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COUNTRY Palestine

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SUBJECT Labor Situation in Nazareth

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League of Nazareth Workers

1. The new Catholic-sponsored labor organization in Nazareth, known as the League of Nazareth Workers, was organized on 31 October 1948 and has now enrolled about eight hundred members. Enough Arab workers registered as members in the initial phases of the organization to eliminate the necessity for registration of priests as workers, as originally had been planned.
2. The new union's charter, which has been approved by the Israeli Government, calls for the establishment of new chapters in other Arab towns as soon as such establishment is feasible.
3. The Central Committee of the League includes two members from each of the predominant groups in Nazareth, including Moslem, Greek Orthodox, Latin Catholic and Greek Catholic.
4. Although many members have been enrolled, the organization is suffering from lack of funds, inasmuch as there is widespread unemployment and members have no money for payment of dues.

Central Labor Office

5. The League of Nazareth Workers, abetted by Histadruth labor leaders, has been attempting to obtain for its members a share of the work which is being done in Lydda under the supervision of Israeli military government officials. Heretofore, the Jewish authorities in Lydda have hired only those laborers sent there by the Communist-dominated Arab Trade Union Congress. The Military Governor has now agreed, however, to set up a central office to which he will refer when he has a call for labor.
6. The proposed labor office will be composed of two representatives each from the Arab Trade Union Congress, the League of Nazareth Workers, the Histadruth, and a new organization composed of former employees of the mandatory government. The six non-Communist members of this office

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will be able to break the present ATUC control of labor, informant claims, and will be guaranteed a fair share of jobs for the members of the unions they represent. Informant adds, however, that, until more work is available, no union in Nazareth will be able to make much headway and that the real struggle will come when conditions return to a more normal state and when laborers are able to move freely to Haifa and elsewhere, in pursuit of work.

Communist Activities in Nazareth

7. Communists in Nazareth have been trying actively to hamper the efforts of the new League of Nazareth Workers, which they accuse of being an Anglo-American tool and regard as an attempt to suppress the workers and their legitimate rights. Nazareth workers in Lydda are being incited against the new organization and Communist organizers have gone to both Lydda and Ramleh, in order to found new chapters of the Arab Trade Union Congress in an attempt to forestall the growth of the League. Monsignor Vergani, Latin Vicar General for Galilee, has been accused by the Communists of being an American tool, and other attacks on the Catholic clergy have been made in an attempt to discredit the Catholic Church in the eyes of all the Arabs.

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8. Munim Jarjura and Joseph Abdu are both Communists who have been active in the Nazareth area, [redacted] Jarjura is an ardent Communist of long standing who formerly was a minor official in the postal department of the mandatory government. About 1942 he was dismissed from his post because of his communist activities, which were interpreted as detrimental to the war efforts of the mandatory government. Informant believes that Jarjura is not an important official of the Communist Party, but that he is a paid employee who is used for general organizational and propaganda activities. His present activities have been confined to Nazareth, Ramleh, and Lydda, where he has been working hard to counteract the influence of the League of Nazareth Workers. Joseph Abdu is the secretary of the newly-formed Communist Party of Israel. Abdu has been active in Nazarene affairs and [redacted] he controls activities of the Arab Trade Union Congress there through contacts who travel between Haifa and Nazareth.

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Military Government in Nazareth

9. The Military Governor of Nazareth, Elisha (fmu), is a man of unknown political affiliations who, wittingly or not, [redacted] has played into the hands of leftist interests. In his desire to secure workers he negotiated with the Communist-dominated Arab Trade Union Congress and, in order to avoid having to deal with more than one labor organization, he discouraged the formation of labor groups in opposition to the ATUC until forced by Jewish authorities to permit their formation.

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10. Several well-known leftist sympathizers assist with the government of Nazareth. The extreme left socialist views of Avraham Ben Sur, Jewish labor organizer and chief adviser to Elisha on labor matters, are self-admitted. Simon Bornstein, assistant governor who handles political and economic affairs, is strongly suspected of having Communist connections. Bornstein's secretary, Avraham Abbud, is a Communist and a hard-working organizer, [REDACTED] who adds that Abbud appears to have considerable influence over Bornstein and has an important voice in the administration of political affairs in Nazareth.

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Israeli Government Action

11. The Israeli Government has become interested in the Nazareth problem through the intervention of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and is aiding in the struggle against the Communists, who have become much stronger than is comfortable for the Israelis, [REDACTED] Varadi (fmu), representative in Nazareth of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is doing what he can to secure the removal of persons who have proved sympathetic to the Communists.

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