The Influence of Organized Labor on U.S. Policy toward Israel, 1945–1967

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Scholars have produced a large and distinguished body of scholarship on U.S. relations with Israel since 1948. Numerous writers have debated the relative importance of domestic political, humanitarian, diplomatic, and strategic factors behind U.S. support for the creation of the Jewish state. Others have examined the evolution of the U.S. policy toward Israel’s on-going conflict with its Arab neighbors. Various works have probed the political and economic ties between the two states.¹ Several historians have debated the idea that the United States and Israel have developed a “special relationship” over the half century of Israeli statehood.² Consistent with the rising popularity of new modes of inquiry in diplomatic history, a few scholars recently have probed the cultural, religious, and gender dimensions of the U.S.-Israeli relationship.³

Although a few scholars have examined the unofficial, nonstatist component of U.S.-Israeli relations, the important story of the interaction between major U.S. labor unions and the state of Israel has remained untold.⁴ This essay explores that relationship from the late 1940s to the late 1960s. It examines, first, the degree to which leaders of U.S. labor sympathized with Israeli national interests and encouraged the government in Washington to make policy decisions favorable to Israel, especially with regard to Israel’s ongoing conflict with its Arab neighbors. Second, it explores the extent to which the Israeli government and the General Federation of Labor in Israel (the Histadrut) exploited the sympathy of U.S. labor by mobilizing it as a potent political force that worked within the United States to Israel’s benefit. Third, to a limited extent it also explores whether labor activism significantly affected the development of official policy by the U.S. government.
After providing evidence of the deep and personal ties between U.S. labor leaders and Israeli officials, this essay addresses these issues through a series of case studies of labor activism on Israel's behalf in the 1947–67 period.

The first twenty years of Israeli statehood coincided with a dynamic era in U.S. labor history. During the 1933–45 period, organized labor had grown in size and influence, embraced international involvement by the U.S. government, and shed its own isolationism in reaction to the foreign threats posed by fascism. For two decades after 1947, major unions dominated by the AFL-CIO strongly approved the prosecution of the Cold War by the federal government, in part because they sincerely opposed communism in principle and in part because massive government spending on defense generated substantial economic benefits for workers. Major unions collaborated with the government by battling to purge West European trade unions of communist influence. Labor remained a fairly stalwart supporter of the Cold War consensus in the 1960s, when it endorsed the government's anticom- munist crusade in Vietnam.5

Despite its partnership with the government on foreign policy, organized labor did not enjoy consistent power and influence within U.S. domestic politics and policy. In the late 1940s, labor consolidated its partnership with the Democratic Party, securing a continuation of the New Deal by rallying behind Harry Truman and pledging loyalty in the Cold War. Although they remained well financed and professionally managed, however, major unions thereafter confronted problems such as stagnant membership rolls, declining influence on industrial relations law, and inconsistency in influencing elections. In the 1950s, conservatives dominated national elections despite labor opposition, Congress and the FBI hounded some unions over alleged corruption and Communist leanings, and public tolerance of strikes and activism waned. In the 1960s, major unions clashed with the White House over wages and inflation policy and considered the Great Society an insufficient step toward their objective of economic democracy. Students, antiwar protesters, and civil rights activists of the New Left, ironically, attacked labor because it remained committed to the war in Vietnam.6

Despite these limitations, organized labor in the United States attracted the attention of Israeli authorities who searched for means to influence U.S. official policy toward the Middle East. A key bridge in the relationship between Israel and U.S. labor was the General Federation of Labor in Israel, or the Histadrut. Established in December 1920, the Histadrut provided social security, military defense, and a form of political democracy to Jewish residents of Mandatory Palestine, and its agricultural settlements established a Jewish presence in the land later accorded to Israel. By some accounts it
served as a government substitute before Israeli independence and thereafter remained equal to the state itself in terms of political and economic power. “Our enterprises,” Histadrut’s U.S. representative Moshe Bitan explained privately in 1953, “have been pioneers in agriculture, irrigation, housing, public building, transportation, and even in some industrial fields.” In 1967, the union enrolled 90 percent of Israeli wage earners; it provided mutual aid and health insurance to 70 percent of Israel’s population; and it owned and operated a vast network of manufacturing, agricultural, marketing, and service cooperatives that generated one-quarter of Israel’s gross national product.⁷

Together with the Israeli government, Histadrut developed friendly relations with numerous U.S. labor unions. Perhaps its closest ties were to the Trade Union Division of the National Committee for Labor Israel (TUD/NCLI)⁸ and the American Trade Union Council for Histadrut (ATUCFH). In the early 1950s, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) consistently recognized the TUD/NLCI as “the living bridge between the American workers and the Israeli workers,” and a decade later Histadrut Secretary General Aharon Becker applauded TUD/NLCI Director Moe Falikman for the “unflagging friendship and solidarity which had by now become a fine tradition in American-Israel labour movement relations.” The ATUCFH formally described itself as “an organization representing American trade unionists of all faiths, who support the program of Histadrut.” In the 1950s, its leaders often discussed with Histadrut representatives strategies for shaping U.S. policy to Israel’s advantage. Prominent U.S. labor leaders were involved. In the TUD/NCLI, International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) Vice President Joseph Breslaw served as an early chairman; AFL President William Green and Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) President Philip Murray served as honorary chairmen; and United Auto Workers (UAW) President Walter Reuther and AFL Vice President Matthew Woll served as honorary vice-chairmen. An early chairman of the larger NCLI was Joseph Schlossberg, former general secretary of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA).⁹

One of Histadrut’s best friends among U.S. labor leaders was George Meany, who occupied pivotal positions in the AFL (secretary-general from 1939 to 1952 and president from 1952 to 1955) and the AFL-CIO (president from 1955 to 1979). Meany emerged as a staunch supporter of Israel, in part because he admired the Histadrut’s role in establishing the state. “There is a bond between wage earners that is like the bond between brothers and sisters,” he explained in an address in 1950. “When Histadrut triumphed at last, it was natural that our hearts should swell with happiness.” Meany added in a speech to the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC) in 1955 that “we
have an interest, a tremendous interest, in the State of Israel—we’ve expressed that for many, many years by a support of Histadrut. . . . In the final analysis Histadrut is Israel.”

Israeli officials naturally tried to build upon the foundation of Meany’s admiration for Histadrut. Representative Moshe Bitan attended annual conventions of the AFL and AFL-CIO to express his federation’s admiration and to encourage AFL resolutions of amity. “Our appreciation should go to Histadrut,” Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett wrote after the AFL-CIO passed a favorable resolution in 1955, “for the constant labors of its able emissaries over the years in bringing about within the American movement this full understanding of our case.” Secretary General Becker reported that Meany’s visit to Israel in the autumn of 1961 “was a successful one. . . . We all feel that our relationship with the AFL-CIO has been strengthened by this visit.” When he toured AFL-CIO headquarters during a trip to Washington in June 1964, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol declared that “we, in Israel, derive strength from the continuous expression of your fraternal solidarity.” Histadrut representative Ben-Zion Ilan concluded that this encounter “reflected the special cordiality of our relations and the high esteem in which the . . . AFL-CIO is regarded in Israel.”

On at least one occasion, Israeli officials exploited Meany’s sympathy for their own political gain. When the government in Jerusalem wanted to influence U.S. policy toward the Arab states in late 1957, for instance, Israeli Labor Attache Nathan Bar-Yaacov briefed AFL-CIO counsel Arthur Goldberg on Israel’s objectives and gave him a position paper. Goldberg then discussed the issue with Meany, who pledged to chat informally with President Dwight D. Eisenhower during a reception for a visiting foreign head of state.

Occasionally, the AFL/AFL-CIO limited its support of Israel. In late 1953, Meany temporarily delayed issuing a statement criticizing State Department policy toward an Israeli-Jordanian border dispute for fear that it might damage labor interests. More important, in an address delivered during a period of rising Arab-Israeli tensions in 1955, Meany alluded to the multiethnic composition of the AFL and urged Israel to seek “real peace based on equitable adjustment of the troubles between the Arabs and the Jewish people in the old Jewish homeland.” On the other hand, AFL and AFL-CIO leaders never contemplated siding with Israel’s adversaries. For example, when an Egyptian labor representative protested Moshe Bitan’s words at the 1954 AFL convention and requested time for a rebuttal, Meany refused even to answer his telegrams.

A more serious threat to the AFL-CIO–Israeli friendship surfaced in 1964
when Israel endorsed UN membership for Communist China. Jay Lovestone of the AFL-CIO international affairs department complained to Histadrut officials that “I cannot for the life of me see why Israeli democracy . . . pursues any course which would strengthen the Mao Tse Tung dictatorship.” Angry, Lovestone added that “since I am not a diplomat, I must state frankly:—Apparently your Deputy Premier [Abba Eban] studied how to irritate friends and undermine friendship.” Even after a breakfast meeting between Prime Minister Eshkol and labor leaders, Lovestone remained angry. “The breakfast was good but [showed] too much harmony, and, as you know, too much harmony is not the best dish.” When he read a copy of Lovestone’s invective, Eban fired back his own salvo. He defended Israel’s policy toward China as designed to create “a better representation of the ‘new states’ of Africa and Asia in the U.N. . . . One does not win American friendship by an obsequious concealment of honestly held judgments,” he added, letting his anger show. “You have no right . . . to indulge in coarse, personal discourtesy.” Eban also complained to Meany, Reuther, and others in the AFL-CIO leadership about Lovestone’s words.  

 Israeli officials enjoyed a much closer relationship with David Dubinsky, president of ILGWU since 1932 and treasurer of the JLC from the 1940s to the 1960s. Israeli officials commonly included Dubinsky in a select group of U.S. Jewish leaders called upon to provide expert advice about Israel’s financial problems, and they appealed to him to support Israeli bond sale drives, in hopes that “if Dubinsky [is] drawn into [the] c[a]mpaign there [is] almost no limit [to the] amounts we might get.” They also routinely scheduled meetings between Dubinsky and visiting Israeli officials, including Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in 1956 and Foreign Secretary Golda Meir in 1959, and in 1961 Ben-Gurion invited the union leader to visit his home at Sde Boqer. Dubinsky became especially close to Eliahu Elath. In 1956, he arranged a luncheon for Elath, then Israeli ambassador to London, and various U.S. labor leaders, and in the 1960s, when Elath had become president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he and Dubinsky engaged in friendly correspondence. Dubinsky’s sympathy paid dividends for Israel. In May 1957, to cite one example, Israeli officials recognized him for adding favorable language to a draft resolution on the Suez Canal transit issue before the AFL-CIO executive committee passed it. Foreign Minister Meir wrote to Dubinsky “to offer to you our warmest tribute for your unwavering support over many years of the causes of the Histadruth and of Israel’s National redemption.”

 Israeli and Histadrut officials also cultivated close relations with other major labor leaders. Walter Reuther, president of the UAW and president of the CIO after 1952, became a close friend. “I want you to know that your
problems are our problems," Reuther wrote to Histadrut Chief of Foreign Relations Reuven Barkatt, "and Israel and the Histadrut are ever in our minds, for we realize that without Israel the forces of freedom and democracy in the Middle East will be without leadership and without foundation." The UAW also eagerly argued Israel's case on important issues. In January 1957, for example, when the writer Norman Thomas published evidence of Israeli atrocities during the Suez War, Labor Attache Bar-Yaakov drafted a letter of protest for signature by Ben B. Seligman of the UAW's International Affairs Division. Three months later, when Seligman needed information to reply to a letter about Arabs living in Israel, he secured it from the Histadrut representative.16

Israel also enjoyed the support of Jacob S. Potofsky, president of the ACWA and vice president of the AFL-CIO. While visiting Israel in September 1958, Potofsky declared that "the American workers in the AFL-CIO are your friends and brothers. They believe in Israel, its philosophy and its future. . . . American workers will tolerate no force of aggression, direct or indirect, by any force on the people and the state of Israel." Labor Attache Bar-Yaakov cultivated a friendship with leaders of the National Education Association, such as Paul Smith, secretary for international relations. With less success, Bar-Yaakov also tried to mobilize John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers. (Lewis seemed uninterested, stressing that "he does not know anything, he has no influence with the administration, and nobody asks and he does not provide any advice." ) On the other hand, Israel did enjoy the support of the United Steelworkers of America, which passed favorable resolutions in 1954 and 1958, and many other craft unions, such as the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (CIO). Histadrut also nurtured close relations with A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.17

In myriad ways, Israeli officials worked to cultivate their close friendships with U.S. labor leaders. Histadrut sponsored annual tours of Israel by leaders of AFL-CIO. "Each time I come back from a visit to Israel," Reuther wrote to Histadrut International Department Head Yehudit Simhoni, "I return with my spirit refreshed and much inspired by what I have seen and heard as you work and struggle to build the State of Israel." The NCLI awarded its "Humanitarian Award of the Histadrut" to George Meany in 1956 and Walter Reuther in 1958. (Previous winners had included such luminaries as Harry Truman and Eleanor Roosevelt.) With tremendous success, Israeli officials also sought financial donations from U.S. labor unions, whose generosity they rewarded by naming public facilities in Israel after the union leaders. In 1955, Haifa named a new soccer stadium after David Dubinsky, and the ILGWU hospital in Beersheba opened in 1959. In 1958, with AFL-CIO
representatives in attendance, Israelis dedicated the Joseph Breslaw Center, a public facility in Nahora; the William Green Cultural Center, a library and meeting hall in Haifa; and the Philip Murray Memorial Center, a public building in Eilat. In the 1960s, they also erected a stadium in Haifa named for Luigi Antonini, a vice president of ILGWU; the Walter Reuther youth center in Holon; and the George Meany Stadium in Nazareth. As Histadrut Secretary General Pinhas Lavon told AFL-CIO convention delegates in 1959, “I must stress the important aid given to us by the trade unions in America. Many institutions in Israel, in city and village, have been built for the welfare of the worker and his family, thanks to the generosity of your hearts.”

The general friendship between U.S. labor and Israel also became evident in various unions’ pro-Israel political activism in 1945–67. Labor unions consistently supported Israel at crucial crossroads in its history such as the establishment of the state in the late 1940s, the debate over providing weapons to Israel and Arab states in the early 1950s, the Suez War of 1956–57, and the Six Day War of 1967. U.S. unions also supported the Afro-Asian Institute, an indirect Israeli initiative to build political alliances in the Third World.

U.S. labor leaders vigorously supported Zionists’ efforts in 1945–48 to promote immigration of Jewish refugees to Palestine and to establish an independent State of Israel. In 1945–46, William Green, David Dubinsky, and Joseph Breslaw of the TUD/NCLP publicly and privately endorsed Zionists’ demands that Britain admit one hundred thousand Jewish displaced persons to Palestine. “In America, our great labor movement has been tremendously disappointed over the attitude of the party in power in Great Britain toward . . . Palestine,” Green intoned in a speech at the AFL annual meeting in 1946. The convention passed resolutions demanding admission of one hundred thousand refugees and termination of British rule in Palestine and urging President Harry S. Truman to compel Britain to comply. Under Green’s influence, locals such as the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor appealed to the State Department to support the Zionist demands. Histadrut Executive Joseph Sprinzak applauded these moves, and Secretary General Golda Meyerson urged Dubinsky to “use all your contacts in preventing new unnecessary tragedy for many thousands” of Jews.

Labor leaders took several other steps to back Zionism. The NCLP raised $3 million for Histadrut and sponsored a pro-Zionist mass rally in New York City on 12 June 1946, and the TUD/NCLP called on U.S. labor to bolster Histadrut in its effort to absorb immigrants and develop the infrastructure of Jewish Palestine. Labor leaders also pressured the British government to accept Zionist demands. “As friends of [the] British Labor Government,” Dubinsky wrote Prime Minister Clement Attlee, ILGWU members expected
British compliance. The AFL, Green declared at a May 1947 labor rally in Atlantic City, “wants to make it clear to its friends in Great Britain that it stands firm with the Palestine Federation of Labor, the Histadrut, at this moment. We, the representatives of labor, will never be satisfied, will never stop, will never cease, until the Jewish people are granted justice and accorded the right to establish their own commonwealth in Palestine, where they can safely live.” The AFL passed a pro-Zionist resolution at its 1947 annual meeting, and JLC President Ben Gold and Secretary-Treasurer Max Steinberg called on the United Nations to “stop the state of warfare in Palestine precipitated by Great Britain” and to revoke Britain's mandate.20

U.S. labor leaders also rallied to the Zionist cause during the late 1947 UN discussion on whether to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. Dubinsky, Green, and Breslaw appealed to Truman to approve the partition plan despite State Department reservations, and Matthew Woll, chair of the IAD, appealed to both Luxembourg and Haiti to vote for the plan when the UN considered it on 29 November 1947. In the winter of 1948, when the State Department proposed to shelve the partition plan and establish a trusteeship in Palestine, Green assured Histadrut Executive Sprinzak that the AFL would pressure Truman to stand by the partition resolution. Histadrut called upon trade unions, the TUC declared, “to voice [the] strongest demands that [the] United States adhere to [the] decision adopted by General Assembly and vigorously promoted by our government.” With the blessing of Green and Murray, the TUC organized a general work stoppage and “huge demonstration” by labor on 14 April 1948 to protest the “shameless betrayal” of Zionism by the State Department.21

The appeals of organized labor were important, although not exclusive, factors in shaping the development of Truman’s policy toward Israeli statehood. Truman personally offered diplomatic support to the emergence of Israel at several decisive moments, most notably by supporting partition at the United Nations in November 1947 and recognizing Israel as a state in May 1948. Although many considerations shaped his thinking about Palestine, calculations about domestic politics and public opinion were important determinants of his policy.22 Lobbying by organized labor, which Truman considered an important political asset, contributed to the president’s decisions to support Israel.

American labor leaders saluted the Israeli declaration of independence in mid-May 1948 and remained steadfast supporters of the new state thereafter. Responsive to a call from Histadrut, leaders of the AFL, TUC, and JLC pressured Truman to supply weapons to the Jewish military forces in Palestine even before independence. “It is our purpose to defend that independent
country established in Palestine," Green declared to the AFL annual meeting in 1948, "and render to the Jewish people there every ounce of help and protection that we can give them." When Isaac Ben-Zvi, Histadrut representative to the convention, encouraged the AFL to support Israel, Green replied that "we will respond whole-heartedly to your request and stand with you and fight with you for the enjoyment of freedom, liberty, and democracy in that great country." The AFL resolved "to do its all to help—particularly the Histadrut, our sister labor federation—to build the Land of Israel into a thriving genuine democracy." During Israel's critical first year of independence, labor leaders pressed the Truman administration to accept Israeli views on several contentious Arab-Israeli disputes, such as the status of Jerusalem, the disposition of Arab refugees, and the demarcation of borders. They also advocated immediate de jure recognition of Israel and approval of Israel's request for a $100 million loan.23

Labor activism on behalf of Israel was carefully cultivated by Israeli government officials and leaders of Histadrut. For example, in November 1948, Michael S. Comay of the Israeli delegation to the UN informed Dubinsky of major issues under discussion at the UN, suggested what policy he wanted the United States to adopt on each issue, and added that "anything that can be done at this end [in the United States] to promote such a move forward would be welcome." Minister of Labor, Housing, and Public Works Golda Meyerson invited Dubinsky to provide economic advice to her government, and Ambassador to Washington Eliahu Elath, citing U.S.-Israeli differences at the Lausanne peace talks, encouraged Dubinsky to provide "friendly assistance in order to safeguard the vital interests of our young state." In August 1949, the Israeli embassy apparently supplied a position paper on major issues to Dubinsky and others. The TUC/NCLI took credit for convincing William Green to write to Truman in September 1949 opposing State Department plans to internationalize Jerusalem over Israeli objections. In 1951, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion appealed to Dubinsky for general friendship and invited him to visit Israel.24

U.S. labor actively supported Israel during U.S.-Israeli discussion in 1950 about U.S. arms supply policy. Fearful of Arab aggression against Israel after Britain resumed shipments of weapons to Arab states in late 1949, Israeli officials requested comparable arms supply from the United States. When the Truman administration remained unresponsive, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett ordered his embassy staff in Washington to initiate a vigorous publicity campaign in the United States and mobilize U.S. Jews to argue Israel's case. The Israeli embassy subtly encouraged key labor leaders and other supporters in the United States to pressure the president to modify his policy.25 Israeli officials briefly debated how extensively to mobilize labor to argue
their case on arms. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., had arranged an audience with Truman for Green and Murray, unrelated to the arms issue, apparently in hope that the labor leaders could leverage an invitation for Ben-Gurion to visit the White House. Once the arms issue surfaced, some officials in the Israeli embassy tried to convince Morgenthau to cancel the meeting, for fear that an appeal to the White House might alienate Secretary of State Dean Acheson and other key officials in the State Department. Ambassador Elath, however, overruled his advisers and endorsed the visit, confident that a show of support by labor leaders would be worth the risk of angering Acheson. In fact, Elath also supplied Green and Murray with background briefing papers, taking care only to deliver the papers secretly through “trustworthy members” of their unions so as to avoid “undesirable effects on Acheson.”

On 10 February 1950, Murray and Green visited Truman and appealed to him to safeguard Israel and preserve Histadrut by opposing British rearmament of Arabs, by arming Israel, and by releasing economic aid to the Jewish state. Afterward, the labor leaders publicly announced that they had met Truman at the request of “the leaders of the World Jewish Movements and organizations,” thus disguising Israel’s role. Afterward, Murray told an Israeli official that the talk went “splendidly” and that Truman “showed sincere and friendly interest in Israel.” Murray also informed the CIO Executive Board that Truman “promised to give every reasonable degree of consideration to the proposal of American labor.” Green and Murray, the TUC announced, “deserve the utmost gratitude from all friends of Israel and of its labor organization, the Histadrut.” Indeed, Pinchas Lubianiker, Histadrut secretary general, thanked Green and Murray for “this new proof of your unceasing support and assistance.” On 17 February, Murray and Potofsky also met with Acheson to press for State Department approval of arms sales to Israel. Elath similarly briefed the two men before the meeting, and afterward they told him that Acheson seemed unconvinced of the merits in Israel’s case.

Despite the apparent favorable effect of Green and Murray’s call on Truman, the arms situation initially remained unchanged. In April, therefore, the Israeli government mobilized Dubinsky to continue arguing its case. Ambassador Elath apparently sent Dubinsky a long memorandum on Israel’s view of Arab rearmament. Unable to schedule a personal meeting with Acheson before he departed the country, Dubinsky, together with Jacob Potofsky, sent the State Department a long written plea to arm Israel and force the Arab states to recognize and make peace with Israel. Interestingly, the Dubinsky-Potofsky letter borrowed substantial excerpts from the memorandum by Elath, including general details about the levels of British weapons reaching Arab states as well as specific phrases such as “the good faith of
the United States is involved.” The union leaders made minor changes to personalize their message, such as changing “US government” in the Israeli paper to “our Government” in their letter. Assistant Secretary of State George McGhee sent Dubinsky a noncommittal reply, and Dubinsky promptly sent a copy of that letter to Elath.\footnote{29}

These appeals by labor leaders, together with similar entreaties by pro-Zionists in Congress and elsewhere within the country, convinced Truman to order the State Department to alter national policy. Initially, State Department and Pentagon officials refused Israeli requests for weapons on the grounds that Arab rearmament posed no security risk to Israel and that U.S. weapons supply to Israel would undermine vital Western security interests in Arab states. The National Security Council (NSC) approved this policy on 6 April 1950. Truman, however, who did not attend that meeting of the NSC, subsequently rejected the council’s decision because it appeared “much too one-sided and . . . would cause trouble.” Truman questioned the wisdom of arming Arab states and noted that “we are not doing what we should to arm the Jews appropriately.” The president thus forced the State Department to improvise a new policy, manifest in the American-Anglo-French Tripartite Declaration, that sought to balance arms supply to Israel and the Arab states.\footnote{30}

U.S. labor also played a significant role during the Suez crisis of 1956–57. After months of mounting tension between Egypt and Israel, war erupted on 29 October 1956 when Israel invaded Egypt with hopes of stopping terrorist incursions from Gaza and Sinai, damaging Egypt’s military capabilities before it absorbed promised Soviet weapons, and undermining the credibility of Nasser. (Israel attacked in collusion with Britain and France, which had quarreled with Nasser for months over his nationalization of the Suez Canal Company and other issues.) The crisis abated in early 1957, when Israel, under compulsion of the Eisenhower administration, conditionally withdrew its military forces from Gaza and the Sinai.

Throughout the crisis, Israeli officials sought the backing of U.S. labor. In early 1956, U.S. Jewish leaders invited Dubinsky, Potofsky, and Victor Reuther of the UAW to a conference on security threats to Israel. In June, Israeli Minister Reuven Shiloah and Labor Attache Bar-Yaacov stressed to Meaney the dangers Egypt posed to Israel and encouraged him to press the Eisenhower administration to supply Israel arms. Once war broke out, the Histadrut Executive Committee promptly endorsed the Israeli government’s position that the attack on Egypt was a defensive act, provoked by months of hostility emanating from Cairo. Moshe Bar-Tal, the Histadrut representative in the United States, developed a similar rationale in a letter to Walter Reuther.\footnote{31}
These appeals from Histadrut were instrumental in shaping labor's views of the crisis. In the months preceding the attack on Egypt, U.S. labor leaders had expressed a profound desire for a peaceful settlement of the Anglo-French-Egyptian controversy over the canal company.32 Once Israel attacked Egypt, however, they rallied to Israel's side. "While action taken by Israel has been subject of grave criticism by [the] United Nations," Dubinsky wired Histadrut Secretary General Lavon, "we are keenly aware of grave provocations to which Israel has been subjected by threats and attacks by [the] Egyptian dictator and his allies. At this most critical moment we wish to assure you of our continuing solidarity and brotherly feelings and express [our] hope that out of [the] travail of [the] present situation will emerge [a] lasting peace." Lavon replied that he "deeply appreciate[d this] assurance of solidarity and brotherhood in these trying days" and asked Dubinsky so to inform "Meany and other labor leaders." In an address to a Histadrut convention on 24 November 1956, ILGWU Vice President Isidore Nagler observed that "now Israel's very existence is threatened" and pledged that "the American labor movement must rededicate ourselves and redouble our efforts to extend all aid to Israel, moral and material, not only for the duration of this emergency, but beyond that, so that the bastion of liberty may continue to thrive in peace and freedom."33

Other unions offered similar support. "While the invasion of Egypt was in violation of the UN Charter," the AFL-CIO Executive Committee resolved on 30 November, "it was a direct consequence of years of provocation on the part of Egypt." Even though this resolution "criticiz[ed] the invasion of Egypt," the JLC took heart that it "stressed the responsibility borne by the provocative actions of Egypt's dictator Nasser." Indeed, Bar-Yaakov listed Meany's initiatives and observed that "it is possible to say that this week was 'Israel week' for George Meany." The Transport Workers' Union and UAW also passed resolutions in November 1956 justifying Israel's resort to force and demanding that the Eisenhower administration work toward a permanent peace settlement that included Arab recognition of Israel. "Years of threat to your nation's very existence," Reuther cabled Histadrut leaders on 29 November, explaining the UAW resolution, "finally made defensive military action on the part of your nation inevitable.... We pledge to use all our influence in persuading our Government to take the lead in bringing about the direct negotiations that will lead to such a peace." Lavon replied that Reuther's words "are of tremendous importance to us in our struggle for peace and progress."34

JLC activism appears to have been even more extensive. JLC leaders resolved that Israeli military action "was a desperate and heroic action of self-defense," and they called for "a firm peace in the Middle East which should
be guaranteed by the United Nations and the United States.” In January 1957, the JLC took credit that “strong resolutions were passed and immediately sent to the U.S. State Department by local labor groups as well as the national AFL-CIO accusing the Arabs of provoking war tensions in the Middle East.” It also compiled a long list of initiatives it undertook during the Suez crisis to mobilize national, state, and local labor groups to lobby officials in Washington on Israel’s behalf. JLC leaders claimed to have secured the AFL-CIO resolution and to have distributed copies of it to every local in the nation. Such action enabled the JLC “to obtain resolutions favorable to Israel from some of the labor leadership who appeared reluctant to contradict the policies outlined by [Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles.”

Labor remained supportive of Israel during a showdown between the Eisenhower administration and the Ben-Gurion government over the terms of Israel’s withdrawal from the Sinai and Gaza. After weeks of wrangling, Eisenhower tried to compel an unconditional Israeli withdrawal by threatening to impose economic sanctions on Israel. In a series of letters to labor leaders, Histadrut Representative Bar-Tal carefully explained Israel’s case in its political, legal, and moral dimensions, and key labor leaders rallied to Israel’s side. Meany issued a statement on 22 February 1957, for instance, declaring that the AFL-CIO “strongly opposed” sanctions on Israel. “We consider such a move a travesty on justice. . . . It is difficult for American labor to understand how our country ever got maneuvered into the impossible position of siding with the dictatorships and against democracy in the Middle East.” Numerous local unions across the United States sent similar pro-Israel letters to the Eisenhower administration and members of Congress.

In the end, Eisenhower refrained from imposing sanctions on Israel mainly because of widespread public and congressional disapproval of such a step. Eisenhower and Dulles realized that unless public opinion remained favorable, “we will lose.” Dulles noted that “it was impossible to hold the line because we got no support from the Protestant elements of the country. All we get is a battering from the Jews.” Israeli officials rejoiced at the groundswell of public opinion that prevented sanctions and took partial credit for causing it. “On the questions of sanctions,” Y. Harry Levin of the Israeli embassy observed, “there was as close to unanimous opposition as I have ever seen here on any Israel issue.” The views of organized labor, of course, were a significant part of such public sentiment.

Perhaps the most novel way in which U.S. labor assisted Israel was its support of Histadrut’s Institute for Training Leadership of Labor and Cooperative Movements in Newly Independent States in Africa and Asia, commonly
known as the Afro-Asian Institute. "We are able to influence all the countries in Asia and Africa except China," Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion noted privately in 1958, "to bring from these countries youngsters to study." Established formally in Tel Aviv in October 1960, the institute provided intensive education in social reform and economic development to trade unionists from newly independent states, with the objective of steering such countries away from communism and promoting friendly relations between them and Israel. Seventy students from twenty-four countries enrolled in the first six-month program, and by 1967, the institute claimed 1,007 graduates from sixty-two countries throughout the Third World.38

Working through Histadrut, Ben-Gurion secured the full support of the AFL-CIO and other U.S. labor unions for the institute. The AFL-CIO publicly endorsed the project, as Meany explained, so that "Afro-Asian students . . . may be trained to become effective democratic fighters against Communist subversion and Soviet imperialism." Meany also hoped that the institute would "develop and strengthen free trade unions as a bulwark against despotism and tyranny." In addition, Meany accepted appointment, together with former ambassador to Washington Eliahu Elath, as co-chairman of the institute, and he in turn named Dubinsky, Reuther, Potorisky, and George M. Harrison (president of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks) to the twelve-person board of governors.39

U.S. labor also backed the institute with cash. In February 1960, the AFL-CIO allocated $180,000 to the school, half its expected operating costs for its first three years. By 1965, U.S. labor unions had contributed $508,500 to the institute. Thereafter the AFL-CIO national board curtailed its funding but urged Histadrut to seek money from local unions. In 1967, in reply to urgent appeals from Histadrut, the AFL-CIO pledged $9,000 per year for three years, and members of its Executive Council individually pledged an additional $69,000 per year for three years from their own international unions.40

Institute and Histadrut leaders credited U.S. labor for the success of the school in Tel Aviv. In 1963, Histadrut Representative Ilan attributed much of the institute’s success to the AFL-CIO’s "moral and material support." The Kennedy administration, whose Peace Corps embraced some of the same ideals as the Afro-Asian Institute, expressed admiration for the school. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs W. Averell Harriman commended the institute as "particularly outstanding. No technical assistance program is more effective in helping meet the great and growing needs of developing countries for technical skills and knowledge."41

U.S. labor rallied fully to Israel’s side in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. Mounting Arab-Israeli tensions escalated dramatically in May 1967, after
Egypt ordered United Nations troops to evacuate the Sinai and closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel-bound ships. As the United States and other countries tried diplomatically to persuade Egypt to reverse its actions, Israeli leaders decided to reopen the waterway by launching a military assault on Egypt. The attack began on 5 June, and within six days Israel defeated Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.

As early as February 1967, the AFL-CIO Executive Council issued a statement deploring Egyptian and Syrian provocations, accusing the Soviet Union of encouraging their reckless behavior, and urging the Lyndon B. Johnson administration to defend Israeli interests. On 1 June, at the height of the war scare, Meany declared that Egyptian threats against Israel were signs of Soviet expansion against the Western world. "Aided and abetted by the USSR, Nasser is fanatically rallying all Arab countries for a war to destroy Israel," he observed. "We have here the voice of Nasser, but the hand of [Soviet Premier Leonid] Brezhnev." Meany warned that failure to defend Israel would encourage Soviet aggression and imperil "the security of our country, of the entire free world." Meany's statement appeared in advertisements in major newspapers across the country.42

In late May, other labor groups forthrightly declared their support of Israel and called on the Johnson administration to support the Jewish state. On 22 May, the JLC cabled Johnson urging him "publicly to reaffirm the United States' commitment to the territorial integrity and security of Israel." The group indicated its satisfaction when Johnson, two days later, reaffirmed the territorial integrity of all Middle East states and free transit on the Gulf of Aqaba, and it promptly urged members of Congress to endorse the president's words. The JLC also mobilized other labor groups to similar action. It convinced the New York Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO) to schedule a mass meeting on 5 June to pressure Johnson to oppose Egypt's "new threat to world peace, and to the territorial integrity and security of Israel." The JLC's local affiliates also organized mass action. For instance, its Michigan Region chapter convinced the Michigan and Wayne County AFL-CIO officers to cable Johnson, pushed a pro-Israel resolution through the Michigan House of Representatives, introduced another in the Detroit City Council, and organized a "community-wide outdoor mass meeting" to show support for the Jewish state. Similar activities were organized in every region of the country.43

The ATUCFH also rallied to Israel's side. Chairman Moe Falikman urged various labor leaders to declare pro-Israeli positions. ATUCFH also summoned labor leaders to a late May conference at Unity House, Pennsylvania. The conference passed a resolution "calling upon our country and all demo-
ometric countries to do everything possible to strengthen the State of Israel and to deter the hostile forces aiming to destroy it."^^44

Histadrut successfully rallied other labor unions to Israel’s side as the war scare deepened in late May. On 26 May, Secretary General Becker cabled ILGWU President Louis Stulberg, Reuther, and Dubinsky, charging Egypt with breaching the peace and vowing that Israel would defend its borders and integrity with force if necessary. “We are confident,” Becker stated, “that as in the past we shall have [the] support and understanding of the free labour movements throughout the world.” Becker invited the labor leaders to state publicly their “great friendship and appreciation” for Israel.^^45

The ILGWU and UAW granted Becker’s request. “We stand with you,” Stulberg immediately replied, “in your determination to restore peace, to halt aggression, [and] to maintain your national integrity. . . . We . . . have urged our nation to use its influence and good offices to protect both peace and freedom in the Mid East.” Stulberg quickly cabled Johnson as well, applauding his “forthright and courageous stand” for peace and his “efforts to summon the great powers and peace-making bodies of the world to halt the aggression against Israel.” Reuther cabled Becker that “in this hour of crisis in the Middle East, on behalf of the officers and members of the UAW I send you our pledge of continued friendship and solidarity.” He also telegraphed Johnson, the president’s top foreign policy advisers, and members of Congress urging that the United States seek a peaceful solution consistent with Israeli interests.^^46

When Israel initiated hostilities on 5 June, Israeli government officials and Histadrut leaders sought and received the unconditional support of U.S. labor unions. In the early hours of the war, the Israeli consulate in New York sent the JLC a statement claiming that Egypt had invaded Israel, consistent with a cover story fabricated by the government in Jerusalem. When he wrote to Meany, Dubinsky, and Stulberg on 8 June, Zeev Haring, chairman of the Histadrut International Relations Department, continued to blame the war on Egypt. “We deeply believe that the international free labour movement,” Haring stated, “will, as ever, lend its unqualified and unrelenting support to people whose only aim and desire is to continue with the constructive building of their land.”^^47

Labor unions responded favorably to these appeals. The JLC released a statement pledging “every effort to assist the people of Israel in their struggle for survival, security, and the preservation of their national identity.” Reuther observed that “the gallant and successful defense of Israel in the face of overwhelming odds has inspired people who love freedom and justice everywhere.” ATUCFH “has worked for many years to get the understanding and
support of the trade union movement in this country for Israel through the Histadrut," its leaders boasted on 9 June. "The present crisis has shown that we were successful to a very great degree." A month after the war ended, Meany issued another statement condemning the Soviet-Arab effort to have the UN brand Israel the aggressor in the war, and he called on local unions to send aid to Histadrut.  

Histadrut officials expressed clearly their appreciation of the backing of U.S. labor. Becker sent both Meany and Stulberg his "heartfelt thanks for the prompt and sincere expressions of support and desire for peace expressed in your recent communications to us directly, to the press, and to your government." Later in 1967, he told the AFL-CIO convention that "I know I am among friends, steadfast over the decades, and proven again in those fateful days we in Israel lived through in May and June of this year. . . . You stood foursquare with us in our great danger." Through NTUCFH Chairman Falikman, Histadrut expressed gratitude to New York affiliates "for the assistance they gave to labor Israel" during the war. "This was indeed an historic manifestation of international labor solidarity." ATUCFH "rejoices at the victory of Israel's heroic defense forces over the genocidal armies of Nasserism," its leaders resolved late in the year, and it "expresses its profound gratitude for the friendship manifested by the working people of America towards the people of Israel in the great emergency."  

This essay has demonstrated that from 1947 to 1967 U.S. labor leaders sympathized with and closely supported Israel. Much of their support stemmed from their admiration of the Histadrut, Israel's free labor federation, in building a democratic state in the Middle East. Labor showed its backing of Israel in favorable resolutions and declarations of support, financial contributions, and lobbying the U.S. government to make policy in the interests of the Jewish state. From 1947 to 1967, such support was firm and consistent.  

The Israeli government and the Histadrut actively solicited labor support. On a basic level, they nurtured the innate pro-Israel disposition in labor circles by visiting union conventions, passing resolutions of friendship, and naming public facilities in Israel after U.S. labor leaders. During moments of crisis, such as those examined in detail in this essay, Histadrut and government officials sought special declarations of support from U.S. labor and encouraged it to pressure the government in Washington to shape its policy to Israel's advantage.  

The critical question remains whether U.S. labor's friendship with the Histadrut and Israeli government made any differences in the evolution of official relations between the United States and Israel. Although its impact is
difficult to measure, the support of labor seems to have had some influence on official policy emanating from Washington. Labor's pro-Zionist declarations in the late 1940s contributed to a political climate favorable to President Truman's support of partition and Israeli statehood and integrity. More certainly, labor and other voices compelled the president to order a change in State Department policy toward the provision of weapons to Israel and the Arab state in 1950. Labor's criticism of Eisenhower's threatened sanctions on Israel in early 1957 contributed to an atmosphere hostile to the president's intentions. During the 1967 war, labor's rally to Israel's political defense perhaps helped convince the Johnson administration to accept Israel's decision to escalate into general hostilities.

Granted, in none of these episodes was organized labor the sole or most influential public voice trying to influence official policy. Indeed, officials made policy in each case for many various reasons. Yet in all cases, even at those moments when major unions felt marginalized in U.S. political culture, the voice of organized labor joined a larger chorus of public opinion that reached the ears and shaped the decisions of key officials. Labor seemed to get what it wanted out of the administrations in Washington, and what labor wanted reflected the wishes and concerns of Israeli labor and government leaders.

Notes


5. John W. Roberts, Putting Foreign Policy to Work: The Role of Organized Labor in American Foreign Relations, 1933–1941 (New York, 1995); Philip Taft, Defending Freedom:


8. Until 1948, the National Committee for Labor Palestine (NCLP).


10. Address by Meany, 26 March 1950, Records of the AFL-CIO, Office of Secretary-Treasurer Files, box 7, George Meany Archives, Silver Spring, MD (hereafter AFL-CIO Papers with appropriate file designations); and address by Meany, 26 April 1955, AFL-CIO Records, Office of President Files, box 31, folder 20.

11. Sharett quoted in Bar-Tal to Meany, 19 January 1956, AFL-CIO Records, Office of President Files, box 54, folder 24; Becker to Dubinsky, 28 September 1961, Papers of David Dubinsky, box 251, Records of the ILGWU, Cornell University (hereafter Dubinsky Papers with appropriate file designations); Eshkol address, 3 June 1964, Dubinsky Papers, box 253; and Ilan to Lovestone, 4 June 1964, AFL-CIO Records, International Affairs Division (IAD) Country Files, box 10, folder 9. For examples of Histadrut activities at AFL and AFL-CIO meetings, see AFL, Reports of Proceedings, 1953,


14. Lovestone to Ilan, 26 May 1964, Papers of Foreign Secretary Golda Meir, 4321/4, Israel State Archives (hereafter Meir Papers with appropriate file designations); Lovestone to Ilan, 9 June 1964, AFL-CIO Records, IAD Country Files, box 10, folder 9; Eban to Lovestone, 12 June 1964, Meir Papers, 4321/4. See also Eban to Meany, 2 June 1964, Meir Papers, 4321/4; Ilan to Eban (Hebrew), 29 June 1964, Ilan to Lovestone, 4 June 1964, and Morat to Simhoni, 19 August 1964, Files of the General Federation of Trade Unions (Histadrut), IV-219A-1–70-B, Lavon Center, Tel Aviv, Israel (hereafter Histadrut Papers with appropriate file designations).

15. Schwartz to Kollek, n.d. [May 1955], RG 130.02, 2420/14; Meir to Dubinsky, 17 May 1957, Meir Papers, 4321/13; Bar-Yaacov to Foreign Ministry (Hebrew), 22 May 1957, RG 130.23, 3089/5. Regarding the 1957 AFL-CIO resolution see Warburg to Dubinsky, 7 December 1953, Dubinsky Papers, box 251. See also Elath to Dubinsky, 22 May 1956, and J. Avrech to Dubinsky, 11 May 1961, Dubinsky Papers, box 251; Eban to Dubinsky, 24 December 1955, Dubinsky to Eban, 29 December 1955, Feinberg to Dubinsky, 15 May 1956, and Eban to Dubinsky, 19 February 1959, Dubinsky Papers, box 254; and Elath to Dubinsky, 24 November 1965, and Dubinsky to Elath, 3 December 1965, Dubinsky Papers, box 252.


17. Potofsky speech, 18 September 1958, Records of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, box 134, Cornell University (hereafter Potofsky Papers with appropriate file designations). See also Zinder to Eytan, 29 September 1949, RG 130.02, 2398/30; Bar-Yaacov to Levine (Hebrew), 18 July 1957, Bar-Yaacov to Foreign Ministry (Hebrew), 14 August 1958, and memorandum by Bar-Yaacov, 26 September 1958, RG 130.23, 3088/10, 3088/11; resolutions by steelworkers union and other unions, Goldmann Papers, Z6/834; Harman to Meir (Hebrew), 15 June 1961, Meir Papers, 4308/19; and Randolph to Simhoni, 30 October 1964, Histadrut Papers, IV-219A-1–70-B.

Biegun to Dubinsky, 7 July 1958, Dubinsky to Becker, 31 August 1961, and Eshkol address, 3 June 1964, Dubinsky Papers, boxes 252–53; Namir to Antonini, 23 April 1956, Namir to Meany, 28 May 1956, and Lavon to Dubinsky, 5 October 1956, Histadrut Papers, IV-208–1-8634; Labor in Israel Newsletter 3 (September 1955); Potofsky address, 18 September 1958, Potofsky Papers, box 134; circular memorandum by Heller, 6 October 1958, Papers of the Jewish Labor Committee, Israel & Middle East box, Memos folder, New York University, New York, NY (hereafter JLC Papers with appropriate file designations); and Becker to Meany, 9 June 1965, AFL-CIO Records, IAD Country Files, box 10, folder 8.

19. Green quoted in AFL, Reports of Proceedings, 1946, 376; Meyerson to Dubinsky, 27 November 1946, Dubinsky Papers, box 252. See also address by Green to International Christian Conference for Palestine, 2 November 1945, Papers of William F. Green, box 4, folder 15, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH (hereafter Green Papers with appropriate file designations); Breslaw to Dubinsky, 27 May 1946, Dubinsky Papers, box 121; Green to Dubinsky, 4 June 1946, and Sprinzak to Dubinsky, n.d. [July 1946], Dubinsky Papers, box 252; and George Staberman (president, Wisconsin State Federation of Labor) to State Department, 5 June 1946, AFL-CIO Records, Department of Legislation Files, folder 10.

20. Dubinsky to Attlee, 1 July 1946, Dubinsky Papers, box 252; Green quoted in AFL, Reports of Proceedings, 1947, 45; and Steinberg circular letter, 10 September 1947, Records of Local 22, ILGWU, box 18, Cornell University (hereafter Local 22 Records with appropriate file designations). See also Breslaw to Charles Zimmerman (manager, Local 22, ILGWU), 17 and 28 February 1947, and Breslaw circular, 28 May 1946, Local 22 Records, box 27; and Schlossberg to Dubinsky, 26 August 1947, Dubinsky Papers, box 121.


23. AFL, Reports of Proceedings, 1948, 11, 311–12, 493–94. Regarding independence, see Jewish Labor Committee to Weizmann, 17 May 1948, JLC Papers, box 1, Israel folder; Dubinsky to Weizmann, 17 May 1948, Dubinsky Papers, box 252; and Israel Feinberg to Ben-Gurion, 17 May 1948, N.Y. Cloak Joint Board Records, box 18. Regarding arms, see Breslaw to Dubinsky, 22 January 1948, Dubinsky Papers, box 121; Breslaw circular telegram, 23 January 1948, Local 22 Records, box 27; Green to Truman, 19 February 1948, and JLC to Green, 20 February 1948, JLC Papers, box 1, Israel folder. Regarding Arab-Israeli issues and U.S.-Israel relations, see Breslaw to Dubinsky, 9 and 27 September 1948, Dubinsky Papers, box 121; and Adolph Held (of JLC) to James Webb, 12 July 1949, JLC Papers, box 2–16.

24. Comay to Dubinsky, 13 November 1948, and Elath to Dubinsky, 11 August
1949, Dubinsky Papers, box 254. See also Meyerson to Dubinsky, 13 June 1949, Ben-Gurion to Dubinsky, 30 October 1951, and Dubinsky to Ben-Gurion, 28 November 1951, Dubinsky Papers, box 254; and Isaac Hamlin to Goldman[n] with attachment, 29 September 1949, and Goldmann to Hamlin, 4 October 1949, Goldmann Papers, Z6/161.

Regarding the August 1949 position paper, TUC Executive Director Isidor Iaderman sent to Dubinsky an untitled memorandum summarizing Israel's positions on major Arab-Israeli disputes. Although the authorship of the memorandum is not indicated, it clearly reflected Israel's positions, it bore "confidential" markings, and Iaderman called it "an AUTHORITATIVE statement." Iaderman to Dubinsky with att., 24 August 1949, Dubinsky Papers, box 121.

25. See, e.g., paper by Israeli embassy, 23 January 1950, and Keren to Kenen, 25 January 1950, Records of the Embassy in Washington, 366/12, Israel State Archives (hereafter RG 93.08 with appropriate file designations); and minutes of meeting in Foreign Office, 31 January 1950, in Israel, Israel State Archive, Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel (Jerusalem, 1982), 5:82–85 (hereafter DFPI with volume and page citations).


27. Green-Murray, position paper, 10 February 1950, Dubinsky Papers, box 121; Elath to USD, 10 February 1950, DFPI, 5:116; minutes of meeting, 14 February 1950, Records of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, International Executive Board Proceedings, George Meany Archives (hereafter CIO Records, with appropriate file designations); circular letter by Laderman, 17 February 1950, Dubinsky Papers, box 121; and Lubianiker to Green and Murray, n.d. [c. February 1950], RG 93.08, 336/12. See also Elath to Sharett, 17 February 1950, DFPI, 5:134; and "summary of cables" memorandum, 19 February 1950, RG 130.20, 2474/8.

28. "Memorandum on Rearmament of Arab States," 25 April 1950, Dubinsky Papers, box 252. This memorandum in the Dubinsky Papers reveals no author, but an identical copy, sent by Elath to Local 22 leaders, is located in Local 22 Records, box 17.


33. Dubinsky to Lavon, 5 November 1956, Histadrut Papers, IV-208–1-8634; Lavon to Dubinsky, 7 November 1956, Dubinsky Papers, box 251; and Nagler address, 24 November 1956, N.Y. Cloak Joint Board Records, box 18.

34. AFL-CIO Executive Council statement, 30 November 1956, Reuther Papers,
box 101, folder 8; unsigned paper, "Work of the Jewish Labor Committee with Trade Unions on the Middle East," n.d. [c. early 1957]; JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Memos on Middle East folder; Bar-Yaakov to Foreign Office (Hebrew), 7 December 1956, RG 130.23, 3089/4; Reuther to Histadrut quoted in Reuther to Held, 29 November 1956, JLC Papers, box 2-42, Conference on Israel folder; and Lavon to Reuther, 2 December 1956, Histadrut Papers, IV-208-1-8634. See also UAW resolution, November 1956, and Transport Workers Union resolution, 15 November 1956, JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Memos folder.

35. Declaration of JLC, n.d. [29 November 1956], JLC Papers, box 2-42, Conference on Israel folder; JLC Outlook 2 (January 1957): 1; unsigned paper, "Work of the Jewish Labor Committee with Trade Unions on the Middle East," n.d. [c. early 1957], JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Memos on Middle East folder.

36. Meany quoted in circular memo by Philip Heller, 26 February 1957, JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Memos on Middle East folder. See also Bar-Tal to V. Reuther, 9 January, 12 February, 19 March 1957, Reuther Papers, box 102, folder 2; Bar-Tal to Nagler, 10 January and 19 March 1957, N.Y. Cloak Joint Board Records, box 18; and Bar-Tal to W. Reuther, 19 March 1957, Reuther Papers, box 457, folder 1. Voluminous correspondence from the locals to Eisenhower and members of Congress is located in RG 130.23, 3088/9. It is unclear how the Israeli Foreign Office acquired copies of these letters, but their existence in the file shows that it at least monitored, if not influenced, the correspondence.


38. Ben-Gurion Diary (Hebrew), 23 December 1958, DBGL. See also Labor in Israel Newsletter 6 (December 1958); memorandum by Elath, December 1962, AFL-CIO Records, IAD Country Files, box 10, folder 8; and Executive Council Minutes, 27 February 1967, AFL-CIO Papers.


41. Ilan to Meany, 18 April 1963, AFL-CIO Records, IAD Country Files, box 10,
folder 8; and Harriman to Ilan, 11 October 1963, Dubinsky Papers, box 253.


43. Circular memorandum by E. Muravchik, 23 May 1967, JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Middle East folder; and Zimmerman circular memorandum, 31 May 1967, and Jack Carper to Muravchik, 31 May 1967, JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Middle East folder. See also Muravchik to Held, 25 May 1967, circular letter by David Ashe, 1 June 1967, and “Confidential Report on JLC Activities in the Middle East Crisis, as of July 5, 1967,” JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Middle East folder.

44. Circular letter by Falikman, 1 June 1967, Stulberg Papers, box 32. See also Falikman to Reuther, 25 May 1967, Reuther Papers, box 457, folder 5; and Falikman to Stulberg, 25 May 1967, Stulberg Papers, box 32.


47. Haring circular letter, 8 June 1967, AFL-CIO Records, IAD Country Files, box 10, folder 11. Copies are found in Dubinsky Papers, box 431; and Stulberg Papers, box 31. See also statement by Consulate, JLC Papers, Israel & Middle East box, Middle East folder.
