

T
70
-

LABOUR CONDITIONS AND LEGISLATION

IN

LEBANON, SYRIA, PALISTINE, AND, IRAQ.

MOHA BAROODY
(Economics) 1943
A.U.B.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<u>Page.</u>
I. Introduction-----	1
II. The Laborer:	
A. His importance in Production-----	4
B. Effect of his Status on Society and the country as a whole-----	5
III. General Conditions Of The Laborer.	
A. In Lebanon-----	7
B. In Syria-----	10
C. In Palestine-----	11
D. In Iraq-----	13
IV. Labor Legislation In Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Iraq.	
A. Lebanon-----	16
B. Syria-----	18
C. Palestine-----	19
D. Iraq-----	21
V. A Comparative Study Of The Different Legislations	23
A. Terms Of Engagement-----	25
B. Health And Safety-----	25
C. Employment Of Women And Children-----	25
D. Working Hours and Weekly Day Rest-----	25
E. Wages-----	25
F. Accidents and compensation-----	26
VI. Evaluations And Suggestions.	
A. Health and safety-----	30
B. Terms of engagement-----	31
C. Working Hours-----	31
D. Regulating Wages-----	31
E. Health Insurance and Old Age Pensions-----	33
F. Accidents and Compensation-----	34
G. Unemployment-----	35
H. Labor Unions-----	35
I. Education-----	36
VII. Conclusion-----	38
VIII. Bibliography-----	40

LABOR CONDITIONS AND LEGISLATION
IN
LEBANON, SYRIA, PALESTINE, AND IRAQ.

1. INTRODUCTION;

My aim in this Thesis is to discuss labor conditions and legislation in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq.

The word worker is limited to Industrial worker receiving a daily, weekly or monthly fixed wage.

One cannot deny the difficulties in tackling such an important subject; unfortunately very few reports have been made to guide a writer on the problems of Labor conditions and legislation in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq. In general, the labor problem was never given its due importance.

To know something about labor conditions it is necessary to interview workers and employers if possible. A great part of the data needed for writing this Thesis was secured from the Lebanese and Syrian workers themselves whom I knew personally. I befriended many workers and was acquainted with their living conditions only too well.

However, for information concerning conditions of the factories and laborers at work, hours of work etc., my visits to most of the Lebanese and many of the Syrian factories and workshops helped me a lot. The field trips we took during our years in Junior College for Sociology and Economics class reports, allowed me to visit workshops and factories and see the conditions under which the workers carry on their jobs. Miss Fuleihan was very strict and asked for detailed reports, which led us to be perfect intruders asking the laborers detailed questions about their conditions some of which were very personal and intimate. No wonder, the employers disliked our visits to their factories (although they were polite enough not to say it) but, by the expression on their face (especially in Damascus) I could tell, that they knew in what conditions their factories were and were always afraid lest someone would come and report these bad and unhygienic conditions to the government authorities.

I was also fortunate enough to come in contact with few contractors and workers during this summer, to visit some foundries and even watch vessels being repaired in the dockyard by our workers ; It was a privilege for me to be permitted to enter that area and so I had a unique sight of miserable workers toiling hard for the army contractors. This work on vessels used to last day and night in case the ship was in a hurry; many times the same workers used to do it and exhaust themselves, for the sake of the contractor, so that H.M. forces will be pleased by his efficient and immediate supply and give him more work.

As for the conditions in Palestine and Iraq, I consulted government reports and a few palestinian and Iraqi friends who were well informed about the subject.

In my survey, I attempt to portray the real situation of the laborers in the four Arab countries, to state the different laws that exist (though not well enforced) compare them, and give some comments, evaluations and suggestions.

I hope that this attempt will be successful, and wish that it will encourage further attempts in the study of these vital problems.

During the last hundred years, labor problems busied the heads in many different countries in the West, and a great labor movement grew for the improvement of labor conditions. Trade Unions labor organizations, strikes and other effective measures were used to prevent the exploitation of the laborer by the capitalist, resulting in many improvements introduced into labor legislation. The Arab world, in spite of all these movements and improvements towards the betterment of the laborer did not think of giving real attention to such problems. Palestine however, has shown signs of awakening and is far ahead of the three other countries in her labor legislation. Now that factories are playing an important part in our economic life, it is time for a labor movement to start. Now that industrial labor is so important and that such a part of the country's economic life depends on it, it sounds mere stupidity not to protect it.

No matter how much I talk about these vital problems, no matter how much I

emphasist the words, no matter how much is written on such subjects, it would do the laborers no good at all if they do not realize their situation. Unfortunately, the Arab worker is practically illiterate and is used to a low standard of living. Any job insuring his bread will be satisfactory (whatever comes from God is welcome, he says) irrespective of whether or not he is being exploited. His ignorance and fatalism are the cause of his misery and our capitalists find it a fine opportunity...

Legislation by the government, not for the sake of the laborers alone, but for the sake of the welfare of the nation as a whole, the prosperity of the country, its national income, and its competitive power would greatly improve the situation in the Arab world.

I do not overlook the attempts which have been done so far by the different governments, but they are not in the least enough. Legal recognition of Labor Unions, Syndicates or Industrial Confederations is necessary, so that the laborers will be classified according to different types of labor.

The workers must realize this fact and unite in order to elevate their Social and Economic standing.

The laborer must feel that his existence is the real significance of the country's economic life, that he constitutes the integral part of it and is not merely living on the margin of life.

It is to the Educated Arab Youths that I appeal.

If we care for the welfare of our country, we must above all care for the vital part which constitutes it - namely the worker. If we do not feel responsible for his welfare who else is going to ?

It is we who are supposed to be sensitive to his problems in our new national movement. It is we who must strive, and fight with him, a national strife, a strife for his welfare which is also the national welfare.

11. THE LABORER.

(1)

A. HIS IMPORTANCE IN PRODUCTION .

" The annual labor of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life which it annually consumes, and which consist always either in the immediate produce of that labor, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations."⁽²⁾

Before everything, the real source of value is labor, since man is the real producer and nature is used by him for production. Whatever is the fertility of soil, its pastures forests or its mines, the abundance or scantiness of its annual supply depends on labor. The farmer must plough and sow his land before it yields crops, and the miner must dig deep and hard before getting out the metals. So labor is the most important factor in production and the most necessary to produce wealth, since without the laborer natural resources in whatever form they may be are useless.

If we take the life of man since the early beginning till our present day, we find him in perpetual strife with nature working to subject it and use its resources to satisfy his various needs. In older days man was more dependent on nature and less on labor but little by little he realized the importance of labor and started to tame animals then he ploughed, planted, and irrigated in order to produce what is sufficient to maintain him and his family. And from then on, man started to work, and labor appeared; man was no more an animal dependent on nature- he worked to transform it and shape its resources to satisfy his various needs- he planted fields, exploited mines, tamed animals, and built houses with the raw material round him.

As he progressed, and the more he employed animals to help him in the simple processes of agriculture, his leisure time grew and this led him to think of certain ways which would be helpful to increase his product and minimize his efforts, and thus he succeeded in inventing certain simple tools that he used in agriculture, and little by little came into existence and grew the simplest kinds of manufacture which developed afterwards.

(1)- Some of the ideas in this account were taken from Al-Urwa-Arabic-No.1, 1943.
(2) - Smith -Wealth of Nations- Methmen & Co. Ltd. Page 1

This simple analysis gives us a true idea about the source of capital and shows definitely that capital is created by labor- or as Ricardo called it -stored up labor.

Then man realizing the importance of stored up labor, developed it and capital started to play an important role in production. It gave use to the accumulation of capital and the industrial revolution, and in the same proportion in which the working class developed, capital developed too. But all this goes back to labor if we follow its origin logically. Then followed division of labor which was also responsible for the increase in production.

This account shows us simply and clearly how important labor is in production. Karl Marx says in his Manifesto:

" Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground, what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor"

B. EFFECT OF HIS STATUS ON SOCIETY AND THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE.

Since labor has such an important share in production, and since the laborers form such a vital part of the population, we conclude that the prosperity and welfare of the country depends to a large degree on the well being of those classes. No matter how much the worker is considered to be by the capitalist a mere tool for profit making yet any intelligent person can realize that the laborer is the essence of production and his being has a large effect on society and the country as a whole.

If the laborer is exploited, working from day break to backbreak, without rest like a machine, his fatigue makes him lose his energies and his work becomes monotonous and distasteful to him. This fact influences his efficiency and therefore the goods will be produced by an inefficient labor force.

Another important result of exploitation on the country is that the worker, not receiving what he should get, cannot afford healthy living with proper sanitary conditions no fortifying meals, no comfort, so how can we expect him to be in good health?

This is the cause of the spread of many diseases and epidemics which may be attributed to the unsanitary conditions in the houses of the workers, the factories and the workshops. This fact is not only a menace to the health of the laborers, but also to the public at large. So this low standard of living and lack of hygiene in the environment produces weak and unhealthy children who are going to compose the nation of the future and carry on its production.

Other results of the misery of the workers is sending his children to work while they still need care, feeding and schooling. One may well ask a child under the age of nine, "Why don't you go to school?" and he will answer, "Because I am hungry- I want to eat." In what condition are we going to expect their health to be in years to come?

Those beggars who follow us in the streets every day, the vagabonds, and criminals, are all results of the poverty of the working class. Children asking for alms are increasing in the Arab countries these days and are becoming horrid bits of nuisance to the social life of the country altogether.

Another consequence of low wages, is that workers have low demand for locally-produced goods and production of those articles which would have been consumed by the workers had they possessed effective demand, falls. While if their wages increase, it increases their demand for those products consumed by the laboring class and therefore stimulates production.

Since labor is so important in production and the status of the worker has such a great influence on society and the life of the country, one can conclude that his well-being is at the basis of the industrial development and economic well-being of a country.

The following chapter portrays the general conditions of the worker in the four Arab countries: Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Iraq, at the end of which the reader will realize how important and necessary Labor Legislation is, and how badly needed to improve our economic life which constitutes the basis of all the phases of our existence.

111. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE LABORER.

A. IN LEBANON.

In what condition does one expect to find the worker under our present system? This system is weighted in favor of the rich and has for its sole aim profit making- which works for the benefit of few capitalists making profits at the detriment of the poor workers. Laborers contribute their time, energy and health without being in the least properly rewarded and given what they deserve. The capitalist takes advantage of their poor state of living, and poor state of mind, making them work long hours, paying them subsistence wages only, while he wallows in luxury.

Nowadays in Lebanon there is plenty of work due to the army contracts. Contractors engage workers of all kinds to work for the army and make tremendous profits. Moreover merchants and industrialists who are taking advantage of the present economic war conditions are reaping large profits. Their laborers toil for them very hard. Their wages have been increased by an amount which is negligible in comparison to prices of the bare necessities of life- food and clothing.

Those laborers can barely subsist nowadays and we can say that there is general underfeeding among the poor working classes. Many laborers are poor workers because of the mere fact that they are underfed. Present wages does not leave anything for the worker more than to keep him living. He can rarely afford nowadays milk, butter, and the rest of nourishing food. As for mosquito nets, coats, boots and umbrellas they are out of the question now.

WORKING HOURS: The working day varies in length depending on the kind of the industry, the size and nature of the establishment. In the modern factories the day is fixed. It is always less than in the workshop where the hours of work often vary according to circumstances. However in most factories ten hours is the rule.

AGE AND SEX. There is a law in Lebanon forbidding the employment of children who have not reached the age of thirteen. However, if one makes a tour and visits the factories he sees that a great many of the children employed are below that age. Many of them have changed their identity cards or use false ones (since their picture is not on the card). This fact is making the enforcement of this law difficult. But in general the child of

seven and eight is out of industry now.

Women are mostly employed in factories. Between the age of 14-18 the number of girls is greater than that of boys because they are cheaper to employ. The typical factory in many industries is composed of a majority of women between the age of 14-20. Luckily enough the number of married women is few in industry.

WAGES: Wages are closely connected with the laborer's standard of living. There are quite a number of cases in Lebanon where the worker is not paid directly by the real employer but through the agency of some intermediary. Such cases happen when the employer contracts with the head of a group of workers to pay a certain sum to the leader in accordance with the quantity produced, the leader being responsible for distributing the amount so earned among his helpers. Another case is when a certain employer distributes his work among his workmen and these workmen in turn have certain people to work for them and thus give them part of the work and pay them their salaries which is less than what they receive. Such methods are very common in the shoe-making industry.

Deductions are often made from wages in respect of fines or payments for damages. Not only that but even in case of a day's absence resulting of sickness a reduction is made for that day. As-to-the-ordinary-fact No regulation exists regarding fines and wages for special jobs.

During our present conditions a skilled mechanic gets a high wage because he is badly needed - 3-4 Lebanese pounds daily. As to the ordinary factory or shop worker his wage is very low. In many factories these are workers who do not get more than 35 or 40 pounds monthly, working ten hours daily.

Moreover, in many cases the day of the worker in certain shops is prolonged for the sake of selling more or delivering an order to the army and the workers are rarely rewarded for this overtime work. The worker is barely subsisting- he is fighting to live.

CONDITIONS OF THE FACTORIES. There is a wide difference in the conditions that exist between the old factories and workshops and the new undertakings. In the former, buildings, sanitation, ventilation, layout, cleanliness are very unsatisfactory. There is no comparison whatsoever to be made between the old and the new factories with regard to the state of machinery, buildings and efficiency.

As regards ventilation most of the new factories have the proper windows but still their use is not comprehensible to the laborers - they leave them closed fearing that fresh air will make them feel cold. . Moreover, in most factories, workers stand while working and they do not mind it any more. They get so much used to discomfort that they feel more comfortable while standing, many even get back aches if they sit down.

The Lainière Nationale is the most modern factory. It provides for the workers all healthy means and they even have a dining room. In general one can say there is a new movement for new factories, but still there is in most cases a complete lack of reasonable comfort for the workers.

LIVING CONDITIONS. The conditions under which the laborer lives nowadays are very miserable. His wage has risen, but it is not in the least proportionate to the rise in prices. He can barely eat bread.

The worker's public opinion is that their children, regardless of their age must work to live. For a family of seven persons to spend on the necessities of life (housing, clothing, and food) five pounds are estimated to be the necessary sum daily. If the father earns 2.50 pounds the other 2.50 must be earned by other family members - by the children. As a consequence we find small children under the allowed age going to work.

In spite of the present conditions of very prosperous business, workers receive (some of them) 4-6 pounds monthly, working ten hours daily. A bookkeeper (friend of mine) who strains his eyes and exhausts his intelligence for ten hours daily receives a wage of 65 Syrian pounds monthly. Is it enough for his food? What about his wife and his children?? Has the enterpriser, who is reaping piles and piles of money, thought for one moment that twenty or thirty pounds more per month (which he may lavishly throw in one night on a bottle of whisky to entertain an officer) if given to a worker may save a starving child, or feed a growing worker making him more efficient?? And believe me if he does this, it will not be for the sake of charity. It will be giving the laborer only his proper share - his just reward for his efforts and energies. This is a real living picture of the Lebanese worker - he who under our present system toils for the happiness of others.....

B. IN SYRIA.

Industry in Syria, like in the other Arab countries, although it is going on an upward trend in its improvement, yet it is still in its infancy whether in its modernization or in its size. A great number of the factories I visited in Damascus were dim, few windows for sunshine and fresh air, with low ceiling and often damp. Moreover, in many cases there was no pavement. Many of them use primitive methods and are of the handicraft type, but of course one always finds developed factories, namely in the cloth making industry.

WAGES are low. The owners of small scale industries do not care for skill as much as they care for low wages. A worker accepting a low wage is in most cases preferred to another asking for a higher wage, although the latter may be more skilled. This fact has led to competition between the workers and has lowered more their wages.

An estimate of the daily wages was made by Mr. Umari as follows ⁽¹⁾

Child...50-75 Syrian piasters

Woman...100 - 150 Syrian piasters.

Unskilled men...125 -225 Syrian piasters.

Skilled men..... 250 -500 Syrian piasters.

Specialized workers or those possessing special talents ...800 - 1000 Syrian piasters.

HOURS OF WORK. There are no definite regulations concerning the working day except for two articles one forbidding the apprentice to work more than 4 hours daily (if he is below the age of eleven) also another forbidding child men and girls between 11-16 to work between 7 P.M. and 6 A.M. But regulation concerning the working day does not extend beyond this and the working day of men and women are subject to the mercy of the employer. In the modern organized factories the workers usually work 8 hours daily while on the other hand, in small industries of the handicraft type nine hours is the minimum working day.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN. In Syrian cities, the percentage of women in industry is 4 - 6% most of whom work in sewing, in the textile industry and in tobacco factories. But in

(1) Al Urwa- (Arabia) No. 1, 1943. pp 33.

Syrian villages the percentage of working women to men is 50 % even 85% in some cases. Children under the age of eleven are forbidden to work , but the law is not well enforced

Woman and child labor are a natural result arising from the fact that the worker is poor, and living under very unsatisfactory conditions, so he is bound to send his wife and children to work and raise part of the family's income. The same difficulties in income and expenses are met by the Syrian as by his brother the Lebanese worker.

The condition of the Syrian worker is very much similar to that of his Lebanese comrade - with no organized Trade Union to protect him.

The Lebanese and Syrian workers cannot envy each other's Social standing. They may shake hands because they are alike - and, for who knows- this may be in the future a cause for their being united.....

(1)

C. IN PALESTINE.

the Palestinian worker lives in a quarter constituting one fourth of a city, while the laboring population composes 3/4 of its population. Those quarters are expected to be under present conditions in the Arab World crowded and dirty. The Palestinian Arab workers live poorly and miserably, every family possessing at most two rooms for its members- amounting to ten in many cases.

One can well imagine how unhealthy and annoying are such living conditions. His children, the workers of the future, are brought up under those conditions. The worker leaves his house at daybreak to toil and earn his subsistence. He comes back at sunset, weary, needing comfort and rest more than ever. But, what can he find in his home instead? A bunch of illbred shouting creatures, a desperate mother and an annoying neighbourhood. So, we see clearly how the poor worker has no peace nor comfort in his home; how can we expect him to turn up healthy and work efficiently in the following morning?

HOURS OF WORK AND WAGES. The working day varies with the kind of job. In Public works and modern factories, the working day varies between 8 and 9 hours. But in other

(1) Some of the ideas in this account were taken from Al-Urwa (Arabia) No. 1, January 1942. The Article on Palestine.

factories it starts at daybreak and ends at sunset. In some seasonal employments workers are witnessed to toil for 12 consecutive hours for 4 consecutive months without even one day's rest.

Wages do not rest on a law or a contract between the employer and the employee. The employer fixes them; they are determined in most cases by supply and demand, and it is taken for granted that it never exceeds the worker's subsistence- in many cases less. Wages vary between 10-15 Palestinian piasters for the unskilled worker daily; and here also we may repeat that the rise in wages during this war is not in the least proportionate with the rise in prices. The system which prevails in Palestine is the time pay. Whereas the wages of the Arab worker in Palestine is determined by the employer and vary with the locality "Wage rates of Jewish labor are determined chiefly by the different vocational divisions of the trade unions, and are set in schedules, which are accepted by employers either tacitly or expressly through wage agreements. The wage rates in these schedules are graduated according to skill and also according to whether it is male or female labor." (1)

"The nominal wages of Arab labor are very low in comparison with European labor as well as with the Jewish labor in Palestine." (2)

STANDARD OF LIVING. The Palestinian worker like the other Arab workers in the Arab countries has a blind faith in religion. Their life is built on certain religious principles or on certain superstitious beliefs. He conceives of marriage as a continuous means to beget children which leads him to have in many cases 8 or 9 of them and this of course makes his life more difficult, and lowers his standard of living. How can he provide proper clothing, feeding or education for his children? How can he raise them in a healthy way. Those who survive have all delicate constitutions and are susceptible to all kinds of diseases.

The worker looks at his poor self-his numerous family members- his poor state of living and finds no other consoling phrase than the typically Arabic "This comes from God-I must accept it with thanks". He is fatalistic and it is the cause of half of his misery. He may well accept exploitation as being from God.....

(1) Himadeh- Economic Organization of Palestine- Pages 283 -84.

(2) Ibid- Page 285.

Trade Unions are few in Palestine. In Jerusalem, there was formed 6 months ago an association of the Arab workers. There are alike associations in Haibus and in Jaffa. The government does not in the least help those Unions and they depend on fees from the members.

The labor Bureau is starting a new movement in Palestine and showing real interest in helping the worker to raise his standard and we can hope for more help on its part, and greater participation to insure a decent living to the Arab worker in Palestine.

D. IN IRAQ.

Generally speaking, the worker's living conditions in Iraq are appalling and really miserable. This fact is manifested in every possible way: In the factory, at home and in society.

THE FACTORY. There is no effective legislation dealing with factory conditions. In addition to this is the fact that there are no Trade Unions or any labor organizations that will urge either the government or the factory owners for better working conditions. As a result of this, the employers in general never felt any responsibility towards the conditions of their employees. Hence we find a complete absence of any hygienic services or free medical attendance supplied by any factory. Proper ventilation and lighting are lacking. Factories may be left for years and years without being painted or their walls sterilized against any possible disease. Accidents from dangerous machines take place continuously, and nothing is done about it, while in more advanced countries, such machines are fenced in such a way as to prevent any real injury to the worker. The hours of work are never rightly observed. A worker is made to work for about twelve hours in the summer and usually eleven during winter, in spite of the government's regulations forbidding such long hours.

The factories are usually situated outside the towns or in the old parts of these towns, where the hygienic conditions are very low. As to those outside, and they are mostly in Baghdad, they are surrounded by marshes which make these districts full of fever and diseases. The fact that such areas were at a time sold at cheap prices is responsible for these factories being situated there.

Some of these factories employ women and children, because it is cheaper,

and the situation becomes more pathetic.

One can assert that the complete irresponsibility on the side of the factory owners is a significant cause of the backward conditions inside the factories. These owners, being mostly uneducated, seek profits so blindly that they are totally unaware of the fact that a healthy worker can produce better quality and more quantity. This in turn is due to the availability of laborers and to the fact that the labor required is mostly unskilled, because these industries are not highly developed. Hence the employer does not care to look after the well being of his laborers as since labor is always available, and at cheap prices.

What exists in the form of legislation is by no means effectively enforced by the responsible authorities which in turn makes the employer of big factories who employ unskilled labor careless and irresponsible towards any improvements inside their factories.

AT HOME. The low standard of living accompanied by the low wages, the complete ignorance and illiteracy of most of the workers, and almost all, and the unencouraging attitude of the authorities, all these factors contribute to make the home of the worker a very unhealthy and even a dangerous one. The worker who works in factories outside the city, and mostly in brick factories, has a far worse home than the worker residing inside the city. The latter enjoys the cleanliness imposed by the local municipalities outside his house and sometimes inside his house when there is an epidemic in town. But the first, namely the out-of-town worker, lives in simple dark mud huts in the midst of the stagnant waters and diseased marshes. He resides there in summer and in winter and mostly suffers from malaria and all kinds of diseases. He does his washing and cooking inside this one hut, living in it with his entire numerous family.

Medical attendance can never reach him when falling sick, and he has to be taken to government hospitals in town, if his people care to; but they usually do not, because they mistrust medicine, doctors and hospitals. In general, government medical services do not benefit much the workers.

IN SOCIETY.

The Social life of the worker is a very queer one. While society has officially secured for him and his children free education and free medical service, we

find that the average worker is far from attaining these two important things neither for himself nor for his family. As to education, the matter can be explained easily: the worker has to send his children to work instead of school (education is not compulsory in Iraq) so that they can earn an extra wage for the family, which they need very badly, since wages are very low, and his income is never sufficient to support the big family. Again the government has not been efficient in maintaining night schools to teach the workers although many proposals were submitted and much discussion was aroused. Thus, low wages, and the inefficiency of the responsible authorities makes education far from the reach of the laborer.

There is no doubt that some laborers enjoy free medical treatment and service in the official hospitals, but these are insufficient in proportion to the number of the working population, and hence are overworked and therefore, unable to render a satisfactory service to the poor worker. There is no doubt that with more hospitals the medical service can produce better results.

The worker does not enjoy any kind of social life, as the term is understood in European countries. There are no organizations or clubs that afford entertainment or offer any kind of education or recreation to the workers. The worker spends his evening in the old coffee-shop where there is no room whatsoever for enlightenment, culture, or any kind of achievement to be acquired except futile reactionary gossip.

IV. LABOR LEGISLATION IN LEBANON, SYRIA, PALESTINE,
AND IRAQ.

A. LEBANON.

1. CHILD LABOR.

labor legislation is scanty in Lebanon. In 1936, The Chamber of Deputies passed certain laws and regulations relative to the dangerous establishments and to women and child labor in industries. These laws though pertaining to children and women working in industries, are made primarily for the welfare of the public, and secondarily to protect the children and women.

This Law forbids the employment of children below the age of 13 in factories, industries, mines and other occupations of similar sort. This prohibition is indeed very important since it relates to one of the most essential factors for the success of any industry, namely the efficiency of its workers. Such efficiency depends on the physical and mental abilities of the laborer, the degree of his education and his skill. One can never expect to find these characteristics present in children below the age of 13 who are still immature and could not have had the physical growth, training, and education required. Yet few visits to Lebanese factories and industries are enough to convince one that many workers in different factories and industries are children varying from 10-13 years of age, and even below 10 in certain cases.. This same law also forbids children between the age of thirteen and sixteen to work more than 7 hours a day excluding one hour of rest. It also forbids them to work after 7 P.M. and before 6 A.M. Nevertheless, during certain seasons when the raw materials that are used in factories or other productive firms are perishable, the hours of work are extended to more than seven and night work is quite permissible.

Children must also be allowed 24 successive hours as a weekly rest. Also they should be allowed ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ at least one hour's rest per day and should not be allowed to work for more than few hours without a break. This provision of the law is very essential, because long periods of work without a break exhaust the

worker and decrease his energy and efficiency. Therefore, it is not only injurious to his health, but also to production.

This law also forbids to employ in the following industries children below the age of 16 who have not secured a certificate certifying their physical capacity to work in the following industries. This certificate will be given free of charge by the sanitary authorities. It can be withdrawn if it is proved that the bearer is no more fit for the work. The industries are: Soap making, tanning, blood seeking, glass manufacturing, cement making etc.

2. WOMAN LABOR. The gradual decay of the domestic industry has left women previously engaged in them without a means of gaining a living. So, such women were obliged to go out to factories and workshops to gain their living. Their number has increased lately due to the fact that with a lower wage than that required by a man, they can compete with him and do his job as well.

Legislation for woman labor is of vital importance. The provision of the Law of 1936 relating to the work of women in industry state that the working day of a woman should be divided by intervals amounting in all to not less than one hour and in such a way as not to have a longer stretch of work than 4 successive hours. This order also forbids the employment of women more than 8 hours daily excluding the intervals of rest and food. This limitation of the working day for women in industry to eight hours appears to be a practicable reform. In nearly all the factories employing women which I visited, an eight hour day is already observed with few exceptions in certain seasons.

Moreover, night work is forbidden for women (after 9 P.M. and before 5 A.M.) and women should be accorded 24 successive hours per week as a weekly rest period.

Any pregnant woman has full right to absent herself, voluntarily, one month before delivery on presenting a medical certificate and she should not be asked to come back to work before the lapse of fifteen days after her delivery and she can, if she wants to, prolong this period another fifteen days.

3. LAW OF MINIMUM WAGE.

A law of minimum wages was issued on the 15th of December 1941.

This law states that the minimum wages in the commercial and industrial enterprises must be the wage paid in December 31, 1939 increased as follows:

120% on portion of wages not exceeding £10 per month.

100% on portion of wages between £11 and £25 per month.

70% on portion of wages between £26 and 50 per month.

50% on portion of wages between £51 and £80 per month.

40% on portion of wages between £81 and £100 per month.

30% on portion of wages exceeding £100 per month.

This law exempts enterprises having already increased the wages of employees, provided that increase is not smaller than that fixed by the present *arrêté*. Family workshops i.e.- workshops where are employed direct descendants, relatives, brothers or sisters of the head of the enterprise, are also exempted. These are the laws and regulations that were drawn for the purpose of protecting and improving public health and safety. No doubt, the Lebanese factory has improved much in the last few years. Moreover, the inspection done by the committee of inspectors has done a great deal of work by trying to see to it that the law is observed.

B. SYRIA.

Unfortunately, in Syria there is only one law and it is to protect children in industries. Nothing is mentioned concerning man or woman labor. This fact is astonishing because man and woman labor are of great importance for the success of industry and their rights ought to be considered as well.

In spite of this fact, the Syrian Law does not pay any attention whatsoever to this majority.

The only law which exists forbids the employment of children below the age of eleven. Children between 11 and 16 are also forbidden to be employed in mines and all work for extraction of stones, as well as night work (between 7P.M. and 6A.M.) However, the stipulations of this *arrêté* do not apply to these establishments which employ members of the family under the authority of the father, or the mother or the

tutor , provided these establishments use neither steam engines, nor mechanical machines nor toxic products.

C. PALESTINE.

The principal legislation regarding industrial labor in Palestine are: The Industrial Employment of Women and Children Ordinance and Regulations of 1927, The workmen's Compensation Ordinance 1927, An Ordinance for the Establishment of A Labor Department 1942. The Fencing of Machinery Ordinance of 1927, The Steam Boilers' Ordinance of 1928, The Regulation of Trades and Industries Ordinance of 1927, and Defence regulations of 1942.

1. THE INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN ORDINANCE, forbids woman as well as child labor in dangerous industries, and prohibits child labor entirely under any industrial form whatsoever if he is under 12 years of age.

No person is allowed to employ any woman or child in any industrial undertaking on the work of cleaning machinery while in motion. This ordinance also limits the number of hours of work per day to 8 for children below the age of 16. Not more than five hours of those can be consecutive. It also prohibits employment of children from 7. P.M. to 6 A.M. and women from 10 P.M. to 5 A.M. or during a period of eleven continuous hours including those hours.

It moreover requires a day's rest, for every child employed in any industry, in every seven days.

2. WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE. This Ordinance, issued in 1927 and amended in 1934, insures protection for industrial laborers, in specified industries (building operations, Transport by vehicles, and railways, blasting, excavations and the like, manufactures where mechanically driven machinery is used, electricity works, and works of constructing and maintaining roads) if their wages do not exceed £P350 per annum, and they are injured during their work through no fault of their own. Where death results from injury the worker has the right to receive a compensation of three years' wages the minimum being £P100 and the maximum £P 250. In case of total or partial incapacity of work resulting, the compensation does not exceed half the weekly wages.

This law specifying the amount of compensation is absolutely necessary for both the growth of the factory, and for the benefit of the worker himself and his family. It makes it possible for the employers to estimate their liability, and the workers' rights become defined and as a consequence, they are no more obliged to incur the trouble and expense of litigation in order to obtain them. It moreover, prevents the occurrence of accidents. Precautions against accidents are more adequately observed and safety is more promoted as a result of a compensation ordinance.

3. THE ORDINANCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LABOR DEPARTMENT. Dated October 22nd, 1942, it establishes a labor department which shall endeavour with all the means at its disposal to safeguard and promote the general welfare of workers and the maintenance of good relations between workers and employers. The director of this department supervises conditions of employment, insures due enforcement of Ordinances relating to the welfare of the workers, settles trade disputes, collaborate in the task of preventing accidents and may collect, prepare and publish statistics on unemployment, wage rates, employment of women, young persons and children, hours of work, apprentices, industrial hygiene and safety, social insurance and general conditions of employment and particulars of labor disputes.

4. THE FENCING OF MACHINERY ORDINANCE OF 1927 requires fencing of dangerous machinery securely and adequately. It moreover, provides for the inspection of industrial establishments to insure the observance of the law.

5. THE STEAM BOILER'S ORDINANCE. Issued in 1925, it provides for the inspection of steam boilers and prime movers.

6. THE REGULATION OF TRADES AND INDUSTRIES ORDINANCE. Issued in 1927, it provides for the regulation and control of certain unpleasant or dangerous industries and trades, for the interest and health of laborers. No license shall be granted to undertake such work except with the approval of the director of the Department of health.

7. THE DEFENCE REGULATIONS. Issued in 1942, state it unlawful for an employer to declare or take part in a lockout and for a worker to take part in a strike in connection with any trade dispute. In case of any dispute in regard to which the District Commissioner endeavours to conciliate the parties, the employer shall not alter the wages or conditions of

employment to the detriment of the workers except in accordance with the decision of a board.

This is all what exists in the form of legislation in Palestine. "No steps have been taken by the government to introduce compulsory labor unemployment or health insurance on the ground that the present stage of Social development in Palestine does not make such compulsory insurance desirable."⁽¹⁾

D. IRAQ.

In Iraq, a general labor law regulates the following:

1. CONDITIONS OF LABOR AND HOURS OF WORK This provision of the labor law, provides for every worker a rest period of one hour at the middle of the daily work and a rest period of one-hour-at-the-middle-of-the at least 24 consecutive hours after each period of six day's work. Every worker working for one consecutive year in any industrial undertaking (wherein more than ten workers are employed) is entitled to a leave with full pay of 12 days for each year and a sick leave with full pay of 15 days for each year (if this leave is base on a medical report).

Night work is forbidden, except in cases where perishable goods are dealt with. Even then, it must be in such a way that no set of workers will be employed for more than a fortnight, at night. A shift must take place every two weeks whereby the night workers replace the day workers and so on.

2. EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PERSONS AND WOMEN. The law forbids entirely the employment of children below the age of 12. It also prevents laboring children and women from night work, and forbids the employment of any young person or woman under the age of 18 on a vessel. Each woman in an industrial undertaking is entitled to absent herself from her work, if her confinement is taking place within two weeks, and three days after her delivery, without anything being deducted from her salary.

3. COMPENSATION FOR DEATH, INJURY, OR DISEASE. When death occurs to the worker through no fault of his own, a sum equal to two years' pay of the worker's daily wages will be

(1) Himadeh- Economic Organization Of Palestine PP 290.

paid to the relatives of the deceased who are dependent upon him for support. Where permanent and total incapacity for work results from an injury, the worker shall receive a sum equal to two year's full salary. In case partial incapacity (permanent or temporary for work results from an injury, the worker shall receive compensation at a rate and for a time determined by the Ministry of the Interior, who in deciding will take into account the wages of the worker.

4. FORMATION OF ASSOCIATIONS. The workers in Iraq have the right to establish special associations for themselves in order to care for their special interests, to spread the spirit of cooperation and assistance between them to endeavor to effect improvements by educational, cultural, hygienic, social and moral means, and to develop the industries in Iraq. The association must be given a legal permit and is subject to inspection, and may be cancelled at any time if it conducts its affairs contrary to the safety of the State.

5. DISMISSAL OF A WORKER FROM EMPLOYMENT. The Law states that in case the employer wishes to dismiss a worker, he must notify him by a written notice one week ahead of time. The same rule applies if the employee wishes to quit his employer, in which case the employer should grant him a certificate of disengagement.

However, if the employer finds it necessary to dismiss the worker immediately, he must pay him the wages of a week and grant him a certificate of disengagement. But if the worker dismissed has been in his employment for over 4 consecutive years, the employer is bound in this case to pay him a compensation equal to the wages of two weeks for every year in addition to the first four.

The law states further that if the employee leaves his job for a new one, without a notice advanced to his employer and therefore without a certificate of disengagement from the old job, then he is bound with his new employer to pay as compensation half of a fortnightly wage to the first employer.

Every employer is bound to pay wages to his employees in a period not exceeding one week.

These provisions however, do not apply to seasonal or temporary jobs.

V. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DIFFERENT LEGISLATIONS.

Whenever there are employers seeing a profit in the conduct of machine operations with cheap labor, and a laboring class willing that their women and children should work in the factories to subsist, shocking conditions will develop. Children of tender age are made to work for stretches of even ten hours, they may be employed on night shifts and, women employed in heavy and sometimes dangerous work that brutalises and exhausts them.

Our laboring class needs work to subsist. Men women and children are sent to industry in the Arab world. Legislation is very important then to protect this majority of the nation.

After having a glance at the chapter about labor legislation in the Near East, the reader notices only too well that legislation in the countries of the Arab world is still in the process of formation. Palestine however, has advanced much further than the other three. It has shown real signs of awakening and progress. The progress was mostly among the Jewish laborers who became recently very well organized by the General Federation of Jewish Labor the "Histadruth" which fund supported to some extent by employe^{is}. But many improvements in the condition of the Arab worker in Palestine have taken place lately due to legislations.

There has been a labor department established which safeguards and promotes the general welfare of workers and maintains the good relations between workers and employers. Its director and inspector see that Labor Legislation is put into practice by inspecting the different factories and establishments.

" There have been several attempts to organize Arab and Jewish workers in the same trade unions, and a number of Arab railway workers belong to an Arab-Jewish union. There are, however, many difficulties in the way, since the Jewish Confederation is much more than a trade union and its funds are partly spent outside Palestine in the training of prospective immigrants. But the Confederation leaders have never ceased the attempt to organize the Arab workers and with their help on several occasions, notably in Haifa, the industrial conditions of the Arab worker have been improved." (1)

(1) Palestine- February 19th to December 30, 1936. Published by the British Palestine Committee- Page 6.

The consequences of the improvement in the conditions of the Arab worker due to legislations and the policy of the Jewish Labor Federation are summed up in an article by Mr. J. Hedess in the 'Manchester Guardian-Palestine Supplement'

"The standard of living of the Arabs has gone up, more Arabs have employment and their scales of wages are higher. Schools, hospitals, Social Welfare Service, considerable relief from land taxation, active agricultural assistance, and many other things undreamed of before by them are at their disposal. Without Jewish immigration and the development resulting from it these improvements should not have been effected.

It is through Jewish efforts and Jewish money that the condition of the Arabs in Palestine has become the envy of the Arabs in neighbouring countries. Palestine Arabs no longer emigrate as they did in former times. Today thousands of Arabs from Syria, Egypt, Transjordan, and elsewhere come to prosper in Palestine."

So Palestine is way better off in her labor conditions and legislation, although it is still backward when compared with the European countries.

Iraq comes next. It has made few attempts to regulate conditions of labor, terms of engagement, hours of work, compensation and formation of associations which are quite a good attempt for further progress.

Unfortunately, we cannot say that our country has followed the example of other countries. The eyes of our government are not yet fully opened to the fact that it should and must protect the most essential and indispensable element of production to be able to reap the most of the productive powers of the State.

Two laws have been issued: The law regulating employment of women and children in industry and the law of minimum wage. Still worse, Syria has only one law for the employment of children, and it is deficient in many respects when compared with other laws for the employment of children. It does not state the exact limits of the working day for the child- only for the apprentice. It does not also provide an article in the law allowing a child twenty four successive hours as a weekly rest, or forbidding them to work in some dangerous industries other than underground work, mines and extraction of stones. So it is not a proper law; it is incomplete; it is mainly starting a law for the employment of children.

I shall now, compare the different legislations under six specific

headings:

A. TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT.

In Lebanon and Syria, no written contract binds the workers to their employers. The laborers are engaged individually and verbally following the local customs.

In Palestine, the terms of work are regulated for the Jewish workers by their trade unions. But, as for the Arab laborers, engagement is not done by means of a written contract and there is no law concerning the terms of engagement or stating the duties of an employer in case he wants to dismiss the employee, or making clear for what period or to what extent wages shall be paid during absence on account of illness. This however, is provided for the Jews and they are in all members of the Sick fund. So, one may say that conditions of the Arab wage earner are alike in this respect, in Lebanon, Syrian and Palestine.

Iraq is one step ahead concerning this problem. It provides rules to be applied in case of dismissal of a worker from employment and for every worker a sick leave is granted with full pay of fifteen days for each year if this leave is based on a medical report.

B. HEALTH AND SAFETY.

In Lebanon many improvements in this respect have been made since the "Union Pour la Protection de l'Enfance au Liban" began regular inspection. The "Direction de l'Hygiene et d'assistance publique" possesses wide powers of inspection and regulation (under the law issued in 1936 regulating employment of women and children in industry dealing with objectionable, unhealthy and dangerous establishments and the general regulations issued thereunder and the general regulations issued thereunder).

Particular classes of unhealthy establishments have been considered, but on the whole, they relate to matters concerning public health and only in occasional instances to the health and safety of the worker.

In Syrian, the one existing law mentions few dangerous industries in which it forbids the working of children. In both Lebanon and Syria machinery in factories is very inadequately guarded and no regulations have been made by the government in regard to safety and health in factories.

Palestine has an inspecting board dealing with regulations concerning unhealthy establishments. They are more specific than in the Lebanese law. Moreover, there is an ordinance for the fencing of dangerous machinery and the same law provides for the inspection of industrial establishments to insure its observance.

The regulation of trades and industries provides for the regulation and control of certain dangerous and unpleasant industries and trades in the interest of Public Health and safety of the laborers.

In Iraq the law states very briefly:

"In every industrial undertaking such special precautions as are reasonable to secure the safety of the worker shall be taken and medical treatment charges for the workers who suffer as a result of their work shall be provided."

So, as a conclusion we see that there is still much to be done in this respect in the Arab world. One tour in some Arab factories shows very clearly that in cases where regulations have been issued for the protection of the workers, they are by no means always observed.

C. EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

The four Arab countries have regulations for child labor, and all except Syria, have regulations concerning woman labor. They have all issued laws dealing with particular classes of unhealthy dangerous establishments where women and children should not work. The working day is also limited and night work forbidden.

Iraq forbids the employment of young persons and women on vessels. Moreover it has rules concerning married women in industry in cases of pregnancy "she shall absent herself and nothing will be deducted from her salary two weeks before and three weeks after her confinement."

D. WORKING HOURS AND WEEKLY DAY REST.

In Lebanon, there are laws regulating the woman and child's working day, but unfortunately, no attention whatsoever is given to the man's working day. In Syria, the only existing law regulates working hours for apprentices

below the age of eleven and night working hours only.

There is no rule concerning the definite hours of work for the laboring child and no mention whatsoever is made concerning women and men in industry.

Palestine and Iraq also regulate the working day of women and children, neglecting man's working day. In the four Arab countries work in factories is totally suspended either on Friday, Saturday or Sunday and there are laws to this effect which are followed in practically all industries except with a few exceptions for a short time during the year where seasonal work requires the labor of workers seven days a week for sometime.

E. WAGES.

In the four Arab countries there are no definite laws for the payment of wages. In Syria and Lebanon, as was mentioned before there are quite a number of cases where the worker is not paid directly by the real employer. The employer then, in many cases is not directly responsible for the payment of wages and this creates trouble as to the fact, -in that, in case of any violation of regulations the employer will not be legally responsible.

In Lebanon there is a minimum wage law which was issued recently. But one may say that in the four Arab countries wages are determined by supply and demand varying with the locality. In Palestine however "wage rates of Jewish labor are determined chiefly by the different vocational divisions of the trade unions and are set in schedules which are accepted by employers either tacitly or expressly through wage agreements. The wage rates in these schedules are graduated according to skill and also according to whether it is male or female labor." ⁽¹⁾ Why should't Arab labor become likewise organized and raise its wage level??

A time limit within which wages should be paid is not established by law, in Lebanon Syria or Palestine. In Iraq, however, every employer is bound to pay wages to employees in a period not exceeding one week.

The workers then, do not receive their wages at regular intervals, and at many times deductions are made from wages in respect of fines or payments for damage.

Not only that, but in many cases as in case of sickness, resulting in the worker absenting himself for few days, a reduction is made for these days. Only in Iraq there is a law stating that the worker may have a sick leave with full pay of fifteen days for each year if this leave is based on medical report.

No regulations exist in any of the countries as to the amount which may be imposed in respect of fines or the extent to which the worker is liable for damage and the manner in which the proceeds of fines shall be used.

F. ACCIDENTS AND COMPENSATION.

In Lebanon and Syria, a law to compensate in case of accident does not exist. In some factories, employers pay the medical expenses of injured workers but, rarely grant adequate compensation.

In case of accidents the rights of workers in Syria and Lebanon are undefined; in any event, they are obliged to incur the trouble and expense of litigation in order to obtain them. But the workers are illiterate and unable to bear the costs imposed on them by the courts. Moreover, they do not know what are their rights, and in case they do, are afraid to ask for them.

In Palestine, the workmen's compensation ordinance provides protection for manual laborers engaged in specified industries if their wages do not exceed £350 annually and they are injured in the course of their work through no fault of their own.

Iraq also provides a compensation ordinance where total or partial injury occurs but it is very brief and where partial incapacity results, the amount of compensation is not defined. The law states: "He shall receive compensation at such rate and for such time as the ministry of interior may determine."

We have seen the different labor laws that exist in the four Arab countries and have compared the most important points.

"For the effectiveness of a system of labor legislation, stringent enforcement is indispensable. There must be a staff of inspectors, well trained and well supervised, and there must be ample provision for prompt penalties on delinquents.

Every movement for social and industrial reform depends for its success on good public officials, and the prospects for success in any country are gauged by the extent to which it provides such officials."⁽¹⁾

In this respect, the four Arab countries are extremely backward. Palestine is in a slightly better position.

The fact is, that the new and complicated problems of modern industry came upon the Arab countries rather suddenly, and political machinery was not adjusted for dealing with them.

Various attempts are being tried however, and we can hope for better attention and adjustment to those problems in the future.

(1) Taussig F.W.- Principles of Economics- The Macmillan Co.- N.Y. 1939- p-364.

VI. EVALUATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

A. HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Departments of Public Health in the four Arab countries have issued series of regulations dealing with particular classes of unhealthy establishments and in most cases forbidding women and children to be employed therein. But still, there remains a lot to do concerning this very important subject.

Rules must be issued in reference to the cleanliness of factories. The inside walls of rooms, all ceilings and tops of rooms and all passages and stair-cases must either be limewashed every fourteen months, painted with oil, or varnished every seven years and washed with hot water and soap every fourteen months, as in England.

The factory must not be ever crowded and in every room in the factory sufficient means of ventilation must be provided and maintained for admission of fresh air and removal of impure air. Ventilation must be such as to make harmless any gas, dust, or impurity that may be produced by the work so that they will not be inhaled by the workers to an injurious extent. A suitable place for meals must be provided in the factory.

A pregnant woman must not be permitted to work forty days before and forty days after her confinement, with no deduction made to her regular wage.

Sufficient and suitable sanitary conveniences must be provided, with separate accommodation for each sex where persons of both sexes are employed.

As regard safety, machinery must be adequately fenced. All fencing must be maintained in an efficient state. Cleaning of dangerous parts of the machinery in motion must be forbidden.

The doors in the factory must not be so fastened that they cannot be opened from the inside.

There must be provided in every factory a first aid box and cupboard containing first aid requisites, in charge of a responsible person who must be always readily available during working hours.

In case an accident takes place, summi-enquiry must be made into its causes and circumstances ; Moreover employers must be required to report accidents immediately.

The need for such measures is very urgent indeed. This need is ascribable in large part of the ignorance of the worker, his short sightedness and his indifference. Ignorance and shortsightedness play the chief part in preventing the Arab worker from his being concerned about the dangers of an occupation. It was not the workers or miners who made the effort for compulsory use of the safety lamp, but it was the men of science and the social reformers. Unfortunately, the Arab worker who is engaged in an unhealthy and insecure occupation seldom protest, risking his health with apparent inability to visualize the inevitable future.

B. TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT.

To lay down and to enforce conditions as to the contract of employment presents considerable difficulties in the Arab world; Generally contracts are not in usage due to the illiteracy of the workshop workers and practice differs as between the large establishments.

The Arab laborer needs legal protection more than the laborers in advanced countries. As we have seen in the chapter about labor conditions, our laborer is poor and illiterate and cannot in the least take any measures to protect himself, while in more advanced countries, he is educated and can sue his employer legally and can follow up the case to secure his rights.

Unfortunately, the laborers in the Arab world are not in the least influential nor are they represented by strong trade unions as in some advanced western countries.

The terms of engagement should also make clear for what period and to what extent wages shall be paid during absence on account of illness. It must embody the conditions of service and the rules need to be explicit. It must also state rules as regards the termination of employment by either side, the length of notice to be given, and how and when it is to be given.

C. WORKING HOURS.

The adult male worker's day is not given any attention whatsoever in the four Arab countries. Shorter hours are as necessary for men as for women and children. The same obvious reasons which makes one sympathize with the demand for higher wages, makes one sympathize also with that for shorter hours. A shorter working day means an improvement in the conditions of the mass of mankind.

Specialized machinery and the division of labor make labor monotonous, irksome and less attractive. The best remedy is to shorten the working day and increase the period of leisure, for rest, for domestic life, for play, for education and the development of the higher faculties.

The cynical objectors to this proposal of shortening the working day may say that leisure in most cases is used by laborers for drunkenness and demoralizing idleness. But in fact, drunkenness is an accompaniment of long hours, of low wages, of bad workshops and of degradation.

But it is also a good suggestion if we can have alongside shorter hours, other agencies for better living: improved education, libraries, playgrounds, good cinemas and theatres and healthy amusements of all kinds.

In time the progress of invention and of the arts may increase the general efficiency of labor and so, enable hours to be reduced without lessening the output. This is what has happened in the civilized world during the last half century this is what we may confidently expect in years to come.

The working day in industrial undertakings must never exceed nine hours in summer or eight in winter with at least two hours for meals before 3 P.M.

D. REGULATING WAGES.

Where conditions exist such as in the Arab world long hours of work, bad workrooms, harsh bargaining with the weak, "the question arises whether there may not be a regulation of the plane of competition by regulating wages (by fixing minimum rates) as well as by regulating hours of labor".⁽¹⁾

(1) Taussig F. W. Principles of Economics- P. 374.

"The earnings of the so-called sweated workers are by no means universally low. They are so when very many compete for the work and can turn to no other sort of work. The subcontractor may then be what is pictured in popular imagination- a prosperous and unscrupulous person who takes advantage of the sweated and grinds them to long hours and pitiful wages. But quite as often he is himself a poor devil, competing with others no less poor, and unable to extricate himself or his employers from the system."⁽¹⁾

So, establishing a minimum rate of wages not only for the sake of the employee but also for the employer's sake as it may serve to regulate the plane of competition. Then, all employers will be affected alike; no one could undersell the others by cutting below the established rate. There would be however, some difficulties of administration - attempts at evasion, to be met by a staff of inspectors, by publicity, and by support from public opinion.

The employer must bargain with chosen representatives of his employees. Compulsory collective bargaining is necessary for the fixation of fair and reasonable wages, and for the satisfaction of both parties.

B. HEALTH AND INSURANCE, AND OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Every Arab worker must be insured against sickness. Contribution must be paid by the employers whose obligations to pay is fixed by the act of employment. The workman must get while ill one half of his usual wage and in addition free medical treatment, even hospital care in case of necessity. The details of the system must be carefully worked out. But they call for a developed well organized economic system built on sound grounds, in order to be fulfilled in the way they should.

Provision for old age can be made by insurance. Unfortunately, in the Arab world there is commonly no set provision of any sort for old age among the masses, and when infirmity comes, the aged are dependent on the younger generation or on charity. There is nothing more pathetic than the position of a workman who has passed the age of efficiency, has no resources, is left without any pension, and is a burden on a household with scanty resources.

Old age pensions are now provided for by public authority in many advanced countries of the west. Every workman or needy workman must be given from the public

funds a pension on reaching a certain age limit. Old age pensions must also amount to one half of his original wage.

F. ACCIDENTS AND COMPENSATION.

A law specifying the amount of compensation is absolutely necessary for both the growth of the factory and for the benefit of the worker himself and his family. The existing Palestinian Compensation Ordinance is based on the precedent of the British Acts "but no attention seems to have been paid to the consideration that if Great Britain had not introduced this type of law before its social insurance legislation, it would not have done so now. Why tie the future of social legislation in Palestine to a bad British precedent of thirty years ago? Why force the workman to take action, and expect him to know that he must give notice of the accident and take proceedings within a certain period? Why leave the employer in uncertainty as to the amount of his liability? Why involve the courts in a kind of decision for which they are eminently unsuited? Why employ hosts of lawyers to debate whether accidents arose out of and in the course of employment?

No provision is made in this Draft ordinance to prevent insurance companies from drawing two or three or four times as much in premiums as they pay out in benefits." (1)

This is a criticism raised about the Palestinian compensation ordinance, and there are other criticisms of that kind to support it by Mr. Gordon and Mr. Rabinov.

In reality, our object in the Arab world, is to secure the workman and his family against the losses resulting from certain injuries and this would be best contrived by forming a compensation fund to which every employer pays a monthly sum in respect of every workman he employs, and it should be administered and supervised by a body representing the government, the employers and the workmen. The administrators of such a fund then, will help instead of having the interest in reducing workmen's compensation which insurance companies have. Such a system will not stand in the way of developing a modern system of social insurance which is necessary to develop one day.

Can't we hope for a day in which the worker if incapacitated will receive 100% of his regular wage through the social insurance, and if he becomes a permanent invalid, as a result of work, he will receive two thirds of his wage??

(1) Palestine-February 19 to December 30th, 1936- Published by the British Palestine Committee- page 6.

G. UNEMPLOYMENT.

Unemployment presents problems more difficult than those of old age, sickness or accidents.

A large reserve of unemployed workmen necessarily comes into being under the capitalist system. Some supporters of capitalism would say, a steady supply of unemployed laborers tends to bring its own remedies. It brings a competition for places, a bidding of laborers against laborers, a readjustment of terms between employers and employees and the final attainment of a stage of equilibrium when all workers will be absorbed in industry. But, all reasoning that attempts to show how unemployment tends to bring its own remedy assumes settled conditions of industry- the absence of friction, transition and irregularity. Such conditions never exist except under socialism.

Under capitalism an automatic adjustment of the supply of labor to those conditions under which all shall be employed is a tendency- like that of imports to balance exports- of the prices to conform the quantity of money, of the earnings of individuals to be proportioned to their efficiency, and such loose conformities.

Nowadays invention is progressing; under our present system workers are put out from one employment and not absorbed in another.

Insurance not only against sickness, old age and accidents, but also against unemployment is very necessary to the Arab world. Contributions must be required in equal amounts from employers and employees the state also adding a share.

A system of labor exchanges is very necessary. Its establishment will facilitate mobility of labor. An employment agency must be set up, to which all cases of unemployment should be reported and to serve as a binding link between the workers and their employers.

H. LABOR UNIONS.

The labor union movement is a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, the factory system and the concentration of industry.

We have seen that in the Arab world as well, the number of persons employed in a single enterprise and under a single employer is tending to become larger. So, personal ties between employers and employees are disappearing and bargaining is becoming impersonal.

Labour Unions are needed very badly in the Arab world. But, they must come about from the worker's feeling of dissatisfaction from dependence, that he not only wishes for higher wages, but for emancipation from semi patriarchal conditions.

Our workers must start to feel the necessity for their demand that wages shall not be settled once for all on the employer's offer but by a contract in which their action shall play an effective part.

It is certain and very obvious that the bargaining power of hired workmen is strengthened by their acting in a body. Moreover, organization and concerted action among workmen is strengthened by their acting in a body, enables them to lessen their disabilities. Labour Unions can do much to mitigate the immobility of labor by classifying it, collecting information about the demand for each type of it, and by aiding their members in reaching the right places.

There must be an organization within each concern in the way of well defined employee representation or works council; and combined with this, independent unions which the men maintain for themselves.

"The essential thing is how employers and employees feel about it and what is the spirit underlying it all. Here the responsibility lies most of all with the employers. They are the leaders and must accept their obligations for industrial peace no less than for industrial progress. It is the sincerity, the genuineness of their attitude which is crucial. On their sincerity depends that of the men.

While the plan of the organization does count, the essential thing is a real desire for betterment, a disposition to meet the men half way, tolerance and forbearance with persons whose lives are dominated by cares and fears quite unlike those of the employing class."⁽¹⁾

I. EDUCATION.

No matter how much is written on such problems and no matter how much such articles may be read by our public, it would do the laborer no good at all if he is illiterate and with a narrow horizon of thinking. So the worker must be educated before everything else in order to see where he stands and ask for his rights.

(1) Taussig F.W.- Principles of Economics-- Page 360

Unfortunately we witness in our country that the parents are often themselves the first to evade restrictions on the employment of children- and this comes out of the well of ignorance in which they plunge so deeply...

Again it is ignorance and shortsightedness which play the chief part in preventing them from concern about the dangers of an occupation.

Most of our workers are ignorant, unskilled, illiterate and are used to a low standard of living. Any job in a factory ensuring their daily bread will be satisfactory irrespective of under what conditions they work or how they are treated. In fact, long hours unrestricted employment of women and children, poor sanitary conditions are results of a low standard of living. The Arab worker goes on and on, with low wages and low intelligence, a high birth rate and a high death rate. To lift them from these conditions calls for strong compulsion on the workers.

"Legislation on labor conditions must therefore be accompanied by other measures above all by education. Nothing is so effective toward cleansing and purifying such a social miasma as the bracing atmosphere of democracy- a sense of equal rights and free opportunity and a stir of social ambition."⁽¹⁾

Education of the Arab laborer, aside from technical training is very necessary. The worker must receive a sufficient education; an elementary grade is by no means enough, but also secondary schools must be established where the worker selects his vocation, after which he will pass into high schools specializing in the chosen subject.

Education must be made compulsory, and free by the state. Mass education is very urgent. It develops in the worker group consciousness.

So, progress in the liquidation of illiteracy must start so that in the future we can hope for clubs and reading rooms to spread culture among the workers, distributing pamphlets, and giving speeches addressed to the workers regularly.

(1) - Taussig F.W. Principles of Economics- page 366.

VII. CONCLUSION.

Most business men may read through these pages with an ironic smile, and will shrug their shoulders thinking to themselves that such representation of the Labor conditions, such evaluation and suggestions are merely utterances of people watching from afar, and that these suggestions have little pertinence in the cold world of affairs.

"The hard-boiled employer and the hard-boiled labor leader will be equally unwilling to admit that there is anything that endures except the underlying conflict. To this attitude the only answer is that we are creatures with mixed motives. We are not just good or bad, hard boiled or soft boiled. Even the worst of us, the hardest, responds sometime, somewhere, to the call of what is born in on him as right. No doubt the mixture of good with bad is different in different individuals; and in the same individuals it shows itself differently at different times.

What shall be the quality of the mixture, which way a man's thoughts and actions shall turn, depends ⁽¹⁾ ~~enormously on the environment.~~"

Therefore, it is not in the least impossible that the same love of distinction and profit making which underlies the people can be turned towards ways of higher and wider usefulness.

Since the government is supposed to represent the people (at least this is what it pretends) it must lend the problems of the worker due considerations

The worker form the majority of the people and since the government is created for the benefit of the people, our governments must devote a little more time for legislation on the problems concerning this vast majority in order to fulfill it duties.

By doing so, the functions of the government are enlarged. So measures are necessary for the training and selection of a competent public staff all the way through.

The passing of laws may be a quick matter. But the details for good administration must come out of an organized political institution, built on sound economic basis.

(1) - Taussig F.W. p 380.

No other problems raise more difficult questions, nothing else shows more plainly the need of striving for a better direction of the economic and social forces.

In conclusion I shall give a quotation to which due consideration must be paid.

"The working and eventual outcome of all such legislation, whether on hours or wages, or labor relations, is as difficult to predict as that of legislation in the field of money and the mechanism of exchange. On these matters, no simple economic principles can be invoked. The only guiding rule is that the course of action to be followed is that which under the conditions of the time and place leads to the maximum of welfare and lessens it the more if there be not merely inequality of "real" income but also inequality of power and position."⁽¹⁾

(1) Taussig -- p 379.

-BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. Burns, C. -Industry and Civilization N. Y. The Macmillan Co.1925
2. Elbourne, E. -Fundamentals of Industrial Administration
London-M:Donald and Evans 1936.
3. Government Gazettes: Iraq: The Government of Iraq Gazette No.20,
No.27 of 1936.
Palestine: Official Gazettes of the Government of Palestine:
of 1927,1928, and 1934.
Gazette 1159, Sun. 2, of 1.1. 42
Gazette 1233, Sun 2, of 12. 11. 42
Gazette 1230, of 22. 10 42.
Gazette 1230, Sun 1 of 22. 10 42.
4. Hemmel E.H. Industrial Political Economy London, Isaac Pitman
and Sons, 1939:
- 5 Loi, -Réglementant le travail des enfants et des femmes dans
l'industrie. Beyrouth-Imprimerie de L'Orient 1936.
6. Marx K. -Communist Manifesto-London,Reeves 1888.
7. Smith A. Wealth of Nations London,Methmen &Co.Ltd 1930,vo. 1.
8. Taussig F.W. -Principles of Economics, N. Y. The Macmillan Co
1939
9. Interviews with workers.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

1. Abu Izzedine and Hakim-The status of Industrial Labor in Syria-
Beirut, A. U.B. -1932.
2. Himadeh-Economic Organization of Syria, Palestine, and Iraq
(3 books).
3. Palestine-February 19 to December 3, 1936 published by the British
Palestine Committee.