIO's white leadership responded with

hostility. Meany fired Theodore Brown, who served as both the AFL-CIO's Civil Rights

Department's assistant director and secretary of the NALC. Brown's colleagues and supporters

immediately called for a march on the AFL-CIO's national headquarters. NALC Vice President

L. Joseph Overton called for a "national work stoppage" or a "mass mobilization" on the AFL-

CIO headquarters.[567] Others proposed suing the AFL-CIO under the Labor-Management and

Disclosure Act or the Landrum-Griffin Act (products of the McClellan Committee hearings).

Tensions could not have been higher between African American labor and civil rights

organizations and the AFL-CIO's white Executive Council.

Much like its Vietnam War position, U.S. labor's inability to address racial

discrimination rendered it vulnerable to criticism within and without. While Randolph and the

NALC primarily waged their struggle within the trade union movement, former allies and

organizations like the NAACP condemned U.S. labor's race relations and policies from without.

In 1960, the NAACP's Labor Department examined racial discrimination in AFL-CIO

[565] Philip F. Rubio, *There's Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 354.
[566] Jones, *The March on Washington*, 131-133.
[567] Ibid., 145.

apprenticeship and training programs. Their published findings were unflattering, especially for a labor federation that claimed to champion civil rights and support fair employment programs.

Meany's incensed response to the NAACP report turned the issue into an all-out, AFL-CIO/NAACP feud and a full-on public relations disaster. In March 1960, Meany wrote a defensive letter to NAACP director Roy Wilkins.[568] He believed the NAACP's report and concurrent demands were an unfair and unwarranted attack against an erstwhile ally. He told Wilkins it was "difficult to understand" why the NAACP's Labor Department did not enlist the Federation's cooperation, instead of using its findings "as a vehicle for an attack on organized labor." Meany believed the NAACP was specifically trying to undermine his leadership and labor movement.

The AFL-CIO/NAACP dispute and Meany's overblown reactions helped bring U.S. labor's racial problems to the general public. Meany could not let the matter rest. In June 1961, he ungracefully injected the subject into a speech he delivered before the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC). He told his audience that the black press was "almost solidly anti-union in dealing with its own employees" and was eager to attack the U.S. labor movement "at the slightest pretext."[569] The AFL-CIO president was apparently not content to feud with the nation's largest African American organization (NAACP). He now invited a quarrel with the African American press and its 18 million readers.

The Baltimore *Afro-American*, one of the nation's largest black newspapers, quickly responded. Chuck Stone, a former Tuskegee Airman and a prominent African-American columnist, had a field day with Meany's comments. "Degradation of the colored press," Stone

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[568] George Meany to Roy Wilkins, 21 March 1960, KCA, ILGWU, RG 5870.014, Box 18, Folder 1.
[569] Chuck Stone, "A Stone's Throw: Meany's Vicious Attack on Colored Community," *Afro-American*, 10 June 1961.

wrote in the *Afro-American*, "is one thing that can get into our emotional craw and sicken us."

But Meany had done more than "stick his fingers in his nose" at the black press. He had

"thumbed his nose at the entire colored community [and] colored leadership."

Meany took much of his frustrations out on the AFL-CIO's most prominent black leader,

Randolph. In 1961, Randolph continued his struggle against AFL-CIO unions' racial

discrimination. He presented to the Federation's Executive Council a report on the "widening

gulf between Negro and labor communities," and proposed the Federation enact stronger civil

rights policies.[570] Once again, Meany and the Executive Council "roared." At Meany's

suggestion, the council censured Randolph for "incredible assertions, false and gratuitous

statements, and unfair and untrue allegations." It was Randolph not them, they surrealistically

argued, who had widened "the gap that has developed between organized labor and the Negro

community."[571] Fittingly, the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks' president, part of a clique that

maintained segregated locals, prepared a motion to expel Randolph from the Executive Council.

The motion failed and Randolph remained in the council, but so too did the massive and growing

cancer of U.S. labor's racial discrimination.

The NAACP's Labor Department director, Herbert Hill, was the next to take aim at racial

inequalities within the U.S. labor movement. This time the target was more surprising: the

ILGWU. Hill's criticisms of the ILGWU stung U.S. labor leaders more than the NAACP's 1960

report. The ILGWU was supposed to be one of U.S. labor's most left-leaning, racially inclusive

unions. The fact that the ILGWU was under fire from Hill made it all the more exasperating for

U.S. labor leaders. Hill had been a labor organizer himself, working for the United Steelworkers

Union. He was a Brooklynite, a Jew, and a former member of the Socialist Workers Party. Hill's

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[570] Jones, *The March on Washington,* 146-147.
[571] Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism,* 163.

biography read like many ILGWU leaders', including its president, David Dubinsky. ILGWU

leaders thus saw Hill's crusade not only as unwarranted, but a betrayal.

Born in Brooklyn in 1924, Hill began volunteering with the NAACP in 1947. He became

the NAACP's labor director in 1951 and was quickly one of the organization's loudest voices

against racial discrimination in U.S. labor. Drawing from personal experience and intensive

research, Hill argued that many U.S. labor unions were plagued by "a broad pattern of racial

discrimination and segregation," by excluding African Americans, maintaining segregated local

unions, and having separate seniority lines by race.[572] In 1959, Hill told the *New York Post*:

> "The real corruption of the American labor movement is not the fast-truck boys or
> the racketeers who have worked their way in. The real corruption is moral. It's
> when unions say they're against discrimination and then go right on keeping
> Negroes out of membership and out of jobs. There's your real dry rot."[573]

In 1962, Hill identified the ILGWU as a prime perpetrator of these hypocritical practices. He

conducted an investigation into the status of nonwhite workers in the ILGWU's New York

unions and discovered that black and Puerto Rican workers were "the victims of a broad pattern

of racial discrimination and segregation."

There were "two faces of the ILGWU," Hill contended. "One is the public image of a

union fighting against sweatshops, bringing stability to the industry, securing educational and

recreational services for its members, building housing projects and generously contributing to

worthy causes."[574] This image, which was "carefully nurtured for many years by an extensive

and well-financed public relations campaign," belied a much less flattering reality. The "other

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[572] Herbert Hill, "The ILGWU Today: The Decay of a Labor Union," September 1962, in *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, 147-160.
[573] Steven Greenhouse, "Herbert Hill, a Voice against Discrimination, Dies at 80," *New York Times*, 21 August 2004.
[574] Hill, "The ILGWU Today," 147. Hill's testimony can also be found in Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey, eds., *Race Traitor* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 215-246.

face" of the ILGWU was a union "controlled by a rigid bureaucracy that long ago lost contact with its rank and file members." This bureaucracy was also highly unrepresentative of the working population. It had more in common ethnically and socially with its employers than with the workers it is supposed to represent, Hill argued.

Hill pointed to several of the ILGWU's New York locals to support his case. The New York Dress Joint Board, for example, practiced "a clear pattern of racial segregation." So too did locals 10, 60, and 89. They were all "lily-white." Even worse, Hill argued, black and Puerto Rican workers were largely limited to membership in two units: Local 22 and "the unit known as 60A, which is the 'Jim Crow' auxiliary of Local 60." These workers were limited to jobs as shipping clerks, push boys, and delivery men. Though it had twice the membership of Local 60, the ILGWU would not charter 60A as a separate local. Instead, Local 60's manager oversaw the Puerto Rican and black workers' auxiliary unit. From Hill's perspective, this constituted a separate and also unequal status.[575]

Hill's criticisms of Local 10 and the ILGWU's central leadership cut the deepest and elicited U.S. labor leaders' most exasperated reactions. "Through a variety of devices," Hill reported, "the leadership of Local 10 prevents Negroes and Puerto Ricans from securing membership in this desirable craft (cutting)."[576] Over the years, African Americans had tried to join the local but were "almost without exception" denied membership "upon a variety of pretexts." According to Hill, Local 10 leaders used mechanisms like administering training programs to "prevent the admission of nonwhite workers" into their union. The local decided who received job training opportunities, which would thus lead to jobs and union membership.

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[575] Ibid., 148.
[576] Ibid., 149.

But there was "no objective criteria or established standards" by which someone was accepted or rejected admission.

Looking at the ILGWU and its central leadership as a whole, Hill was just as condemning. The voices of the ILGWU's 130,000 nonwhite workers—almost a third of its membership—were "throttled." They were denied a voice in the ILGWU's conventions and General Executive Board (GEB). In 1962, the 23-member GEB had zero African American or Puerto Rican representatives. Even worse, "the Dubinsky-controlled administration" had not "handpicked" a single black or Puerto Rican member to serve as a local manager. In conclusion, Hill depicted a union that had "nothing in common with [its] radical past." It was now "an elite club which seeks to preserve for itself the leading power positions…the local unions and the best jobs in the shops for those most closely identified with its own history and nostalgia."[577]

Hill's charges did not go unanswered. The ILGWU launched a public relations campaign, and union leaders authored rebuttals in liberal and left-wing magazines. They lobbied the NAACP to fire Hill, arguing that he was sabotaging the American trade union movement and driving a wedge between labor and the civil rights movement. ILGWU allies, like the American Jewish Committee (AJC), issued their own rebuttals. AJC director Harry Fleischman published a widely circulated document in November 1962 rhetorically titled, "Is the ILGWU Biased?"[578] The answer was an emphatic "no."

Gus Tyler, the ILGWU's Education Director, wrote one of the most detailed responses to Hill's charges. In December 1962, Tyler wrote a piece for *New Politics* magazine: "The Truth about the ILGWU."[579] He claimed Hill's testimony to Congress was nothing but "opinions,

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[577] Herbert Hill, "The ILGWU: Fact and Fiction," March 1963, in *Autocracy and Insurgency*, 176.
[578] Ibid., 174.
[579] Gus Tyler, "The Truth about the ILGWU," December 1962, in *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, 161-172.

conclusions, and characterizations." Tyler wrote that "the doors of the [ILGWU] are open to all workers, regardless of race, creed, or color."[580] He contended that Hill's charges were at once laughable and seriously damaging. On one hand, they were apparently so inaccurate that Tyler called them "trial by rumor and humor." At the same time, Tyler—much like Meany—claimed *Hill's charges* were "the basis" for a widening rift between the NAACP and "the progressive labor movement." The fault lay with U.S. labor's critics, not with any of its potential practices. The ILGWU had "for years been a force in [the] civil rights movement—and has been recognized as such," Tyler noted. Now they were subjected to an unfair, "anonymous smear."

Tyler exhibited the most extreme form of backlash that Hill faced. Because he was singling out a historically Jewish labor union, Hill (himself a Jew) was charged with anti-Semitism, a much more serious betrayal. Tyler wrote that Hill was practicing "the kind of smear used to characterize races, religions, the NAACP or the labor movement by references to some piece of gossip or embedded in jokes." Tyler closed with his most belligerent language, writing of Hill's campaign: "This is the lynch spirit."[581]

Labor, Black-Jewish Relations, and U.S.-Israeli Relations

The Hill-ILGWU controversy was emblematic of a number of trends that damaged U.S. labor's image and influence at home and abroad. Because of the specific unions, leaders, and communities involved, it also directly related to U.S. and Israeli labor's special relationship. The ILGWU, especially its New York unions like Local 10, was one of the most ardent supporters of Histadrut projects in Israel and the Afro-Asian world. The ILGWU central leadership and its locals provided a large proportion of the National Committee for Labor-Israel's (NCLI)

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[580] Ibid., 161-164.
[581] Ibid., 172.

leadership and membership rolls. The union and its affiliates had been a consistent financial and political supporter of the Histadrut since the 1930s.

The NAACP and Hill's charges subjected the ILGWU and its primarily Jewish leadership to intense scrutiny at a time when Jewish American and Israeli leaders worried about their relations with and image within the African American community. For decades, many African American and Jewish American leaders believed their communities shared a common bond forged through tragedy, suffering, and marginalization. Booker T. Washington drew these parallels in 1915. Speaking in Little Rock, Arkansas he asserted, "There is, perhaps, no race that has suffered so much, not so much in America as in some of the countries in Europe" as the Jewish people.[582] American Jews were present at the NAACP's founding in 1909, and two Jewish brothers, the Spingarns, served as its first directors.[583]

The Zionist movement, and later Israel and the Histadrut, had subsequently enjoyed many African American leaders' support. W.E.B. Du Bois was a vocal supporter for the Balfour Declaration. He believed it would benefit both Diaspora Jews and serve as an inspiration for African Americans. Du Bois imagined a parallel black Diaspora movement to carve out an independent central African state.[584] To Du Bois, "philo-Zionism" was part and parcel of his general sympathy for persecuted peoples' liberation struggles around the globe. Du Bois was not alone in his support for a Jewish state in Palestine. Paul Robeson sympathetically viewed the Jewish people as a "race without a nation" in the 1930s.[585] In the late 1940s, NAACP secretary

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[582] Robert Weisbord and Richard Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 11.

[583] Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), x-xi.

[584] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective,* 14.

[585] Ibid., 24, 20

Walter White lobbied "intensively and heavy-handedly" for Palestinian partition, though shortly
afterward he experienced significant second thoughts.[586]

Minor cracks in mainstream African American leaders' support for the Jewish state
became more apparent after the 1956 Suez War. Israel's invasion of the Sinai Peninsula and its
collaboration with British and French imperialist powers did little to damage the majority of
African American leaders and the black press's support.[587] An opinion piece in the Baltimore
Afro-American, for instance, placed most blame and its heaviest criticisms against Britain and
France. Israel, the paper argued, had simply made the mistake of allowing these imperial powers
to use it as a pawn.[588] However, the Suez War caused some erstwhile African American "philo-
Zionists," like Du Bois, to perceive the Jewish state quite differently. Du Bois's 1956 poem,
"Suez," portrayed Israel not as a land of oppressed, but a new oppressor. By invading Egypt,
Israel had flipped the script. He wrote: "Israel as the West betrays; its murdered, mocked, and
damned; Becomes the shock troops of two knaves; who steal the Negroes' land."[589] This type of
criticism, though still in the minority, was not limited to African American leftists like Du Bois.
The enigmatic, conservative black journalist and publisher George Schuyler also expressed
second thoughts about the Zionist project. He now believed that Israel's "unabashed aggression"
against Egypt proved the "uselessness of the UN" and alluded to ulterior motives for Israel's
establishment. The Jewish State, he wrote, had been created "against the wishes of Palestine's

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[586] According to the memoirs of White's spouse, Poppy Cannon, the NAACP secretary exhibited significant
hesitations in his support of Israel as early as 1949. During their trip to Israel in June 1949, Walter White and Poppy
Cannon were haunted the plight of Palestinian refugees and Israel's Arab population. Two American Jews in Tel
Aviv asked White, "What do you think about Israel? Shouldn't your people have a homeland, too?" White
responded bluntly, "I don't approve of segregation" [Poppy Cannon, *A Gentle Knight: My Husband, Walter White*
(New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1956), 103.
[587] Yvonne Newsome, "International Issues and Domestic Ethnic Relations: African Americans, American Jews, and
the Israel-South Africa Debate," *International Journey of Politics, Culture, and Society* 5 (1), Autumn 1991, 35.
[588] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 30.
[589] McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 85.

inhabitants."[590] Like Du Bois, he now viewed Israel as imperial powers' Middle Eastern shock troops.

On the whole, however, most African American politicians, labor leaders, and journalists continued to support Israel and view it as one of the most positive developments in the modern Middle East. Throughout the 1950s, black leaders like Hubert Delany traveled to Israel on tours similar to their black trade union counterparts. Delany was not a labor leader but a lawyer, civil rights activist, and one of the first African American judges in New York.[591] Delany served on the Harlem YMCA's board of directors and was particularly interested in issues pertaining to African American youth. In 1956, he traveled to Israel to study its juvenile delinquency programs.[592] Delany gave an account of his trip in the NAACP's *Crisis*, and he came to quite different conclusions than had Du Bois and Schuyler. Delany viewed Israel as part of the global "anticolonial movement" and praised Israeli policies toward Arab and "Oriental" Jews.[593] Delany's account joined with voices like those of Randolph, Springer, and other African Americans who continued to see Israel positively through lenses of racial solidarity, modernization and development ideology, and liberal political thought.

In 1960, just before Hill's indictment of the ILGWU, the initial cracks in African Americans' support for Israel spread much wider. This had to do with issues both in the U.S. and the Middle East, and these changes were evident in both Black-Jewish relations at home and abroad. In the U.S., the plight and status of Jewish Americans no longer closely resembled that of African Americans. At least economically and politically, Jewish Americans were no longer a

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[590] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective,* 30.
[591] Ibid., 85.
[592] Lewis Young, "American Blacks and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, Volume 2 (1), Autumn 1972, 70-85.
[593] Hubert T. Delany, "Hubert Delany Reports on Israel," *Crisis*, November 1956.

marginalized group.[594] By the mid-1960s, nearly half of Jewish American families' incomes were in the nation's top 25%, and the percentage of Jews in white collar jobs was three times the national average. American Jews had risen to places of power and influence in U.S. government, academia, media, and cultural institutions. In some ways, Jewish Americans had become white.[595]

American images of Israel and Israeli Jews had also shifted. Through popular fiction, the press, film, and the critiques of U.S. intellectuals and policymakers, most Americans, particularly white Americans, no longer imagined Israel and Jews as unmasculine "outsiders," but "tough guys," pioneers, and masculine fighters.[596] Israel's successful invasion of the Sinai in 1956 bolstered this idea of an embattled but tough underdog nation filled with its own version of America's former pioneering spirit. The U.S. and Israel were at least "friends," if not "partners" in the Cold War and the Middle East.[597] While white Americans increasingly saw a reflection of themselves in Israel and Israeli Jews, however, African Americans saw less.

Hill's charges against the ILGWU in 1961-62 only worsened perceptions of the African American-Jewish divergence. Jewish Americans were once seen as the black worker's most sympathetic and vocal allies. The ILGWU itself had tried to integrate black workers and build bridges to the black community as early as the 1920s.[598] Hill's reports now depicted a union led predominantly by a Jewish American labor elite that blatantly held minority workers in the lowest rungs, banished to "Jim Crow" locals and barred from equal status, representation, and

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[594] McAlister, *Epic Encounters,* 163.

[595] Eric L. Goldstein examined the changing ways Jewish Americans placed themselves, and were placed, within U.S. racial culture from the 1870s through World War II in *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). He argues that by the late 1940s, Jewish Americans became accepted as part of the U.S.'s white mainstream culture.

[596] Mart, "Tough Guys and American Cold War," 358-380.

[597] Michelle Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally* (State University of New York Press, 2007), 175.

[598] Katz, *Altogether Different*, 110.

fair wages. U.S. labor's race problems had repercussions that went beyond its own ranks and shop floors. It threatened to exacerbate a widening rift between African American and Jewish Americans.

These racial tensions and turmoil were intertwined with some African Americans' changed views of Israel.[599] By 1964, Israelis and their U.S. supporters—black and white—feared a full-on crisis in Black-Jewish relations and African Americans' support for Israel. Some African Americans, particularly a generation younger than that of Martin Luther King, Jr., Randolph, and Wilkins, began to cast different visions for the black freedom struggle, especially in terms of tactics, alliances, and sympathies in the international arena. That year, Malcolm X toured the Middle East and West Africa, including Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria. He urged African Americans to cultivate closer ties with Arabs in the Middle East and Africa.[600] In 1964, the formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization created a movement that challenged Israel in the international arena and strove for the sympathy of peoples of color, including African Americans.[601] The ideological divide between different generations of African Americans and the tumultuous changes throughout the international landscape created a sense of foreboding for Israel and its American supporters.

Problems Abroad

U.S. and Israeli labor's challenges at home significantly affected their image, relations, and activities on the international scene. The limits of U.S. and Israeli labor unions' interracial solidarity and inclusiveness served as easy ammunition for African critics who labeled them

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[599] Yvonne Newsome's article, "International Issues and Domestic Ethnic Relations," makes a convincing case for tying these issues together. "A valid discussion of African American-Jewish relations cannot focus on domestic issues to the exclusion of international affairs," she wrote (Newsome, "International Issues and Domestic Ethnic Relations," 42). I would argue that this statement's inverse is also true.

[600] Whitney Young, "Israel's Lessons for Africa," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 25 October 1969.

[601] Alex Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 114.

imperialists and neo-colonialists. Violent racism, segregation, and other racial injustices large and small caught the attention of African political and labor leaders.

In 1958, for example, Ghanaian trade unionists were appalled by the death sentence of an African American farmer, James Wilson. Wilson, an Alabama farmhand, was convicted of violent robbery for stealing $1.95 from a 74-year old white widow. An all-white Alabama jury sentenced Wilson to death, a decision which the U.S. Supreme Court ultimately upheld. The Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC) held a weekend session to address the requests made by several of its affiliates who wanted the union to express their "utter indignation for, and protest against" Wilson's sentence. General Secretary John Tettegah informed the AFL-CIO's George Meany that the GTUC had lodged a "unanimous protest" with the U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Ghana. They demanded the foreign official "intervene in order to save the good name and reputation of American Justice throughout the world."[602] By the 1960s, African leaders like Tettegah no longer believed in the U.S.'s good name and reputation. And if Americans subjected racial and ethnic minority workers at home to this type of discrimination and inequality, how could African trade unionists trust them?

At the same time, U.S. labor and the Histadrut's African antagonists could point to depictions of corrupt, "Big Labor" in the U.S. and Israel in efforts to silence critics of parallel trends in the developing world. Revelations of U.S. labor-state foreign policy collaboration and the blurring lines between the Histadrut and Israeli government undermined advocates for free trade unionism. Finally, the growing international outrage over the Vietnam War and its close association with modernization ideology struck a heavy blow to western labor and government officials touting the bromide of development diplomacy for Africa.

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[602] Tettegah to Meany, 16 September 1958, GMA, RG18-001, International Affairs Department, Country Files: Ghana, Box 9, Folder 12.

By 1964-65, Israel and the U.S.'s African critics grew louder and larger in number, nearing what threatened to be a critical mass. The fourth conference of the All-African People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) and the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF)—both in 1965—issued harsh resolutions against the U.S. and Israel. An AAPSO resolution called Israel "an aggressive base of old and neocolonialism which menaces the progress, security, and peace of the Middle East region as well as world peace."[603] Israel's assumed friend and ally, John Tettegah, presided over an AATUF Executive Bureau session that denounced "International Zionism" and Israel as agents of "American imperialism" in the Middle East. The Histadrut's Secretary General, Aharon Becker, was "dismayed." He wrote to Tettegah that he was "deeply surprised" since "quite a large number of African trade unionists and cooperators—many of them AATUF affiliates—have visited Israel and had the opportunity to observe on the spot the work being done in our country."[604] Becker and other Israeli Africanists feared that even their oldest allies and most intense efforts might not be enough to survive the changing currents of African politics and labor.

The previous year, 1964, the AFL-CIO had made its most ambitious attempt to establish a firmer foothold in Africa, creating the African American Labor Center (AALC). An AFL-CIO press release described the AALC as a center for developing economic and social projects in Africa. It would enable African workers to improve their skills, increase their job opportunities, raise their standards of living, and garner better working conditions.[605] Maida Springer believed the AALC would play a pivotal role in helping Africans build free trade unions and strengthen their economies. Springer and George McCray were immediately brought on the AALC's staff,

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[603] Levey, "Israel's Strategy in Africa, 1961-67," 72.
[604] Aharon Becker to John Tettegah, 8 March 1965, PLI, IV 219A 40.
[605] "News from the AFL-CIO for press release," 30 November 1964, PLI, IV 219A 70B.

and the AFL-CIO appointed Irving Brown as the AALC's executive director. The three leaders

hoped the AALC would shore up U.S. labor's reputation in Africa and finally enable it to carry

out initiatives the ICFTU never had.

Instead, the AALC almost immediately became a rallying point for critics of the U.S. and

American labor. In early 1965, AATUF leaders initiated a flurry of attacks in African

newspapers, AATUF publications, and African trade union conventions. The Ghanaian press led

the charge. The AALC, one paper warned, would "provide money, materials, and technicians for

neocolonialist trade unions in Africa." Its aim was to "divide and rule."[606] The AATUF's

Executive Bureau issued an even more dramatic and detailed attack, not only against the AALC

but U.S. labor's African representatives. The bureau described Brown as "a well-known CIA

agent" who was "actively organizing new maneuvers against the African Labor Movement." He

had been "chased out of many African countries, including Kenya and Uganda," but he now sat

ominously in the AALC's executive office. The AATUF Executive Bureau also noted that

Springer was looming in Lagos, "adding her notorious weight in the crusade to establish a neo-

colonialist stronghold in Africa." The AALC's creation would give these unwelcome and

unsavory figures a home base in the heart of Africa.

U.S. labor's most vociferous African antagonists also employed recent tropes of corrupt,

self-enriching "Big Labor" to attack not just the AALC, but the very nature of the American

labor movement. In March 1965, the AATUF republished and distributed a column from the

Ghanaian Times, sarcastically titled "George Meany Gets Tough."[607] Columnist H.M. Basner

described U.S. trade unions as "big business" with corrupt, out-of-touch leaders who enjoyed

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[606] "U.S. Plans for Afro-American Labor Center Hit," Accra Domestic Service in English, 7 February 1965, GMA, RG18-003, Jay Lovestone Files: NY Office, Subject Files: AALC, Box 2, Folder 10.
[607] AATUF News Bulletin, March 1965, PLI, IV 277 381.

"enormous loot to share." Basner focused his assault on George Meany, who was emblematic of the U.S. union "boss." Basner wrote, "[Meany] spends most of his time in Miami, Florida, making his headquarters in deluxe hotels whose prices are too steep for the average rich Americans." Operating "from his tiled bathroom and beach umbrella," Meany runs a racket "with the gangsters, mobsters, hoodlums, thugs, conmen and finks who control most of the American trade unions." Meany, Irving Brown, and their "dupes" in certain African trade unions now threatened to bring America's corrupt and neo-colonialist model to Africa. Basner warned that AALC officials and their African cronies were already discussing the importance of foreign capital investments. The AALC—and U.S. labor in general—had to be immediately and firmly opposed.

These stinging criticisms of U.S. labor and its newly established AALC were not limited to AATUF circles and already hostile audiences in countries like Ghana. In March 1965, Tettegah brought the battle to Tanzania. Tettegah arrived in Dar es Salaam to address the first national congress of the National Union of Tanzania Workers (NUTA), the TFL's successor. NUTA had been created with both labor and government support. Prime Minister Julius Nyerere and the Tanzanian government, much like the Tseirim in Israel, wanted a labor movement more responsive and subordinated to state interests and development. Recognizing only a single, unified trade union organization would make this much more easily managed. Tanzanian labor favored the move, too. Michael Kamaliza seamlessly transitioned from TFL to NUTA general secretary. Kamaliza and NUTA supporters wanted a more unified and centralized Tanzanian trade union movement, which they believed would therefore be stronger. "Instead of a collection

of individual trade unions organized for the most part on an industrial basis and led by persons of

conflicting personalities, there is now a united and unified movement," Kamaliza announced.[608]

Tettegah and the GTUC had also influenced Kamaliza and Tanzanian labor's journey

toward NUTA. Tettegah was thus flown in to deliver one of the major addresses at NUTA's first

congress. Tettegah began his speech innocuously, praising Tanzanian labor and the AATUF. The

new Tanzanian trade union, for instance, was already "one of the most loyal and militant

affiliates of the AATUF."[609] Tettegah lauded the AATUF for bringing an authentically African

trade union movement to the continent. Quickly, Tettegah pivoted to attack U.S. labor and the

recently established AALC. The AFL-CIO's recent creation of the AALC was an alarming

development, he warned. "Why do Americans now wish to 'GO-IT-ALONE' in Africa?"

Tettegah asked. Answering his own question, he cited two U.S. news stories. One reported that

Washington played a significant role in the AALC's establishment. The other story detailed how

AFL-CIO leaders envisioned the AALC as a vehicle for expanding private investment

opportunities through African development projects. For Tettegah, this was smoking-gun

evidence that U.S. labor and its AALC were "part of a Grand Design of U.S. imperialism." It

was clear that "the principal object of the AALC," he told the NUTA congress, "will be to assist

the financial magnates of Wall Street to neo-colonial [sic] Africa."

Tettegah's speech particularly troubled U.S. and Israeli labor leaders because of the

context. U.S. labor leaders viewed the GTUC as a lost cause, but they had not given up on

Tanzania or anticipated this degree of blowback to the AALC. Yet one of the most prominent

speeches at NUTA's first congress was largely devoted to depicting U.S. labor's most recent and

ambitious African initiative as "the new threat facing Africa."

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[608] Michael Kamaliza, "Tanganyika's View of Labor's Role," *East Africa Journal*, November 1964, 9-16.
[609] Address by John Tettegah, First National Congress of NUTA, 27 March 1965, PLI, IV 277 381.

Tettegah's speech also created an awkward and diplomatically delicate situation for the AFL-CIO's Israeli counterparts. The Histadrut also had a positive past with the TFL, and they hoped to continue this partnership with NUTA. In fact, Tanzania's new labor federation—like the GTUC's "New Structure" before it—was largely inspired by the Histadrut. NUTA officials invited Akiva Eger, the Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute Director, to address the congress. While Tettegah delivered his diatribe against the AFL-CIO, Eger had to patiently listen before he took the stage and addressed the congress himself.

By the time of NUTA's first congress, some of U.S. labor's most Africa-attuned leaders conceded that they needed to eschew some aspects of free trade union orthodoxy or face a fate similar to the ICFTU. NUTA's establishment was just further confirmation. In Ghana, Tanzania, and even Kenya, African labor was trending toward unified, centralized structures that were intimately tied to the government and nation-building.

Irving Brown thought the AALC would meet these changing needs and demonstrate U.S. labor's desire to be a force for African workers and national development. It was a dynamic departure from the ICFTU and U.S. labor's past African endeavors, he believed. The AALC would create "more ample and newer instruments of [sic] furthering economic and social development." U.S. labor had already been "one of the most advanced organized forces in the USA in the struggle against colonialism." Brown thought the AALC would now enable U.S. labor to join their "African union brothers" in "the great struggle for economic independence."[610]

Despite Brown and others' high hopes for the AALC, U.S. labor's efforts in 1964-65 were nowhere near enough to change the direction of African labor and politics. They were not enough to increase or even maintain U.S. labor's level of influence and partnerships across the

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[610] Irving Brown, "AALC," 10 February 1965, GMA, RG18-003, Jay Lovestone Files: NY Office, Subject Files: AALC, Box 2, Folder 10.

continent. The AALC was never able to distance itself far enough from its critics' charges of neo-colonialism or imperialism. In the late 1950s, U.S. labor had been able to dismiss similar attacks and press ahead in their African initiatives. But by the mid-to-late 1960s, things had significantly changed. U.S. labor's international critics had been partially vindicated by stories in the American press. Additionally, by 1965, African politics and labor had taken a markedly radical turn. African socialism was developing either a more Eastern bloc or pan-African flavor, and there was hardly an African leader who wanted to be associated with Europe or the U.S. To achieve some of the goals its supporters envisioned, the AALC probably should have been established a decade earlier. Instead of opening new doors, it closed some of the few remaining.

The Decline of Development Diplomacy

Another reason why the AALC and U.S. and Israeli labor's other last-ditch efforts were too late was that the ideology and model they promoted were quickly becoming discredited and distrusted. U.S. and Israeli labor's international programs and the ideology undergirding them had become primarily based upon notions of modernization and nation-building. The AALC embodied U.S. labor's evolution from promoting free trade unions in and of themselves to modeling labor as a means to carry out development and economic growth. The Histadrut had always been modeled as such. But by the time U.S. labor eschewed its free trade union orthodoxies and went "all-in" and fully devoted their new AALC to labor development, it was too late. Events across the developing world, from Vietnam to Iran to Ghana, proved Western-style and Western-sponsored modernization incapable of meeting the lofty expectations that often accompanied it. Instead, modernization often served as a convenient tool for entrenched regimes to consolidate their power and control their populations. U.S. and Israeli labor's primary avenue for relations in Africa no longer held such a strong international appeal.

The U.S. government played a heavy hand in development and modernization ideology's international decline. The Kennedy administration had used it as a primary instrument in its foreign policy toolkit. In 1961, the White House turned to development as a means to prop up its South Vietnamese allies and hold the communists at bay. Through nation-building, political development, and social engineering, the U.S. and the Diem regime believed they could win the "hearts and minds" of the South Vietnamese people and defeat the Viet Cong.[611] The intimate connection between U.S. strategy in Vietnam and development ideology assured that the latter's credibility would rise or fall along with the war. It fell hard. Resettling peasants, constructing new schools, roads, and canals, and establishing new "Self-Defense Corps" and youth movements did not "win" the South Vietnamese populations.[612] Instead, these initiatives created an environment of heavy-handed repression and authoritarian coercion. In the U.S., meanwhile, fiscally conservative government officials and left-wing critics alike viewed these programs as a massive waste of resources and a failed diplomatic strategy.

Development and modernization initiatives seemed to fail well beyond Vietnam. The pattern continued in Africa. Newly established governments across the continent were preoccupied with economic planning and nation-building. African labor and their U.S. and Israeli allies made vigorous efforts to promote a labor-led version of development and nation-building, but they lent enhanced legitimacy to the development imperative in general. Instead of empowering populations, expanding democracy and improving economic, social, and political opportunities, development planning and nation-building trended toward coercion and authoritarian impulses. Quite quickly, African governments could use the imperatives of nation-building and development to override competing interests and justify deviations from causes and

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[611] Latham, *Modernization as Ideology,* 166, 151.
[612] Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission,* 190.

values they had previously championed, even democracy or free trade unionism. "The developmental state," wrote African historian Frederick Cooper, "was a peculiar entity; it exercised initiative, yet it suppressed initiative, too, and it above all encouraged citizens to *think* of the state as the prime mover for raising the standard of living."[613]

Development and modernization ideology in Africa was either discredited and distrusted or championed by increasingly authoritarian states and used to demobilize challengers to state authority—such as labor unions. Some African governments, like Nigeria, turned away from Western development programs and their international benefactors because they failed to bridge the wide gap between promises and results. Others, like Tanzania, observed the ways in which the U.S. and other international powers used development as a diplomatic tool and determined it was not worth the risk to their nation's autonomy. Julius Nyerere was highly skeptical of foreign aid and development programs, and by the mid-1960s he instead championed African self-reliance. Yet even Nyerere's "Ujamaa" still advocated state-centered development. "Ujamaa" and Jomo Kenyatta's "Uhuru" platforms were supposedly unique African versions of social and economic development. They both represented an African critique of international development aid and the heavy foreign strings often attached. But they also still resonated with the ascendance of centralized, increasingly authoritarian African states and the ways in which they used development to achieve these ends.

The decline and changing politics of development directly affected U.S. and Israeli labor's power and influence. Their international initiatives were viewed with increasing skepticism and suspicion. The promising and growing African trade unions with which U.S. and Israeli labor had once partnered were being demobilized, displaced, or enveloped by the state.

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[613] Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*, 80.

And, unintentionally, U.S. and Israeli labor had played some part in these trends. As AFL-CIO and Histadrut officials scanned the African landscape in the late 1960s, there were fewer and fewer potential inroads for international labor partnerships. Labor unions were no longer at the forefront of African politics and society. That mantle was now taken by the state.

From the "Decade of Development" to "Arms Bazaars" and "Tottering Dictators"

By 1965-66, U.S. and Israeli government officials took a similarly dim view of development programs and political trends in Africa. Only five years after the "Year of Africa" and Kennedy's declaration of a "Decade of Development," government analysts began to speak in very different terms. A 1965 CIA National Intelligence Estimate essentially declared African development dead on arrival. CIA analysts believed there was a "desperate shortage of virtually all kinds of technical and managerial skills," while "basic institutions and staff" for economic development were "inadequate or absent." Setbacks were "probable in a number of countries."[614]

Even the U.S. State Department, which had been at the forefront of U.S. development diplomacy, significantly lowered its expectations for African political and economic development. In 1966, a State Department taskforce reviewed U.S. Africa policies. Its report was a stark contrast from those just a few years prior and suggested dramatically narrowing the scope of U.S. initiatives and interests in Africa. The U.S.'s "primary concern" regarding Africa, the taskforce asserted, "has been, and will continue to be for some time, to prevent events on the continent from…interfering with our central strategic and political preoccupations in other regions." No longer a "New Frontier" in the U.S.'s global mission, Africa would instead revert to an arena for conservative, defensive U.S. policies to maintain the status quo and prevent Africa from affecting supposedly more important regions, like the Middle East and Asia.

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[614] Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 200.

The U.S. and Israeli governments, unlike the eponymous labor unions, were perfectly equipped to navigate the decline of labor and development diplomacy and the rise of single-party or authoritarian regimes. In several ways, the U.S. and Israeli governments actually benefited from these changing circumstances. Conservatives in Congress were eager to jettison the financial and political burdens of large-scale development aid, including the pressure to produce rapid, tangible results.[615] Despite U.S. leaders' bold rhetoric about America's commitment and ability to transform Africa, Washington had never really put its money where its mouth was. Even midway through the Kennedy administration, the U.S. provided just over $200 million a year in aid to Africa, and much of that was committed to propping up Mobutu's authoritarian regime in the Congo.[616] By comparison, the U.S. gave Greece $100 million per year alone. U.S. government aid to Africa was perpetually less than any other region. The White House and U.S. State Department did not give up on development aid entirely, but reformulated it as a means to influence African leaders' behavior and prop up the U.S.'s favored African regimes.

As U.S. government leaders planned their African exit, they moved the proverbial goal posts and abandoned their previous commitment to African democracy. U.S. officials, commentators, and the public in general came to accept one-party rule, coups and military dictatorships as an acceptable condition for Africans' stage of development. The majority of the U.S.'s ambassadors in Africa believed single-party states were "inevitable rather than bad."[617] Accordingly, the U.S. government's recalibrated African mission was significantly narrowed. Development, nation-building, and democracy were replaced with cost-cutting, maintaining a small roster of strategic allies and regimes, and keeping African issues contained to Africa.

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[615] Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*, 127.
[616] Ibid., 182.
[617] Ibid., 129.

Washington's new and narrowed mission in Africa during the late 1960s no longer required a substantial partnership with U.S. labor. Most African states had obtained independence. Nation-building and development had often failed or been co-opted by "economists with guns."[618] U.S. labor's utility in Africa, which had once been championed by influential officials and academics like Richard Nixon and Arnold Rivkin, was replaced by the common language of military, security, and intelligence entities.[619]

The Israeli government was similarly equipped to execute a strategic and tactical pivot in African relations. As described in chapter 3, the Histadrut's tireless efforts to befriend African labor movements and political parties often opened doors for the state. This included the Israeli Defense Ministry and intelligence agency, Mossad. These government entities quietly built on labor's Africa foundations, adding their own networks of allies and partnerships. In the mid-to-late 1960s, the changing dynamics in Israeli and African labor and politics presented the opportunity for the state to take over.

While 1960 had been the "Year of Africa," 1965-66 might be described as the "Year of the African Coups." African governments were overthrown in Algeria, Benin, the Congo, Uganda, Nigeria, Burundi, Ghana, and the Central African Republic. Israel's growing military ties in places like the Congo, Uganda, and Nigeria, allowed it not only to weather political turmoil and regime changes, but often strengthen its standing and influence. By 1966, Israel's

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[618] This phrase is in reference to Bradley Simpson's *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008). Simpson examines U.S.-Indonesian relations, focusing particularly on the emergence and U.S. embrace of authoritarian regimes as a means for stability and military-led development. Simpson argues that, in the case of Indonesia, the imperatives of modernization and national development led down a path to authoritarianism rather than democracy.

[619] Arnold Rivkin was director of the African Studies Program at the Center for International Studies at Massachusetts Institute for Technology. He was viewed by many academics and U.S. foreign officials as the foremost expert on African economics and development. Several of his publications advocated the importance of trade unions in Africa development, and he argued that Israel's labor-development model could serve as a useful blueprint for the Afro-Asian world [Rivkin, "Israel and the Afro-Asian World," *Foreign Affairs,* volume 37 (3), April 1959, 486-495; *Africa and the West: Elements of Free World Policy* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1962)].

African military and intelligence partnerships eclipsed its civilian aid programs and labor relations. In the Congo, for instance, new president and former general Joseph-Désiré Mobutu had little interest in the Histadrut or civilian aid and trade. But he had acquired a sweet tooth for Israeli military assistance.[620] With Mobutu's rise to power, and the Israeli Defense Ministry and IDF's ascendance in foreign relations, Israeli-Congo relations were completely transformed. Israel's military mission in Kinshasa soon dwarfed the smaller embassy staff in both size and stature. Finally, Israel had publicly cast its lot with a military dictatorship.

Israel's growing commitments to authoritarian rulers and military regimes incited a tense conflict between the Foreign and Defense Ministries. By early 1966, they engaged in an all-out "turf war."[621] Foreign Ministry officials resented their nation's growing association with "dubious" regimes and their role in propping up "tottering dictators." Deputy Foreign Minister and former Histadrut representative to the U.S. Moshe Bitan complained that defense officials were turning Africa into an "arms bazaar."[622] Instead, Foreign Ministry officials implored their government to reinvest its dwindling resources in "politically safe" civilian aid.[623] Foreign Ministry officials even waged minor acts of resistance. In May 1966, for instance, Ugandan Prime Minister Milton Obote requested that Israeli pilots fly his air force's jets on strafing runs to suppress an uprising against his regime. Israel's ambassador in Kampala, Uri Lubrani, refused and neglected to pass the request on to Defense officials.[624]

The Defense Ministry, Mossad, and IDF commanders saw things quite differently. They were happy to oblige the requests of military strongmen like Mobutu. They thought it behooved

[620] The U.S. State Department encouraged Israel's role in training the Congolese military. For more details, see: Levey, "Israel's Involvement in the Congo, 1958-1968."
[621] Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries,* 114.
[622] Levey, *Israel in Africa, 1956-1976*, 114.
[623] Levey, "Israel's Strategy in Africa, 1961-67," 74.
[624] Ibid., 82.

Israel to take advantage of Africa's changing landscape. Defense officials sought to utilize a growing African arms market and put Israel's increasing reputation as a cutting-edge military power to use. Military-minded officials did not want to lose their strategic "foothold" in a central African nation like the Congo or the "hinterland" via Uganda. In early June 1966, Mossad and Defense Ministry officials explained their position during a joint meeting with officials from the Foreign Ministry, IDF, and the Prime Minister's office. Rather than distancing Israel from African strongmen and autocratic regimes, they called for a steep increase in Israel's military involvement in Uganda. They argued this would not only protect a strategic region from "Arab subversion" but also create profitable opportunities for Israeli Military Industries, Soltam Systems (an Israeli arms manufacturer), and the Israeli aircraft industries.[625]

Members of Israel's Foreign Ministry continued to protest, but it was an increasingly uphill battle. Bitan visited Uganda in September 1966 and authored a damning appraisal on the state of Israel's African relations. Israel's "over-commitment" in Africa, Bitan argued, had much more to do with the "ambitions of the Defense Ministry" than the Foreign Ministry's development initiatives and civilian programs. Even worse, Defense officials seemed to have no standards in selecting partners and ignored their larger political ramifications. "With no objective justification, a security empire has been erected in Africa," Bitan wrote. "This interferes with work, foments turmoil, and creates great political risk." Foreign Ministry officials were subjected to increasing African criticism of Israel's support for unstable, corrupt, and autocratic regimes. And when these "tottering" African leaders did fall, Israel remained saddled with their unsavory reputation. It was not yet too late to change directions, Bitan believed, but that time was near.

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[625] Levey, *Israel and Africa*, 5, 127.

"We can overcome these encumbrances," he wrote, "But to do so we will have to prevail over vested interests while slaughtering a few holy cows."[626]

Realities on the ground in Africa and Israel were ultimately to the Defense Ministry's advantage. African military governments and single-party regimes sought to consolidate their power and stave off their rivals. They were often much less interested in civilian aid and massive development projects than assistance in shoring up their military and police forces' discipline and competency. At the same time, by 1966, the Israeli economy was in a deep recession. The Israeli government's foreign programs had experienced budget crunches since 1960, but in 1966 it was a full-scale financial crisis. As in the U.S., Israeli politicians and government officials were souring on expensive development aid programs and looking for more strategic, cost-cutting measures that would still maintain their nation's most vital interests. Again, advocates of Israel's African military partnerships held the upper hand.

By the end of the 1960s, it became clear that arms bazaars and tottering dictators won out over development aid and labor relations. In Uganda, little remained of the original ties that bound Israel and the Histadrut to Ugandan political and labor leaders. Israel's initial Ugandan ally, Prime Minister Milton Obote, embarked on his own power-entrenching campaign from 1966-67. In 1966 he trumped up charges of treason to justify overthrowing a traditional ruler, Mutesa II, and rationalizing changes to the Ugandan constitution that made him both prime minister and president.[627] Obote granted himself unprecedented, centralized power and authority. At the same time, he went after domestic and international trade unions. In 1966, he shut down the ICFTU's Kampala Labor College and tried to reign in the Ugandan Trade Union Congress.[628]

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[626] Ibid., 128.
[627] Mutesa II, the Kabaka, was the traditional ruler of Buganda, the largest of Uganda's traditional kingdoms.
[628] Barry Cohen, "The CIA and African Trade Unions," in Ellen Ray, et al, *Dirty Work 2*, 75.

Members of Obote's regime alleged that the ICFTU was training labor spies against the government. In January 1971, however, Obote was given a dose of his own medicine. A military junta led by his former commander, Idi Amin, seized power and added to Africa's growing list of strongmen.

The decline of labor and the end of even token democracy in Uganda did little to alter Israeli-Uganda relations. Amin, like Mobutu, had briefly enrolled in Israel's paratrooper training. Amin too had become an admirer of Israel's military, and he developed a close personal friendship with Israel's military attaché in Kampala, Colonel Baruch Bar-Lev.[629] The day after Amin seized power, Bar-Lev admitted that he had known of the general's plans months earlier. In contrast to the Histadrut, the Israeli state could easily survive such regime changes. In fact, Bar-Lev became Amin's personal advisor, traveling with him "wherever he went."[630]

Things Fall Apart: The Fracturing of the AFL-CIO and the ICFTU, 1966-69

In 1965, when Ben-Zion Ilan wrote his farewell letter to Jay Lovestone and Mapai splintered in Israel, Lovestone's own trade union movement, the AFL-CIO, began unraveling. The Vietnam War continued to serve as one of the primary catalysts. Antiwar sentiment spread well beyond the New Left and radical student movements. By 1965, mainstream liberals and even moderates were turning against the Johnson administration and the U.S. war effort.[631] UAW president (and AFL-CIO vice president) Walter Reuther, however, refused to publically budge from his original pro-administration position. Reuther's closest staff members, department heads, and even his brother, Victor, quietly pushed him to change his stance, but Reuther simply doubled-down. Instead of heeding his critics, he actively worked to contain and silence them.

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[629] Helen Epstein, "Idi Amin's Israeli Connection," *The New Yorker,* 27 June 2016.
[630] Levey, "Israel's Strategy in Africa," 133, 131.
[631] Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism,* 209-210.

Reuther's stubbornness lent more ammunition to U.S. labor's left wing critics and fulfilled the caricature of U.S. labor as part of the Establishment and a tool of U.S. imperialism.

The AFL-CIO's president, George Meany, did not just support the Vietnam War personally; he endeavored to put the AFL-CIO squarely behind the war effort. Beginning with the AFL-CIO's 1965 annual convention, Meany repeatedly attempted to put the federation on record with a resolution declaring this position. Meany was convinced the war was imperative, "because we have an obligation to be there" to prevent the spread of communism in southeast Asia and maintain American international credibility.[632]

Reuther eventually buckled under intense internal and external pressure, and his about-face had damaging repercussions for the AFL-CIO's internal cohesion. Before Reuther turned against the Vietnam War, he and his brother, Victor, tried to distance their legacy and their union from the AFL-CIO's international collaboration with the U.S. government. When reporters first broke stories about AFL-CIO/CIA activities abroad, Victor Reuther threw Meany and the Federation under the bus. In May 1966, he told the *LA Times* that the AFL-CIO had been acting as a CIA front in developing nations. As per usual, he insinuated that it was the old AFL's leaders, not those from the CIO, who had made this Faustian bargain. The following August, Meany punched back. During an AFL-CIO Executive Board meeting, Meany pushed through a resolution censuring Victor Reuther for his accusations. When Walter Reuther left the room, Meany struck again. He surreptitiously passed a resolution on the Vietnam War that was far more hawkish than the UAW's official position.[633] The Reuthers were outraged that Meany had associated their union with such a resolution. The AFL-CIO's president and vice president were now at war over the War.

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[632] Ibid., 219.
[633] Ibid., 227-228.

U.S. labor's internal war over the war cut more deeply and widely than just the AFL-CIO Executive Board; the Federation's official record of support belied a growing bloc of internal dissent. In 1967, for example, four national AFL-CIO officials joined with the trade union division of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) to call for a "National Labor Leadership Assembly for Peace." Over 500 delegates from 63 labor unions attended the consequent two-day rally in Chicago. Prominent guest speakers like Martin Luther King, Jr. and John Kenneth Galbraith headlined the rally, and Victor Reuther took the stage to blast AFL-CIO leadership and their "top-down" method for handling foreign policy questions. According to historian John Bennett Sears, efforts like the Chicago assembly "broke the ice" and began the unraveling of U.S. labor's "Cold War consensus."[634] By 1970, leaders from 22 nation trade unions would buck the AFL-CIO Executive Board and call for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.

While war abroad rent U.S. labor's leadership apart, racial conflict fractured rank-and-file solidarity on the shop floor and in U.S. cities. As the civil rights movement gained political and legislative victories on Capitol Hill in 1964-65, its ramifications played out on factory floors, in ballot boxes and on American city streets.[635] African Americans' frustrations with the failing War on Poverty combined with a growing conservative white backlash to foment violence in urban centers around the country. The summer of 1967 was particularly violent. Riots erupted in Newark, Detroit, and other cities across the nation, killing dozens, injuring thousands, and leading to millions of dollars in property damages.

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[634] John Bennett Sears, "Peace Work," 710.

[635] This phenomenon's ramifications at the ballot box and for the Democratic Party is particularly well-documented in Paul Frymer's *Black and Blue: African Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

The systematic racial divides in U.S. labor, which Randolph, Hill, and the NAACP had earlier documented transformed into physical altercations on shop floors and many white workers' rebellions in state and national politics. Black workers' increased militancy frightened or incensed a number of white trade unionists and labor leaders. Many also resented President Johnson's expensive "Great Society" domestic programs, because they believed they were paying the bill while African Americans reaped the programs' benefits. A wave of white racial backlash was particularly acute in the North's industrial cities, like Detroit, where the UAW dominated.[636] According to a UAW internal poll, by 1967 over half of the union's white workers opposed any further integration. The limits of U.S. labor's racial solidarity seemed to have been reached. Many white workers had reached a point of departure politically, as well. In the mid-to-late 1960s they abandoned the Democratic Party and much of U.S. labor's traditional labor-liberal ideology in droves. Between 1964 and 1966, for example, the Democratic Party's share of white UAW voters dropped by 15%.[637]

Things were falling apart in U.S. labor's international relations and initiatives, as well. The AFL-CIO's vaunted AALC continued to invite amped up charges of neocolonialism and drove away foreign political and labor leaders who may have previously been on the fence. Even U.S. labor representatives' former friends, like Julius Nyerere, eyed the AALC suspiciously and turned further away from their former U.S. friends and allies. Maida Springer, the pioneer of U.S.-African labor relations, was the most serious casualty of the AALC-AATUF conflict. Springer had already been physically and emotionally exhausted by her ceaseless efforts in Africa. The now decade-long conflict between the ICFTU, AFL-CIO, and various African labor movements had destroyed many of her close friendships and shattered many of her dreams for

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[636] Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 57-58.
[637] Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism*, 230.

African labor and society. In January 1966, Springer had experienced enough. She resigned from her position as AFL-CIO African representative.[638]

Springer was not the only prominent U.S. labor leader to exit the stage. The feud between Meany and the Reuthers continued to rage, becoming a full-on struggle between the AFL-CIO and the UAW. In February 1967, Walter Reuther resigned from the Federation's Executive Council. On his way out, he verbally excoriated his former colleagues. The AFL-CIO was "historically obsolete" and its leadership, he argued, had "lost its drive, its sense of purpose, its sense of social idealism."[639] Meany was a "custodian of the status quo" and had shepherded the U.S. labor movement into a "stagnant and vegetating" state.[640] Then in February 1968, the UAW withheld its Federation dues.[641] It was a dramatic symbolic gesture, but it also had serious and tangible repercussions; the UAW was the AFL-CIO's largest and one of its most politically influential unions. In mid-May, Meany responded, suspending the UAW from the Federation. It was essentially an act of expulsion.[642] In July 1968, Walter Reuther officially withdrew the UAW from the AFL-CIO. "Why should we," he asked a colleague, "the largest union in the AFL-CIO, pay more than a million dollars a year in [dues] for the privilege of being kicked in the ass by George Meany?"[643] Understandably, it became exceedingly difficult for U.S. labor to project any kind of unified, active, and ambitious agenda.

The UAW's withdrawal had an immediate, tangible effect on U.S. labor's international presence. In 1969, after a period of intense internal debates, the AFL-CIO withdrew from the ICFTU. On the surface, the move seemed a long time in the making. Meany, Brown, Lovestone,

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[638] Richards, *Maida Springer*, 257.
[639] Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 43.
[640] Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism*, 243.
[641] Edward and Karen Koziara, "Conflict with the AFL-CIO: The Meany-Reuther Split," *Human Resource Management*, Volume 7 (3), November 2006, 1.
[642] Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism,* 243.
[643] Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 43.

Springer, and McCray had all vehemently criticized the ICFTU for over a decade. Yet the AFL-CIO's withdrawal did not occur for predictable reasons or due to the usual suspects. In fact, Brown and Lovestone opposed the move. AFL-CIO leaders left the ICFTU in part because of the latter's languishing and ineffective international development programs. They also opposed new contacts between ICFTU affiliates and unions from Communist nations.[644] The most notable factor, however, related directly to U.S. labor's internal schisms. In 1969, AFL-CIO leaders were livid because the ICFTU considered partnering separately with Walter Reuther and the UAW. AFL-CIO leadership decided they would rather see the ICFTU collapse than lend increased power and legitimacy, particularly on the international stage, to Reuther's rogue UAW. By 1969, much like Mapai and the Histadrut, the U.S. labor movement's presence at home and abroad looked very different than it had for decades before.

States Come Together: The New "Special Relationship"

By the late 1960s, U.S.-Israeli bilateral relations looked very different, as well. Here, as in Africa, U.S. and Israeli labor unions did not have the same influence with which to affect their nations' relations, but, in this case, they took solace in the fact that this was no longer needed. Historians may debate the reasons for, or exact beginning of, the state-to-state "special relationship," but most agree that U.S.-Israeli relations took on a markedly more intimate nature after 1967.[645] Washington no longer viewed Israel as a strategic or political burden in the Middle East. The U.S. and Israel ramped up their military and intelligence partnerships. Questions in the

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[644] Richards, *Maida Springer,* 260.

[645] A prime example of this is the roundtable in *Diplomatic History* 22 (2), Spring 1998, which was centered around the question of a "special relationship." Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, who chaired the roundtable, explained that "the special relationship thesis generally maintains that the United States and Israel have a unique and unparalleled partnership, with high levels of friendship, amity, trust, and political and military cooperation" (Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A 'Special Relationship'?" *Diplomatic History* 22 (2), Spring 1998, 231). He concluded, and so did Peter Hahn, that before 1967, "the values and ideals common to both sides were not sufficient to make it special in light of the divergence in strategic interests and the absence of strategic cooperation," (Ibid., 259).

White House were no longer "if" or "whether" the U.S. should sell Israel arms or grant it other

forms of military aid, but "how much." President Lyndon Johnson's answer to this question of

degree, like most American presidents after him, was "foursquare" support in whatever arena.

Israel's overwhelming victory in the 1967 War created a new political and strategic situation in

the Middle East and completed Israeli Jews' transformation "from victims to victors."[646]

While the Six Day War was a watershed moment in this political, cultural, and strategic

transformation, U.S. trade unions played a decades' long role laying the groundwork for

Washington's new perspective. Since the 1940s, American labor tirelessly lobbied government

officials. They helped create and circulate images of Israel as a regional and global asset for the

U.S.'s Cold War, the spread of democracy, and Western-style development in the Third World.

And American trade unions lent Israel and the Histadrut millions of dollars to complement

American government aid. In effect, U.S. labor unions were one of the most influential and

efficacious midwives of the states' "special relationship." From the late 1960s on, U.S. and

Israeli labor no longer wielded the same clout with which they could affect their nations'

relations. But at least in this arena, and at this time, they were comforted by the fact that their

efforts were no longer needed.

As this chapter has detailed, there were several interwoven reasons for U.S. and Israeli

labor's domestic decline, their relative marginalization in the bilateral "special relationship," and

their displacement in Africa. During the late 1950s and 1960s, the Histadrut came under

increasing attack from critics who depicted it as a bloated, inefficient, special interest group that

hindered Israel's economy and promoted particularism over the nation's well-being. The

Histadrut's failure to equally incorporate Mizrahi and Arab workers into its ranks and its

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[646] Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948," 232; Little, *American Orientalism,* 32.

leadership positions rendered it vulnerable to sharp attacks from Israel's two largest growing

populations, their Ashkenazi allies, and right-wing politicians looking for the labor party's

political vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, Israeli labor yielded many of its institutions, nation-building

functions, and welfare programs to the state. This was done at times voluntarily, as in the case of

the Israeli education system. In other instances, such as the Histadrut's surrender of Kupat Holim

in 1960, it was only done after bitter political struggles. By the decade's final years, Israeli labor

was no longer the force it had once been, and Israel was no longer as such the "workers' state."

America's trade unions faced a somewhat similar array of factors that ultimately

destabilized and undercut their power and influence, at home and abroad. During the 1950s and

1960s, U.S. labor's domestic critics tried to portray American trade unions as corrupt,

entrenched, and self-interest groups. As "Big Labor" became more hierarchical and top-heavy

with long-established leaders and bureaucrats, trade unions' rank-and-file increasingly joined

this chorus of critics. Much like their Israeli counterparts, U.S. trade unions also had to navigate

a rightward drift in American politics. Labor no longer had an ally in the White House, and the

new Republican president, Richard Nixon, promised to appoint strict constructionists to the

Supreme Court. Nixon's "Southern Strategy" and the presidential campaign of arch-

segregationist George Wallace (who garnered 13.53% of the national vote) embodied the salient

racial divides in American politics, in U.S. cities, and in union halls and on shop floors. The

ways in racial conflict translated into politics rent apart any semblance of labor's racial solidarity

and splintered the traditional Labor-Democratic alliance. Divided over race, U.S. trade unions

were no longer such a cohesive voting bloc, and they no longer wielded the same corresponding

clout in Washington. In addition to race, by the late 1960s U.S. trade union leaders and rank-and-

file members were at war over the Vietnam War. The struggle over labor's proper position on the

war drove a wedge between top-level trade union leaders and eventually created a groundswell of dissent across the country.

U.S. and Israeli labor's challenges at home significantly affected their reputation, relations, and ability to act internationally. During the late 1950s and 1960s, the limits of American and Israeli trade unions' interracial and interethnic solidarity were fodder for their international critics, like leaders of the All-African Trade Union Federation, who were eager to label Western trade unions as imperialist or neo-colonialist. U.S. and Israeli labor's weakened state at home compelled them to rely more on their respective governments to act abroad. This too was used against them. Revelations of U.S. labor-state foreign policy collaboration and the blurring lines between Histadrut and the Israeli government undercut their international campaign for free trade unionism. U.S. and Israeli labor unions opened doors for their governments' influence abroad, but by the 1960s it was they who were being pushed out.

Social upheavals and political trends in Africa and the international arena affected U.S. and Israeli labor's power, influence, and the prominence of their "special relationship." From the late 1950s to mid-1960s, African labor and politics changed in ways that shifted U.S. and Israel labor's influence from highly relevant to nearly obsolete. In places like Ghana, Tanzania, and Kenya, African trade unions trended toward unified, centralized organizational models geared toward labor-state partnerships and national-development. They looked increasingly different from the Western "free trade union" model. African labor movements also became more vulnerable to state control and coercion. Beginning in 1965-66, Africa experienced a wave of military coups and the advance of single-party regimes. Labor unions were typically the first non-state entities to be subdued by these authoritarian regimes. Trade unions' championing of nation-building and development was often used against them, giving government justification

for muzzling labor's autonomy. By the late 1960s, U.S. and Israeli labor unions, which had previously been at the forefront of their nations' African relations, found that they too were forced to the sidelines.

Finally, U.S. and Israeli labor's international influence and the prominence of their "special relationship" abroad deteriorated alongside the decline of development diplomacy and modernization ideology. Events across the developing world, from Vietnam to Indonesia to Ghana, proved modernization incapable of meeting its lofty expectations, instead often serving as a means for regimes to consolidate power and control populations. Unfortunately for U.S. and Israeli labor, development ideology had been a pillar of their international influence and outreach. Their international programs and the labor-development model they championed for the Afro-Asian world were viewed with increasing skepticism and suspicion. To a degree, U.S. and Israeli labor's championing of development and their partnered promotion for labor-led nation-building in the Afro-Asian world planted seeds for their demise. African labor unions that embraced this ideology and these imperatives were often the ones demobilized, displaced, or enveloped by the state.

When U.S. labor unions and the Histadrut surveyed African labor and politics in the late 1960s, there were few remaining opportunities for inroads and partnerships. When trade union leaders took stock of their movements' standing in domestic affairs, they were confronted with internal dissent and divisions, increasingly antagonistic governments, and structural and economic forces unfavorable for reviving labor's halcyon days of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Amidst the turbulent changes of the late 1960s, however, there was at least one arena in which U.S. and Israeli labor unions viewed their states' ascent not as a threat to their mission or evidence of their failure and marginalization. By the late 1960s, American and Israeli labor

movements took solace as their states finally translated the "bond between wage earners" into the

bilateral "special relationship."

Conclusion

"The Trade Unions Have Passed the Test," read a June 1967 headline in *Davar*, the

Histadrut's newspaper.[647] On June 5, Israeli fighter jets launched a preemptive strike on Egypt's

airfields, marking the official beginning of the Six Day War. The war was a transformative

moment in Mideast politics, Arab-Israeli relations, and Israel's image and relationships

throughout the globe. Israel's preemptive strike and subsequent occupation of territories in the

Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip quickly evinced a marked line in the sand for

its supporters and critics alike. *Davar* was pleased to report that U.S. trade unions remained

firmly by Israel's side.

From the AFL-CIO's president George Meany to UAW leader Walter Reuther to A.

Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, U.S. trade unionists immediately

voiced their ardent support for Israel in the Six Day War. Meany told a crowd of United

Packinghouse Workers in Washington that the AFL-CIO stood with Israel against Egyptian

president Gamal Abdel Nasser, whom he dubbed "the puppet of Moscow." Reuther quickly

dispatched a telegram of solidarity to the Histadrut's General Secretary Aharon Becker. Despite

the fact that Reuther and Meany's unions had recently experienced a bitter divorce, the two labor

leaders were "unanimous" in their support for Israel.[648]

In addition to these prominent figures, thousands of local leaders and rank-and-file U.S.

trade unionists loudly expressed their solidarity. They met at rallies like one in New York City,

where 4,000 retail and building trades workers lent their voices to the cause. The ILGWU

initiated an emergency fund for Israel and the Histadrut. They immediately pledged $1 million to

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[647] Translation of article by Shlomo Sapir, "The Trade Unions Have Passed the Test," June 1967, *Davar*, GMA, RG 18-001, Country Files: Israel-Including Histadrut, Box 10, Folder 11.
[648] Ibid.

the Histadrut and announced they would purchase millions more in Israeli bonds. As they had in 1948, 1956, and other moments of crises and turning points in Israel's history, in 1967 a broad swath of U.S. trade unionists mobilized to support their Israeli counterparts financially and politically.

Though Chapter 6 demonstrated how much about U.S. and Israeli labor's "special relationship" changed during the mid-1960s, some things remained the same. U.S. trade union delegations continued their pilgrimages to Israel. "The urge to visit Israel has not diminished," reported the American Trade Union Council for the Histadrut (ATUC) in September 1966. A "record number" visited Israel during the last years of that decade. In 1968, trade union leaders from the UAW, ILGWU, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the United Steelworkers of America, and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), traveled to Israel and participated in the Histadrut's Trade Union Leadership Seminar. Like the hundreds of U.S. labor leaders before them, the Histadrut's extensive welfare programs and national-development activities charmed them. They visited "newly developing areas" in Israel's southern Negev region and observed training sessions at Israel's Afro-Asian Institute. Unlike their predecessors, U.S. labor visitors to Israel after 1968 had new destinations tacked onto their itineraries. They visited Israeli-occupied territories in the Golan Heights and the West Bank, held "discussions with Arab members of the Histadrut," and ostensibly became persuaded that in these territories too Israel and the Histadrut would spread the benefits of development and modernization to Arab workers. Despite the changing contexts around them, U.S. and Israeli trade unionists still believed they shared a common bond, forged through shared ideologies, interests, and culture.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the nature of U.S.-Israeli relations and the most prominent players in the "special relationship" changed. Chapter 6 traced some of the ways state-to-state relations eclipsed labor's role in the special relationship. By the 1970s, labor played a more minor role compared other non-state American actors, as well. The U.S.'s growing evangelical Christian Zionist movement was foremost among these.[649] Evangelicals were particularly excited about and inspired to support Israel after the 1967 War, because many viewed Israel's conquest of Jerusalem's Old City as biblical prophecies fulfilled. U.S.-Israeli relations, its participants, the emphases of its surrounding imagery and rhetoric, and its major participants shifted from many of the foundations trade unionists had initially laid. This became most apparent in the second half of the 1970s. Evangelist and Christian author Hal Lindsey published his end-times prophecy book, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, in 1970. Lindsey's book supported the notion that Israel's conquest of the Old City was a sign of the "last days."[650] It also became a national bestseller and fueled evangelicals' religious-centered view of and support for Israel. Then in 1977, Israel's labor party fell from power in a landslide defeat to the right-wing Likud Party. It was the first time in history that the Israeli government was led by labor's opposition. During the 1970s, politics in U.S. and Israel, and the "special relationship" itself, took a markedly "conservative turn."[651]

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[649] Studies examining U.S. Christian evangelicals' support for Israel include: Caitlin Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel* (New York University Press, 2012); Shalom Goldman, *Zeal for Zion: Christians, Jews, & the Idea of the Promised Land* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Donald Wagner, "Reagan and Begin, Bibi and Jerry: The Theopolitical Alliance of the Likud Party with the American Christian `Right'," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1998).

[650] Hal Lindsey and Carla Carlson, *The Late, Great Planet Earth* (New York: Zondervan, 1970).

[651] Noam Kochavi argues that this "conservative turn" took place even earlier than 1977 and Likud's rise to power. He contends that it occured during the Nixon-Meir-Rabin years of the early 1970s [Kochavi, *Nixon and Israel: Forging a Conservative Partnership* (State University of New York Press, 2009), 2].

Regardless of its changing tenor or vacillation between political left and right, U.S. and Israeli government leaders continually affirmed the "special relationship" into the early 21st century. In fact, U.S. political leaders have more recently endeavored to make this partnership even more intimate. They began describing it not only as "special," but "unshakable," "unbreakable," and transcendent of partisan political orientation. In June 2009, the Obama administration sent a special Mideast envoy, George Mitchell, to Jerusalem in an attempt to soothe tensions over Iranian nuclear negotiations. The U.S. and its "P5+1" partners were trying to reach an agreement with Tehran that would lift international sanctions against Iran in exchange for an agreement to cap the nation's stockpile of enriched uranium. Under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli government wanted the P5+1 partners to take a much harder line, and they subsequently questioned the Obama administration's commitment to Israel's security.[652] Mitchell, however, assured Israeli officials that U.S. support was "unshakable."[653]

Two years later, President Obama uttered the same phraseology. In December 2011, he delivered a campaign speech before the Union for Reform Judaism in Maryland. He had recently come under attack from his Republican rivals, like Mitt Romney, who claimed the president had "repeatedly thrown Israel under the bus. Instead, Obama demonstrated the opposite. "I am proud to say," he announced, "that no U.S. administration has done more in support of Israel's security than ours. None." Like his 2009 Mideast envoy, Obama described the U.S.'s commitment to Israel as "unshakable." Going even further, he argued that "the bonds between the U.S. and Israel "transcend partisan politics…or at least they should."[654]

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[652] The P5+1 partners are the UN Security Council's five permanent members—China, France, Russia, the U.K., and the U.S.—plus Germany.

[653] Richard Boudreaux, "U.S. Envoy Says Ties with Israel 'Unshakable,'" *Los Angeles Times,* 10 June 2009.

[654] "President Obama Defends 'Unshakable' Commitment to Israel," *Al Arabiya,* 17 December 2011.

The 2016 Democratic and Republican presidential nominees have continued this twenty-first century tradition, trying to outdo each other in their support for Israel. In March 2016, Hillary Clinton told delegates at AIPAC's annual conference, "One of the first things I'll do in office is invite the Israeli Prime Minister to visit the White House." The former secretary of state insisted, "We must take our alliance to the next level." In order to do this, she called for "even more intense" security and diplomatic cooperation. She demanded that the U.S. arm Israel's military "with the most sophisticated defense technology." And she maintained that Israel was "a bastion of liberty" with which the U.S. must uphold its "unbreakable bond."[655] The Republican front-runner and eventual nominee was more succinct in articulating his pro-Israel bona fides.[656] After accusing President Obama of being "the worst thing that's ever happened to Israel," Donald Trump boasted in third-person, "nobody will be more loyal to Israel than Donald Trump."[657]

Presidential politics and U.S.-Israel state relations have traveled a long distance from the mid-twentieth to the early twenty-first century. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the Eisenhower administration prescribed an "even-handed" approach toward the Middle East and President Kennedy and his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, initially tried to exude "impartiality" in the region.[658] The U.S. government's sale of Hawk missiles to Israel in 1962 was a

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[655] Ben Norton, "'She Sounds like Netanyahu,'" *Salon,* 22 March 2016.

[656] It is true that Trump has made remarks that seemingly contradict his outspoken pro-Israelism. Mainly, he initially vowed to be "neutral" in negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. But he quickly and repeatedly clarified that his neutralism would be anything but. For example, he promised to move the U.S.'s embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He argued that Israel "has been trying to sit down at the negotiating table for years" while Palestinian "children are being taught to hate Israel and hate the Jews." And finally, he insisted that Israel was America's "cultural brother" and his "number one priority" ["Donald Trump Vows to End Violence in Middle East—Using Blueprint Revealed in His Book," *New York Daily News,* 21 March 2016; Ray Hanania, "What Would Donald Trump Mean for the Middle East?" *Al Jazeera,* 2 March 2016].

[657] Jessica Schulberg, "Trump Says Israel Should 'Keep Moving Forward' Building Illegal Settlements," *Huffington Post,* 4 May 2016.

[658] Little, *American Orientalism*, 89; Bass, *Support Any Friend*, 53.

groundbreaking event. It reversed a nearly 15-year precedent in which Washington refused to

sell arms to Israel. In 1964, 16 years after Israeli statehood, the White House finally invited an

Israeli prime minister for an official visit. Washington's rhetoric and policies toward Israel has

changed dramatically since then. The new precedent for presidents and presidential hopefuls

involves promising Israel the U.S.'s "most sophisticated" weapons, insisting that impartiality in

the Middle East is impossible or even immoral, or arguing over who would invite the Israeli

Prime Minister earliest and most often to the White House. In the early twenty-first century,

American trade unionists' past declarations of a "bond between wage earners" echo loudly in

U.S.-Israeli state relations and American politics.

In addition to the U.S.-Israeli "special relationship" and its "unbreakable bond," so too

remain many of the images and much of the rhetoric surrounding Israel and its development

model that U.S. trade unions helped construct. This has been particularly evident since 2005,

when the Israeli government and its U.S. allies embarked on a supposedly new and innovative

"nation-positioning" campaign.[659] Israeli officials were concerned that after the Second

Palestinian Intifada ("Uprising"), too many Americans, Europeans, and others around the globe

saw Israel solely through the prisms of religion and military conflict. They partnered with U.S.

marketing executives to hammer out a new plan to improve Israel's image abroad. Consequently,

Israel's Consul for Media and Public Affairs in New York, Ido Aharoni, launched the "Brand

Israel" campaign. Aharoni's campaign encouraged Israel's government leaders and its

international supporters to employ a new, "visionary" approach that would capture imaginations

with stories, images, and rhetoric portraying Israel as "relevant" and "modern."

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[659] Nathaniel Popper, "Israel Aims to Improve Its Public Image," *Forward*, 14 October 2005.

Israel's "country-positioning" campaign is not as original a phenomenon as its adherents and admirers have frequently proclaimed. As this project has demonstrated, U.S. and Israeli labor were branding and promoting Israel and its labor-development model more than a half-century ago. They did so in ways that uncannily anticipated the same imagery and rhetoric used by Israel and its supporters in the twenty-first century. In a 2013 interview with *Advertising Age*, for instance, Aharoni explained, "The strategy that we chose was to celebrate Israel as a bastion of creativity, inspiration, and innovation."[660] While that may have seemed a novel strategy in 2013, Israel's U.S. labor allies described it as a "bastion of democracy" with "modern cities" and a "pioneering" spirit half a century prior.[661] Since 2005, the Israeli government and its allies determined to disseminate images of Israel as a "tiny, war-torn" country somehow able to not only survive but also thrive as a "Startup Nation" amidst a sea of uncertainty and strife. Yet, the AFL-CIO's promotions of Israel began in 1961 or perhaps even earlier. The Federation's president, George Meany, spoke of Israelis always having "one eye cocked on your rifle" yet able to "apply modern economic methods" in ways that turned "the Promised Land into the land of promise."[662] The blueprint for Israel's nation-branding strategy did not originate from marketing and communications executives in New York or government officials in Tel Aviv; it was built into the very fabric of U.S.-Israeli relations, considerably by labor.

Much like their fade from the "special relationship," these labor brand-builders have long been left out of Israel's most recent country-positioning campaign. For instance, celebrations and explanations of Israel's economic and technological accomplishments no longer include references to trade unions and public-labor partnerships. The Israeli Foreign Ministry's own

[660] "How Israel has Rebranded Amid a Volatile Geopolitical Backdrop," *Advertising Age,* 20 August 2013.
[661] *We Saw Israel: A Report of a Visit by American Trade Unionists*, published by the AFL, 1954, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder "Israel."
[662] "View from the AFL-CIO," 4 June 1961, PLI, IV 219A 48.

historical rendition, "Israel: The World's Innovation Nation," occludes labor's role in the

nation's "innovative journey."[663] The official account begins with the kibbutz and quickly skips

to the later influence of Israel's military. "Team-work, problem-solving, and technical skills

learned during military service," the ministry explains, "have also contributed to the success of

Israeli entrepreneurs on a global scale." It was a combination of immigrants, "go-getter

'chutzpah' attitude," and a wealth of educational opportunities "that have helped foster an

impressive ecosystem of innovation." In order to mesh with the twenty-first century's economic

and political trends, official and unofficial biographies of the Startup Nation have borrowed the

imagery and rhetoric from trade unions past but conveniently left out the story of those trade

unions themselves.

Just as significantly, one of Brand Israel's original pillars of support, American labor, is

no longer its most ardent promoter or unshakable ally. In the 2010s, a growing number of U.S.

labor locals, state and regional union federations, and even a national union have broken ranks

and endorsed the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. The

University of California System's UAW affiliate, Local 2865, was the first to do so. Local 2865

represents more than 13,000 UC teaching assistants, tutors, and other student workers. In

December 2014, 65 percent of the union's voting members endorsed the BDS Movement. They

called on their university and the UAW to divest from "companies involved in Israeli occupation

and apartheid," and they demanded the U.S. government end its military aid programs to

Israel.[664]

[663] "Israel: The World's Innovation Nation," Israel Foreign Ministry online, mfa.gov.il, 2013.
[664] Press Release, "Historic: UAW 2865, UC Student-Worker Union, Becomes First Major U.S. Labor Union to Support Divestment from Israel by Membership Vote," UAW 2865 Executive Board, 10 December 2014.

The following year, larger state and regional labor movements like the Connecticut AFL-CIO (CT AFL-CIO) and its 2,000 members joined the UAW's California local and the BDS Movement. The CT AFL-CIO's journey to BDS was a long one, both physically and temporally. In 2000, AFL-CIO president John Sweeny visited Israel and the West Bank. He established an official relationship between the AFL-CIO and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU).[665] Fifteen years later, the PGFTU invited the CT AFL-CIO and other state and national unions, such as the Indiana United Steelworkers and the Machinists Union, to the West Bank. They wanted their American counterparts to glean "first-hand the effects of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian workers and families." These U.S. trade union visitors saw quite a different Israel and Middle East than their predecessors. Rather than sharing "good news" about Israel's labor-led development or pressuring the U.S. government to support Israel, they returned home to spread word about the "extreme oppression" and "inhumane conditions of Palestinians."

In 2015, the CT AFL-CIO acted on these labor ambassadors' recommendations. The union issued a resolution demanding the AFL-CIO "adopt the strategy of BDS" against companies and investments "profiting from or complicit in human rights violations arising from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories."[666] They also insisted that the U.S. government "diligently apply all diplomatic and economic tools to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and support a fair and just peace." While the CT AFL-CIO maintained relations with the Histadrut, that solidarity no longer extended to the Israeli state or the development model it embodied. For these trade unionists, "We Saw Israel" had a wildly different meaning than it did for those in previous decades.

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[665] "CT AFL-CIO Adopts Resolution in Support of BDS and Justice and Peace for the Palestinian People," *Portside*, 1 November 2015.
[666] Ibid.

The same year, the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE) became the first U.S. national union to endorse BDS against Israel. During their 2015 annual convention in Baltimore, representatives for the UE's 35,000 members passed a resolution calling for an end to the U.S.'s $3 billion annual economic and military aid to Israel.[667] The UE's convention demanded that any Arab-Israeli peace agreements include Palestinian's right to self-determination and the "right of return." Angaza Laughinghouse, from UE Local 150 in North Carolina, told convention participants, "Our government is on the wrong side. We have to stand on the right side of the Palestinian struggle." The UE convention not only unanimously endorsed BDS, but also declared the union would "become engaged" in the movement.[668]

These local-, regional-, and national-level labor insurgents do not, however, comprise the whole picture. The majority of U.S. labor unions and their top-level officials are still highly supportive of Israel and vocal in their opposition to BDS. In 2007, for example, presidents of the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Communication Workers of America, and several other unions signed a Jewish Labor Committee (JLC) statement against BDS.[669] The statement these leaders signed portrays BDS as an unfair and potentially anti-Semitic campaign. The 2007 JLC statement questioned "the motives of these resolutions [endorsing BDS] that single out one country in one conflict." It argued, "There are victims and victimizers on all sides [of the Arab-Israeli conflict]." Instead of divestment from Israel, the statement's signatories advocated intensified engagement, "maximizing, rather than proscribing, the free flow of ideas." Like their development-minded forebears, prominent twenty-first century labor leaders who signed the JLC's statement believe "that investment of time, energy, and

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[667] Mario Vasquez, "UE Becomes First National Union in U.S. to Endorse BDS against Israel," *In These Times,* 1 September 2015.
[668] Vijay Prashad, "America's Labor Unions are Increasingly Standing with Palestine," *Alternet,* 19 April 2016.
[669] "Statement of Opposition to Divestment from or Boycotts of Israel," Jewish Labor Committee, 2007.

material aid is the best means to alleviate the ongoing suffering of Palestinians and Israelis."

Time will tell whether these signatories' position was more an artifact of the past or evidence of

labor's "special relationship" holding firm into a new century.

Regardless of U.S. labor unions' early twenty-first century position on Israel, their efforts

in the previous century left powerful legacies that continue to reverberate in American politics

and culture, U.S.-Israeli state relations, and international imaginings of Israel and its

development model. Discussions about the "most modern metropolitan center in the Middle

East" and the model its offers continue anew.[670] In lieu of the AFL-CIO, for example, support for

Israel and its international image has been taken up by new non-state actors, organizations, and

events like the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in Austin, Texas and its 2015-16 exhibitions

like "Building the Perfect Country" or "Israel: Small Country, Big Ideas."[671] Pro-Israel labor

groups such as the ATUC may have faded from the scene, but U.S. political and business leaders

can turn to reports, publications, conferences and exhibits by new advocates who sing similar

songs, like the national best-selling book, *Startup Nation,* or the Israel Museum's related exhibit,

"Israeli Technology for a Better World."[672] Labor unions may have faded from the foreground,

but much of what they helped build endures.

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[670] *Report on Israel*, published by the Congress of Industrial Organizations, April 1949, KCA, RG 5010, Box 2, Folder "Israel."

[671] According to its website, SXSW is "a tool for creative people to develop their careers by bringing people together from around the globe to meet, learn, and share ideas." Its descriptions for Israel's SXSW events include rhetoric about the "Startup Nation" as a "breeding ground" for "mythical 'unicorns'"—startup companies valued at over $1 billion—and Ido Aharoni as the expert who "brought about a paradigm shift in Israel's public image."

[672] Senor, *Start-up Nation*; David Shamah, "Obama Gets First-Hand Look at Start-Up Nation's Innovations," *Times of Israel*, 17 March 2013.

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