other qualities must follow as links in a chain. True character must, by definition, involve believable dialogue, plausible behavior, recognizable worries, realistic relationships and backgrounds.

If any one of these is untrue, then everything in the film tends to become unbelievable. This is a fact that the film producers of England appear to have grasped, and one which we are several country miles away from.

However, the British should not celebrate their comparative maturity too quickly. The desire for a full distribution of their films in this country could easily lead their film-makers to produce a brand of pabulum the equal of our own.

This is how such a thing could happen.

J. Arthur Rank, who owns better than sixty percent of the British film industry, recently make a picture called *Fanny by Gaslight*. It deals with a little girl brought up in a house of prostitution and her conditioning by such an environment. Martin Quigley, prominent lay Catholic, publisher of film trade papers, co-author of the film code of morals, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy's watchdog over the moral and political content of our films, saw a print of this picture. He denounced it at once. He then took it upon himself to speak for film exhibitors and the people of the country —all the people. He informed Mr. Rank that we in America do not tolerate this type of film, and that if Rank wants his films distributed in this country he might do worse than study the production code governing the Hollywood factories. Rank replied that he was willing to discuss the matter. Soon after, the self-appointed regulator of our tastes set sail for England. There is no proof that he went solely to see Rank, but the story went the rounds that Quigley and Rank talked the matter over at great length. The question of British film quotas for American consumption and allied subjects comes up soon, and who can tell? Adherence to our Production Code might be rewarded by somewhat larger distribution.

If that should happen, British films would rapidly become indistinguishable from our own brand of home-cooking and Hollywood could stop worrying about British competition — for there would no longer be any reason to prefer British films to American.

PALESTINE: A SOLUTION

How the obstacles that stand in the way can be overcome by the Soviet proposals.

By CHARLES S. ABRAMS

THE finale of the special Palestine session of the United Nations Assembly did not warm the heart of the British colonial bureaucrats or of the architects of the Truman Doctrine. Things had not quite worked out as they had planned.

On the major questions that had come up for decision the votes had gone the way the Anglo-American bloc wanted them to go. The terms of reference for the UN investigating commission do not include any mention of Palestine independence. The composition of the commission leaves the door open for all sorts of Anglo-American maneuvers. What a travesty of justice it is for the Netherlands—which has been waging war against the independence of the 55,000,000 inhabitants of the Indonesian Republic—to hold a seat as a "neutral" member of a committee inquiring into a colonial question. But Warren Austin's stubborn fight against the inclusion of the permanent members of the Security Council on the commission was not motivated by considerations of justice or neutrality. The objectives were to bar the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and to avoid any assumption of responsibility by the US for a solution of the Palestine question. And Austin won this point.

But something bigger than the election of another fact-finding commission was achieved at this session. The basis for the just solution of the problem of Palestine was dramatically placed before world public opinion. This of course was not on the agenda that Britain and America had so carefully prepared for the Assembly. But Great Britain and the United States are not the only members of the United Nations. After Andrei Gromyko finished his address at the closing session of the UN the formal victories of the Anglo-American bloc looked small indeed. The formal victories could not obscure the imperialism on which the Anglo-American position rested. The Anglo-American attempt to use the UN session as a mere delaying tactic—under cover of which they would continue to jockey for Middle Eastern hegemony, for oil and bases — had sustained a sound moral defeat.

Gromyko's speech has already evoked an international response comparable, under new circumstances, to Litvinov's "collective security" speech in the defunct League of Nations. It gave this UN session an entirely new significance, as all objective observers admit. The Republican New York *Herald Tribune*, for example, pointed out editorially: "Undoubtedly, the most important single development of the special session was Mr. Gromyko's address. . . . This Russian declaration opened for the first time the possibility of an all-around and roughly equitable solution." Although there is much room for disagreement with the rest of the *Herald Tribune's* comment and with other interpretations that have been read into the Gromyko speech, the decisive thing is that the position enunciated by the Soviet Union provides a practical basis for untangling the Palestine knot. If the problems of Palestine are to be solved many people will have to depart from pet formulas and slogans. The great challenge of

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the Gromyko speech and the practical manner in which it has placed within reach a solution of the Palestine problem lies in its thorough grappling with fundamental realities.

IN ESSENCE the problem of Palestine is a colonial problem—a colonial problem with its own specific complexities and peculiarities. Geographically and strategically Palestine lies at the point where Asia, Africa and Europe converge. It lies in the heart of the rich Middle-Eastern oil fields. Between World War I and World War II it has been developed into the decisive strategic base of Great Britain in the Mediterranean. British policy in Palestine has been dictated by imperial strategy, the pursuit of oil and the cultivation of commercial advantage. In this primary sense the problem of Palestine is no different from the problems of any other colony. British colonial rule in Palestine has been typified by the absence of democracy, by brutality and terror, a conscious cultivation of enmity between the peoples who inhabit the country, and support for the most reactionary forces in both the Arab and Jewish communities as the best props for continued imperialist domination. A solution of the problem of Palestine within an imperialist framework is a contradiction in terms. The root problem of Palestine is: imperialism. Its woes and agonies, its trials and tribulations during the past decades are all the fruit of foreign rule. There is no magic formula that can bring peace, security and the termination of conflicts in Palestine outside the framework of the colonial problem as a whole: freedom from imperialist rule.

In addition Palestine is linked to the aspirations and problems of important sections of the Jewish people. The Jewish community in Palestine today numbers 600,000. It has deep roots in Palestine and aspires for the realization of its national rights. Any attempt to ignore or evade the rights of the Jews in Palestine would not only be unjust but would fail to afford a solution.

At the same time a solution for Palestine cannot ignore or evade the fact that there is a large Arab population, comprised chiefly of peasants and workers, aspiring for an end to semi-feudal bondage and the democratic realization of its national rights.

Imperialism has traditionally pitted Arab against Jew and Jew against Arab in order to betray both peoples and perpetuate imperial rule. The significance of Gromyko's speech lies in the fact that it did not evade or ignore any of the complexities of the Palestine question and at the same time set forward a practical plan for resolving the difficulties within a framework that provides full protection for the national development, national aspirations and desire for self-government of both peoples. The current effort to twist the speech into the old formulas based upon the imperialist pitting of one people against another only turns the clock back. Gromyko's speech was neither pro-Zionist nor anti-Zionist, but sought peace and cooperation between the Jews and the Arabs.

The dominant Zionist leaders have

"Can you still see Harry Truman?"

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sought to channelize the national aspirations of the Jews into the sterile rut of reliance on imperialism. Gromyko demonstrated that the true national aspirations of the Jews can best be satisfied through the movements for national liberation which are ascending with such intensity throughout the colonial world.

The Soviet delegate posed independence as the key problem—explaining that neither an independent Arab state, ignoring the lawful rights of the Jewish people, nor an independent Jewish state, ignoring the lawful rights of the Arab population, are tenable. The solution he emphasized was "a single Arab-Jewish state with equal rights for Jews and Arabs," within which cooperation between the two peoples, for their mutual advantage, can be developed. He also suggested an alternative, a less desirable solution, in the event that relations between the Jews and the Arabs deteriorate to such an extent that a democratic Arab-Jewish state becomes untenable: two independent states, one Jewish and one Arab. The headline writers immediately asserted that Gromyko favored partition. In reality Gromyko's alternative proposal bears no similarity to any of the past partition proposals, all of which have been based upon the continuance of British rule and sovereignty over Palestine. The key to Gromyko's approach, in both instances, is independence.

AFTER watching the conduct of the representatives of the Arab Higher Committee at Lake Success, and after hearing their distinctly anti-Semitic utterances, many question the possibility of cooperation between the Jews and the Arabs. But it should be borne in mind that the reactionary Axis-tainted Arab leaders, who represent the Mufti's coterie, are British imperialism's contribution to the world. Great Britain has consistently worked with and supported the most reactionary top crust of Arab feudal lords. They are not the true representatives of the Arab masses in Palestine. At least two Arabian newspapers in Palestine expressed strong opposition to the representation of the Arab Higher Committee. *Al-Ittachad* wrote: "We refuse to recognize the Arab Higher Executive because it cannot and will not express the will of the Arab public. We reject its political methods, which deny elementary rights to the people." *Al Shaab* wrote: "The Higher Executive has never been elected and has no democratic basis." Most significant is the report that 13,000 Palestinian Arabs wrote letters to the Arab Higher Committee protesting its appointment and demanding election of Arab representatives.

These are the Arab forces with whom cooperation is both possible and necessary. The joint Jewish-Arab strike of British army and government employes in Palestine, which occurred right after the UN session ended, is further demonstrable proof of the practical possibilities of Jewish-Arab cooperation based on the common interests of both peoples. Within the Jewish community there have long been advocates of Jewish-Arab cooperation. In addition to the Communist Party of Palestine there is Dr. Judah L. Magnes' Ichud group and the Hashomer Hatzair party. These groups are among the best known supporters of Jewish-Arab cooperation notwithstanding differences on many other political questions. And the chauvinism of the Arab and Jewish extremists alike are among the factors that have to be combatted if a solution is to be achieved.

The decisive obstacle to a solution in Palestine, however, is American imperialism. The close teamwork between the American and British representatives in the UN Assembly should not obscure the fundamental fact that the Middle East is the scene of acute Anglo-American rivalry. American control of the British Empire is one of the prominent objectives of the "American Century" expansionism embodied in the Truman Doctrine. In the Far East and Pacific the United States has already far outstripped Great Britain as the dominant imperialist power and is now driving to outstrip the British in the Middle East. America has emerged from recent battles over oil with a monopoly of Saudi Arabia's rich oil reserves and vastly extended rights and interests in the British sphere. The Greco-Turkish subsidy and the expanded American grip on the Middle East oil belt consolidate American imperialism for further assaults on Britain's weakened positions—positions not limited to the Mediterranean but extending to the heart of the Empire, to India itself. This rivalry is a factor in the evolution of US-British relations in the Middle East and has been reflected in the sharp verbal tilts between Foreign Minister Bevin and President Truman on the question of Palestine, and the inability of the British and American governments to agree on the implementation of the proposals of the Anglo-American Commission on Palestine which they had jointly set up.

In addition, while American imperialism persistently drives to reduce Britain to an increasingly subordinate position, it wants to preserve the British colonial system and utilize British manpower and administrative machinery for the defense of oil and imperial interests. Thus, hand in hand with the Anglo-American rivalry, we witness the studied American efforts to defend and uphold the British colonial system under US hegemony.

The zigzags of US policy in Palestine are, in part, explained by this contradiction. Richard Crossman, the British Labor member of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine, has the following to say in his book *Palestine Mission* about the American support recently rendered to Britain's departure from the commission's recommendation: "Why, then, did Mr. Byrnes give his approval in Paris to the Morrison Plan? [A partitioned Palestine under federal British rule.] The answer was clear. Deeply embarrassed by the ineptitude of President Truman's first statement on our committee's report, he realized the importance to America of a joint Anglo-American policy in the Middle East, designed to safeguard the oil fields against Russian expansion. Looked at from Paris, where the American-Russian deadlock overshadowed all other issues, the fact of agreement was more important than the details to be agreed upon."

It is, of course, absurd in the face of the facts for Crossman to speak of "Russian expansion," but his remarks do indicate the excuse American imperialism uses in shoring up British colonialism.

The Anglo-American imperialists will not shrink into oblivion because of the moral defeat they have suffered in view of the Soviet's position on Palestine. They will only intensify their efforts to achieve their imperialist objectives. The decisive struggle is therefore, still ahead. Because of the special role of the United States, American public opinion has a special responsibility. Washington must continue to hear demands for a shift in American policy, for American support of a just solution of the Palestine crisis based on UN unity and American-Soviet collaboration.

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review and comment

THE SAGA OF AMERICAN LABOR

Philip Foner's inspiring history shows the working class as the architect of liberty.

By GEORGE SQUIER

HISTORY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES: From Colonial Times to the American Federation of Labor, *by Philip S. Foner. International.* $3.75.

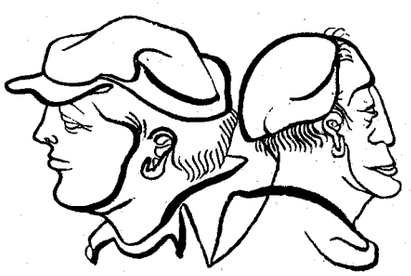
PHILIP FONER has made a great and lasting contribution to the American working-class movement in the writing of its history. Through his own painstaking research and study, he has illuminated the past and brought new light to the present. By its nature the book is a direct challenge to past "interpretations" of labor history. Foner gives the reader a clear picture of the constantly changing but never ending struggle of American workers since before the American Revolution.

Until the appearance of Foner's book there was no labor history that contested the approach put forth by John R. Commons and his associates and followers. Commons in effect took what Lenin termed "economism" (the tendency to separate economic from political issues and to disregard the latter) and sought to make it the basis for a theory of the history of the labor movement. This approach to labor history became a justification for every backward tendency in the AFL. At the same time it was used to attack any effort to transform the labor movement into a militant and aggressive force using both its economic and political power. Fortunately, the workers who organized the CIO never accepted this thesis.

Foner's book becomes a powerful ideological weapon in the fight against economist and other backward tendencies. It demonstrates that the American labor movement has struggled for a militant uncompromising program on its own behalf. From its inception it has been involved in political action to advance its class interest; it has struggled to be ideologically free from the employers through the establishment of a labor press and education. From the beginning the workers were developing a class consciousness which led them, however imperfectly, to seek an end to exploitation and the emancipation of the working class. Foner thus makes clear by the rich testimony of the workers and their leaders that it is the progressive elements in the CIO and AFL, Communist and non-Communist alike, who today uphold the great tradition of militant effort, political independence and class consciousness inherited from our past. Within this book is found the true spirit of the working class.

Much of Foner's material on the basis of the past struggles of the workers brings to mind the comment of the oldtimer who said: "Things ain't what they used to be; as a matter of fact, they never were." Most historians have stressed advantages of free land, free opportunity and high wages that a traditional scarcity of labor is presumed to have given to American workers from earliest times. Foner makes clear that these constituted a grand illusion, often fostered by employers or exploiters such as the Virginia Company, which issued a coin in 1630 reading:

In England land scarce and labor plenty,
In Virginia land free and labor scarce.



G. Morris.

Foner recalls in refutation the countless indentured servants, slaves of their masters for a period of years, who had to submit to torture and even death if they sought to act as free workers; the Irish workers "who worked under killing conditions on canals and turnpikes at wages ranging from fifty to eighty-seven cents a day"; the Lowell factory girls who were virtually the prisoners of the millowners and were paid a wage of two cents per hour; the untold numbers of men and women killed and wounded in the railroad strike of 1877, when they asked for a wage to give bread and shelter to their children. Foner's material drives home, time and again, the truth of Marx's statement that workers' wages have seldom been more than enough for bare subsistence. Poverty and insecurity have been the eternal companions of American workers from the beginning. And equally from the beginning they have fought for a united and militant labor movement.

No less important, in the light of today's events, has been the ever-present thread of political activity in the American labor movement. It is today's CIO-PAC, and not the policy of "rewarding friends and punishing enemies," which represents the American labor tradition. By the very nature of the struggles which they conducted against the employers the workers found it necessary to enter into political activity. This activity was part of their fight for their class. The battles with the police when scabs were brought in to take over textile workers' jobs in 1875; the fight against the court decisions that declared unions to be conspiracies; the battle for legislation to grant first the ten-hour day and later the eight-hour day; the legislative campaigns against anti-labor laws —these were all an integral part of the class struggles conducted by the unions.

Political activity was sporadic, at times organized into political parties, at other times confined to lobbies and demonstrations. But it was always present to some degree. Typical is the case of the struggle against an open-shop bill put forth in New York in 1864. This bill, entitled "An act to

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