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## ON THE IRRESPONSIBLE HANDLING OF THE PALESTINE QUESTION

By T. Cliff

We have received two numbers of the Internal Bulletin of the SWP (October, 1946, No. 11 and No. 12) in which three items on the Jewish question and Palestine appear. As we are sure that acceptance by the SWP of the position expressed in all these items will do infinite harm to the cause of the Fourth International in all the Arab countries and may even bring about a cleavage between the colonial sections and the SWP, we find it necessary to criticize these items in the most severe manner. The three items repeat the same idea, but as the article "A Revolutionary Programme for the Jews" by Leo Lyons gives the most elaborate exposition of it, we shall concentrate our criticism on it. This article, bringing the superficial tourist approach to the Palestine question to its height, is no more than a mixture of ignorance as regards the situation in Palestine, an absolute lack of any understanding of the theory of the Permanent Revolution and the colonial question, and above all, an illustration of the proverb "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Its tendency is Zionist in all but words, and it is for this fact alone that it is important to analyse it.

### The Trade Unions

In one small paragraph L.L. manages to make at least one mistake in every sentence. This is the paragraph:

"The development of the productive forces in Palestine by Jewish and Arab capitalists produced the phenomenon of Arab trade unions. Despite the smallness of the productive forces the concentration of the Palestinian proletariat made it necessary for the Arab unions to affiliate with the General Federation of Jewish Labor (Histadrut) in order to fight their class enemy, the bourgeoisie. These Arab unions have a membership of 2,000. Other Arab trade unions, hostile to the Histadrut, were organised by the government in order to split the labour movement nationally -- they have a membership of 5,000. Despite this split, in 1943 eleven Arab strikes took place with 4,143 workers participating. Four additional strikes of 4,000 Jews and Arabs also occurred. Special note should be taken of the one-day strike of 30,000 government employees, half-Jewish and half-Arab." (p. 31, Column 1).

In the first sentence the overwhelming weight of foreign capital is not mentioned at all. The fact that foreign capital owns over three-quarters of the total capital of industry and transport in Palestine appears to be unknown to L.L.; as also the fact that the majority of the Arab proletariat is employed by the government and foreign capital, while no Arab workers are employed in Jewish industry.

The second sentence is even more monstrous than the first. No Arab unions became affiliated to the Histadrut "in order to fight their class enemy." The Histadrut organised a special Arab organisation, which is mainly a weapon for Zionist propaganda abroad. The Histadrut is so far from having comradely relations with the members of this organisation that it does not allow the organisation to have

one elected committee, all being appointed by the Histadrut. The leadership of the organisation is the Arab Department of the Histadrut, in which there is no single Arab. The local branches are administered by Jewish secretaries appointed by the above-mentioned Department. If in some cases, there does happen to be, besides the Jewish secretary, an Arab one too, the latter's authority is subordinated to the former's. There are no democratically elected branch committees and conferences have never been convened. From the year of its inception, 1927, until today, an assembly of Arab delegates of this organisation has taken place only once, and its organisers gave it the fitting name "A day of study", no decisions being taken, but only lectures being given.

L.L. does not know all this. He tries to describe the Arab organisation of the Histadrut as an independent trade union. He forgets to explain why, at the beginning of the war, after twelve years of its existence, it claimed only 300 members. He does not explain, it seems he does not know, that the main prop of this organisation is the fact that the Histadrut has a contracting agency called Solel Boneh, which takes a big part in the building of camps, etc. Although it pays its Arab workers only a third or a quarter of what it pays the Jewish workers, the Histadrut's Arab organisation still has some attraction, as it to a large extent controls the acceptance and dismissal of workers. It is because of this that during the war the number of Arab workers in the organisation rose to 2,000.

In Haifa, the only town with relatively big enterprises employing Arab workers and with a relatively developed working class, the Arab organisation of the Histadrut contains Arab workers only from small enterprises. It has no foothold in the railways, refineries, Public Works Department, etc.

Among the Arab employees and workers of the government and foreign enterprises, the Histadrut has no influence whatsoever. L.L. does not mention the influence of the "conquest of labour" policy of the Histadrut on the character of its "affiliated" organisation. He does not know that the branches of this organisation are not only very small and not rooted in the main centres of the economy, but also that they rest on very shaky foundations. For instance, the workers of the Neshet Cement Factory, who belonged to this organisation, in 1933 declared a strike. The Histadrut sent strikebreakers, finding in the strike an excellent opportunity for the Zionist "conquest of labour". A similar occurrence took place in the railways, when Arab members of the organisation were dismissed. This entirely smashed its new fairly strong foothold in the railways. In the middle of 1944 the Acre branch of the organisation, one of the most successful in the eyes of the leadership, disappeared in the space of a few weeks: the reason was that some scores of Arab workers were dismissed and the Arab Department of the Histadrut let slip that the dismissals were for the purpose of creating places of work for new immigrants.

L.L. does not know that the Histadrut leaders prevent all political discussion in this organisation by whatever means they can, not, fortunately, always succeeding. Thus, for instance, in the 1944 May Day meeting of the Jaffa Branch, the Histadrut was attacked for

its Zionist policy directed towards turning Palestine into a Jewish State, and a resolution to this effect was passed unanimously. The Histadrut promptly reacted by bringing four of the Arab militants to the government court on charge of disturbing a meeting. We of the Revolutionary Communist League of course supported these militants, against the Histadrut.

With the third sentence it is not necessary to deal, as the corrections of the second cover this also.

The fourth sentence, "Other Arab trade unions, hostile to the Histadrut, were organised by the government in order to split the labor movement nationally -- they have a membership of 5,000," reaches the fortissimo of falsification. These words are the basest slander of the militant Arab workers. THE ARAB TRADE UNION FEDERATION was founded in 1925. Scores of members of this organisation have been cast into prison for struggling for the right of organisation. Despite the bureaucracy which grew within the organisation, it played a decisive role in all the railway strikes and most of the other important strikes in Palestine.

The other Arab trade union organisation is the FEDERATION OF ARAB TRADE UNIONS AND WORKERS' SOCIETIES, founded in 1942 by a Stalinist group which split off from the Palestine C.P. The two organisations have about 10,000 members (double the number L.L. states), with a much wider support when it comes to class action.

There is another, loose, organisation, the Second Division Civil Servants' Association, which contains both Jews and Arabs, the leadership being mainly Arab; this organisation is in very unfriendly relations with the Histadrut. In L.L.'s eyes, it is not the Histadrut which is to blame for the split in the labour movement nationally, but the Arab unions. And this despite the fact that the picketing for the boycott of the workers of other nations is not the work of the latter, but the former. The record of the Arab organisations in this sphere, although not spotless, is infinitely superior to that of the Histadrut. It would take up too much space to quote all their numerous resolutions calling for unity and solidarity with Jewish workers, and their actions in this direction. It is interesting to note that Palestine is the only country in the Arab East in which Jews are not together with Arabs within one union. It is criminal to say that these unions are bodies organised by the Government. This spits in the face of militant workers struggling for their rights under the most difficult conditions. No one would dare to call the CIO a company union, but the Zionist agents do dare to throw mud on the organs of struggle of the Arab workers. L.L. takes the Zionist propaganda at its face value.

The last sentence, "Special note should be taken of the one-day strike of 30,000 government employees, half-Jewish and half-Arab," contains two mistakes. First of all the strike was not for one day, but for a fortnight. The 32,000 strikers were not half-Jewish, half-Arab, but there were about 26,000 Arabs and 6,000 Jews. It is worth noting that the leadership of the strike was in the main of Arab employees and workers, that the Histadrut did not have any important influence on the strike and that, while the workers of Haifa and Jaffa ports went on strike, the third port, that of all-Jewish

Tel Aviv, continued to work throughout the period of the strike: the Histadrut was unwilling to jeopardise Zionist activity.

So much for L.L.'s facts about trade unions in Palestine.

### The "Left" Zionist Parties

From an idealisation of the Histadrut, L.L. goes on to an idealisation of the "left-wing" Zionists. We write "left" in inverted commas. He instead writes: "One-third of the Federation (Histadrut) (the Left Poale Zion, Kibutz Artzi, and the left wing of the Mapai) supports the slogan of a bi-national state, and Arab-Jewish Republic, as opposed to the chauvinistic slogan of a 'Jewish Commonwealth'".

This is a conglomeration of mistakes. The facts are: The "Left Poale Zion attacked the slogan of the bi-national state, putting forward instead that of a Jewish Socialist State. Today it is united with the former "left wing" of Mapai to form the party "Ahdut HaAvodah-Poale Zion." This party supports the slogan of 100 per cent Jewish labour and the Biltmore resolution calling for a Jewish Commonwealth. As regards the bi-nationalism of Hashomer Hatzair, it is an untruth to say that they stand for an All-Jewish Republic. Against the official Zionist programme they put forward these demands:

A. To open the doors of Palestine for Jewish immigration.

B. To establish in Palestine a political regime under international control which will give the Jewish Agency the right to carry out Jewish immigration according to the full economic absorptive capacity of the country and taking into consideration the extent of the plight of the Jews in other countries at the end of the war.

C. To grant the Jewish Agency the necessary authority for the development and building up of the country, including settlement of all government owned lands and uninhabited spaces, in the interests of the two sectors of the population, which will make dense Jewish colonisation possible, and the development of the Arab economy.

D. To establish in Palestine after the war a regime based on the political equality of both peoples, which will enable Zionism to realize its aims undisturbed and will advance Palestine towards political independence in the frame of bi-nationalism." ("Against the Stream, Collection of Articles and Speeches," Tel Aviv, 1943, Hebrew).

All matters of immigration and settlement, according to Hashomer Hatzair, must be dealt with by the Jewish Agency, which will be concerned -- as it has been concerned until today -- with the "development of the Arab economy."

Of course Hashomer Hatzair is ready to cooperate with the Arabs on such a basis. They only forget one small question: will the Arab masses accept this as a basis for collaboration? Is not control of immigration and colonisation in such a country as Palestine control over the most important functions of the state? Does the programme of Hashomer Hatzair differ from the Jewish State programme in other than a greater dose of hypocrisy?

But if any doubt remains as to the extreme Zionism of Hashomer Hatzair, its leaders dispel it when they explain the bi-national programme: "We aspire to the concentration of the majority of Jews in Palestine and the neighbouring countries." "The problem we are all concerned with is what is the most purposeful way to cease being a minority in the country." "Ben-Gurion claims that Zionism is not conditioned by the agreement of the Arabs; our position has always been the same." "Without agreement with the Arabs, too, we will continue the Zionist undertaking." (From the speeches of M. Yaari and Y. Chazan in the Inner Zionist Council, 15th October and 10th November 1942). What is the basis for agreement with the Arabs? Hashomer Hatzair gives a clear answer: "A primary precondition for any negotiation will be a declaration and common agreement that negotiations will be carried on only on the basis of the Mandate, and the unshakable recognition of Jewish immigration into Palestine." ("On the Wall", 1/1/39)

Are not Hashomer Hatzair really enthusiastic about bi-nationalism and fraternity with the Arabs? After all, all they ask of them is consent to only two "small" points -- imperialist domination and Zionism.

L.L., it seems, does not know that there has been no case of picketing against Arab labour which was not supported by Hashomer Hatzair. He does not know the heroic record of Hashomer Hatzair and "left" Mapai in the eviction of Arab tenants from their land.

#### The "Benefits" the Zionists Bring to the Arab Masses

L.L. also takes at its face value the benefits that the Arab masses receive from Zionist immigration and colonisation. His main "proof" he arrives at by juggling with a few figures. He writes:

"Arab population near Jewish settlements has shown a marked increase compared to that in other sections of Palestine. In Jaffa, near the all-Jewish city of Tel-Aviv, the Arab population increased 69% in the period from 1922 to 1935, and in Jerusalem, with a large Jewish community, the Arab population increased 47%. By contrast, in the Arab cities of Jenin and Nablus, the increase was only twelve and eight percent respectively. This tendency is shown even more clearly in the case of Arab villages near Jewish settlements:

	<u>Population Increase</u>
Salama (near Tel-Aviv)	212%
Zarnuqua (" Rishon-le-Zion)	102%
Yibna (near Ness-Ziona)	101%

Compared to this, the population in the non-Jewish districts of Tulkarem and Nablus increased only thirty-five and twenty-eight percent respectively."

He does not say that the three Arab villages chosen are in the region of orange groves while Tulkarem and Nablus are in much less fertile areas. He forgets to mention that generally the towns on the seashore -- not only Haifa and Jaffa in Palestine, but also Beirut and Tripoli in Lebanon -- have increased their populations much more than the inland towns. The increase in the Arab population

of Jerusalem is not to be explained by the influx of Jews, as no single Arab in the town is employed by Jews, but is to be explained by the important administrative position of Jerusalem as regards the whole country. L.L. forgets to mention those areas of Palestine in which the Arab population not only declined since the Zionist immigration, but even disappeared completely -- scores of villages in the Valley of Jezreel (Marjibn Amir) and the valley of Hefer (Wadi Khawaret).

L.L. writes that the Arab population of Palestine increased by 40 percent in 15 years, while that of Egypt increased from 1920 to 1932 by only 13 percent, and that of Transjordan has remained practically stationary since the First World War. About Syria he finds it necessary to write that emigration has averaged 9,500 per year during the period from 1920 to 1930. Let us analyse these figures. The following table is taken from the Statistical Yearbook of the League of Nations, 1937:

	<u>Births</u> <u>per 1000</u>	<u>Deaths</u> <u>per 1000</u>	<u>Surplus of</u> <u>Births</u> <u>over Deaths</u> <u>per 1000</u>
(Average 1931-1935)			
Arabs of Palestine.....	50.2	25.3	24.9
Algeria (excluding Europeans, 1934)...	33.1	17.1	16.0
Egypt.....	42.9	27.4	15.5
Cyprus.....	29.8	14.8	15.0

As regards other countries of the Middle East there are no statistics of population. What do these figures show? They show that in the main the great increase in the population of Palestine over Egypt, Algeria or Cyprus is not the result of immigration, which is negligible, nor of a low death rate, but of a very high birth rate. If we compared the increase of population of Palestine is on no account a proof of well-being.

L.L. of course does not analyse the figures he brings of the increase of population. For him every word of the Zionist propagandist machine is to be taken at face value. The fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were 100,000 people in Palestine (according to Dr. A. Ruppin, a Zionist research worker, in "Syrien als Wirtschaftsgbiet", Berlin, 1920), while in 1922 the number of Arabs in Palestine reached 663,000, i.e. an increase of more than 600 percent, surely proves, according to L.L.'s way of argumentation, that the feudal regime and Turkish rule benefitted the Arabs immensely. The same thing applies to other colonial countries. For instance the population of Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century was 2-2½ millions, while at its end it was 10 millions, i.e. an increase of 300-400 percent, of Germany 130 percent, and of England 266 percent.

Let us see how Zionist colonisation influences the Arab masses.

It does so in three spheres: the buying of land, the buying of Arab agricultural products, and the employment of Arab labour.

From 1878 to 1936, 123,185 hectares of land were acquired by Jews. Of all the land about which there are any details only 9.4 percent were acquired from peasants. The only ones among the Arabs who profited from the buying of land were the big landowners, while at least 3,000-4,000 Arab tenants were evicted from their land. The Zionist leaders in the USA certainly did not tell you about this, or if they did, you were told that these tenants received compensation. What is the truth about this compensation? Dr. A. Granovsky of the Board of Directors of the Jewish National Fund announced that every expropriated tenant received an average of 39.9 pounds. Assuming this to be so, if the tenant owed, according to the Johnson-Crosbie Report, an average of 27 pounds, after the payment of the debt he was left with the grand sum of about 13 pounds. We know that even this is an exaggeration, that the evicted tenants leave with nothing at all in their pockets.

As regards the employment of Arab workers by Jews, the maximum number of Arab workers employed by the Jewish economy is 3,000-4,000. The Jewish capitalists who employ Arabs are almost only the orange grove owners, and this they do because their market is not in the Zionist economy in Palestine, but in England. The Jewish organisation of orange grove owners has therefore more than once broken Zionist discipline, even reaching the stage of demanding a restriction of Jewish immigration (in 1934).

So perhaps Zionist immigration influences the Arab masses not through the buying of land or labour power, but through the buying of products. According to I. Gruenbaum ("National Income and Outlay in Palestine, 1936", Jerusalem, 1941, a Jewish Agency publication), the purchases made by Jews from Arabs amounted to only 10 percent of the value of the purchases by Jews of overseas imports. And there is no question that the prevailing tendency of the closed Jewish economy in Palestine is to become more and more autarchical as regards the Arabs. Anybody who was in Palestine 30 years ago will remember that a much bigger part of Jewish purchases were made from Arabs at that time. The weakness of Jewish economy is the main reason for the fact that even today a small percentage of its purchases (3-4 percent) must willy-nilly be made from Arabs, who constitute 70 percent of the population of the country. Ben-Gurion was certainly right when he declared that the strengthening of Zionism would put an end to these purchases too. (These few remarks, incidentally, we hope dispel any false ideas which may have been derived from L.L.'s article, which speaks about "the economic interdependence of Arabs and Jews." If L.L. troubled to learn about conditions in Palestine he would know that there is very little "economic interdependence of Arabs and Jews," and that the tendency on the part of the Zionist economy is to become ever more autarchical.)

Perhaps the benefit to the Arab masses from Zionist immigration and colonisation is made indirectly, through the increase in the income of the Government. But here too, Zionism brings with it more harm than good, as with the support of Zionism, imperialism could



deny even those democratic rights which it is compelled to give to the masses in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. The fact that in Palestine there is not even a democratic advisory council, while in all these countries there are parliaments -- even though of very restricted powers -- is also due to Zionism, which for years has clamoured against it, knowing that the popular majority would put an end to Zionist expansionism. This allows the government with impunity to give 4,000,000 pounds to the import monopoly, Steel Bros., and about the same amount to the police, while Arab education and health do not receive even a fifth of the two sums together. Nor must it be forgotten that the Zionists strive to diminish even this small sum, putting forward the "progressive" principle that the expenditure budget be divided between the two communities according to the share of each in the revenue. If this were adopted, even if we assume that there were not such a bulky police budget, we do not understand how the increase in the income of the Government (according to the Zionists the result of Jewish immigration) could benefit the Arabs.

### The Special Character of Zionist Immigration to Palestine

It is self-evident that the SWP should struggle for the right of asylum for refugees, for free immigration into USA. But only the greatest superficiality can drive one to the conclusion that this slogan holds good at all times and under all conditions. In the independent capitalist countries the struggle for free immigration is part and parcel of the struggle for socialism. This is not always the case in the colonies. The Arabs of Tripoli and Cyrenaica resist the immigration and colonisation of Italians despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of those who came to settle were poor peasants. In Kenya and Rhodesia there is a struggle against white immigration. A similar struggle took place in Manchuria against colonisation by Japanese peasants. And it is no accident that in the I.F.T.U. Conference held in 1945, the representatives of colonial trade unions -- a Palestine Arab, the Indian Federation of Labour, the All-India Trade Union Congress, South African, Nigerian and Gambian negroes -- all voted for the deletion from the report of the sentence supporting Jewish immigration and colonisation in Palestine. The Egyptian delegation which had no voting rights, put forward a very militant programme and incorporated in it the struggle against Zionist immigration. It is no accident that the Trotskyist groups in Palestine and Egypt wholeheartedly support the struggle against Zionist immigration and colonisation.

Everyone who knows the ABC of the Theory of the Permanent Revolution and the colonial question must understand that the main tasks of the anti-imperialist movement in the Arab East are:

- 1) The overthrow of imperialist domination.
- 2) The unity of the Arab countries split by feudalism and imperialism.
- 3) The agrarian revolution.

The struggle for these aims goes beyond the boundaries of the capitalist regime. The criterion for our relation to Jewish

immigration into Palestine must be: how does Jewish immigration influence the above tasks.

The majority of the Arab workers are employed, as we have said, by foreign capital and imperialism. They are brutally exploited by it and find themselves in direct, irreconcilable and open antagonism to it. And as this regime of superexploitation is based on the pauperisation of the peasantry, they are vitally interested in the abolition of feudalism and imperialism, which hamper the development of the forces of production. This interest becomes more direct and open owing to the urban proletariat's origin being peasant. The Jewish workers at the same time are nearly all employed in the closed Zionist economy. They therefore do not come into direct conflict with foreign capital and imperialism. Being in a closed economy means also that by nationalistic means they protect themselves from the pressure of the pauperisation of the peasants in the feudal economy. So that we can say that the words of Trotsky as regards South Africa (that South Africa for the Negroes is a colony, for the whites a dominion) are in the main correct as regards the Arabs and Jews in Palestine also. The Jewish worker can on no account lead the struggle against foreign capital and imperialism, and against feudalism. The only thing he can do, if he renounces Zionism, is to follow the lead of the Arab proletariat, whose main centres are Cairo and Alexandria.

What is the relation of Zionism to the second task of the revolutionary movement in the Arab East -- the unity of the Arab countries. It is self-evident that if the closed economy -- which is the main characteristic of the Jewish economy in Palestine -- isolates the Jews from the Arabs in Palestine, it certainly has no ties to unite it with the Arabs of other countries.

L.L. may say that he is against the closed economy and 100 percent Jewish labour, but nevertheless is for free immigration and colonisation of Jews in Palestine. This argument is simply foolish. What interest will workers of a European standard of life find in going to a country dominated by imperialism and feudalism, where the standard of life is terribly low? If not for the closed character of the Jewish economy in Palestine, which absorbs practically every immigrant Jew, no Jew would today have come to Palestine any more than he goes to India or China. In these conditions, to be against the Zionist policy of 100 percent Jewish labour means to be against Jewish immigration into Palestine. He who is for Jewish immigration into a Palestine under imperialist rule must, by the logic of the objective conditions, be also for the Zionist policy of a closed economy, enmity towards the Arabs, etc.

It is also impossible to be a consistent Zionist without being for a Jewish State. The logic of events themselves compelled the majority Zionists to change their position as regards this problem. Not more than ten years ago, only a tiny minority in the Zionist camp (the Revisionists) wrote on its banner the demand for a Jewish State. At that time Ben-Gurion went as far as saying that he who supports the slogan of a Jewish State is a deceiver and a villain. Today the demand for a Jewish State is the slogan of the great majority in the Zionist movement, the same Ben-Gurion being one of its

most prominent protagonists. As we have already said, the programme of Hashomer Hatzair demands that the Jewish Agency be given such powers over the paramount questions of immigration and colonisation, that their differences with the majority Zionists prove to be purely verbal. This development, starting from bi-nationalism, which was the official programme of the World Zionist Organisation, and going over to the demand for a Jewish Commonwealth, or control of the Jewish Agency over immigration and colonisation, is not accidental. As we have said, large-scale immigration and colonisation to Palestine under the existing economic, social and political order, could not be realised without closing the Jewish economy to the Arab people. The Jewish State can seal the economy much more hermetically by adopting passports to prevent the movement of Arab workers into the Jewish economy, by establishing protective tariffs to prevent the influx of Arab products, etc. The Jewish ruling class has nearly no economic, social and political contacts with the Arab ruling classes. Any state that exists in Palestine, therefore, which is not a workers' state, must necessarily be either Jewish or Arab -- in reality, either a Jewish puppet state of imperialism, or an Arab puppet state. A Jewish State in the whole of Palestine, or at least in part of it, is therefore necessarily the aim of Zionist expansion, while the bi-national state, unless visualised as a proletarian state, must necessarily be only a dream, an illusion, or downright treachery.

If, therefore, the situation is approached dialectically, one can never come to the conclusions of L.L. -- for Jewish immigration to and colonisation in the British colony of Palestine, while against the Zionist conquest of labour or the Zionist demand for a Jewish State.

#### What is the Character of the Kibbutzim?

In order to prove the basic progressive character of the Haganah, L.L. finds it necessary to emphasize that the kibbutzim (Jewish collective farms) are the backbone of this organisation. For one who looks at Palestine not from the standpoint of the national and social emancipation of the Arab masses of the East (40-50 millions in number) but from the standpoint of the member of the kibbutz, who is in a closed economy, the kibbutz is really a most progressive element. In the propaganda of the Zionists, the kibbutz appears to be really a communist cell in the backward East -- a torch lighting up the darkness.

But this is only a myth. The first question to be asked about these kibbutzim is: who finances them? The answer -- the Zionist funds whose main source of income are the rich Jewish capitalists of USA, England and South Africa. What interest have capitalists in building communism? The fact that the Zionists built these kibbutzim is a result of the necessity to establish Jewish agriculture on the basis of 100 percent Jewish labour. The collective form assured this much better than individual colonisation could. Jewish agricultural workers would not enthusiastically have supported the struggle for the conquest of land and the eviction of other tenants from it. Nor would Jewish agricultural wage earners have taken an active part in organising the struggle against Arab agricultural products. Besides this, a closed Jewish economy must undertake agriculture, but

privately owned agricultural units based on Jewish labour would not yield satisfactory profits -- hence the intervention of the national funds, and the construction of "labour settlements" (mainly kibbutzim).

The standard of life of the members of the kibbutz is much higher not only than that of the Arab peasant masses, but even that of the Arab kulaks. While the fellah's family of six people had an average income of 26 pounds per annum, before the war, including what he consumed of his own products, his debt payments, etc., the family unit in a kibbutz, whose number does not reach four persons, in 1936 spent for food alone an average of 83.6 pounds, for increasing invested capital 37.5 pounds, and further sums for other items. From these figures it is clear not only that the standard of living of a member of a kibbutz is much higher than that of an Arab fellah, but that the difference is on the increase, for, as the figures show, the capital invested yearly on every family unit in the kibbutz is bigger than the whole income of the Arab peasant family, not to speak of the part he can invest.

While the Arab peasant continues to plough the land with a wooden plough which is more primitive than the ancient Hebrew plough of 2,000 years ago, the kibbutzim are equipped with the most modern agricultural machinery. The number of tractors in the kibbutzim is extremely high, the cultivated area per tractor being 140 hectares (in 1936) while in USA (in 1930) it was 145, in Germany (in 1933) it was 850, and in France (in 1930) it was 1,000.

Have the kibbutzim anything in common with the class struggle of the rural poor? Are they interested in the overthrow of feudalism? Not at all. The kibbutzim are not exploited by the feudal lords and have nothing to profit from their overthrow. On the contrary, the land on which they are built was bought from the big landowners, (statistics show that the Zionists hardly succeeded at all in buying land from the peasants, such purchases making up less than 10 percent of total land purchases), and the existence of these landowners is a precondition for the expansion of the kibbutzim. They are interested in high prices for agricultural products, and so the more backward Arab economy is, the smaller is the competition of its surplus products on the Jewish markets. It is interesting to note that when in 1944 the government of Palestine put price controls on agricultural products, which wage workers, Jewish and Arab alike, criticized for not being sufficiently restrictive, the kibbutzim vehemently protested against the fact that the government put any controls at all. The only "benefit" the Arab fellahs derive from the kibbutzim is the sight of the well constructed concrete buildings, the trucks and tractors, modern chicken coops and cowshed, the luxurious kindergartens and children's houses. Their children continue to play on the dungheap, and their cows, goats and chickens, continue to live with them in their windowless mud rooms.

#### The Influence of Zionism on the Arab National Movement

L.L. writes: "It is over-simplification to state that Jewish immigration is a force 'oppressing the Arab movement for national liberation.' As a matter of fact, Zionism was the very factor that

developed Arab nationalism in Palestine."

If there is any over-simplification, and therefore also distortion, it is in L.L.'s words. Imperialism is the power which gives an impulse to the national movement. Marx spoke most appropriately when he said that it was British penetration into India which, for the first time in history, built the basis for the unity of India. This it did by smashing the self-sufficient economy, by connecting all the fibres of the economy to the world market, by building railways, etc. At the same time imperialism did its best to preserve the outworn feudal property relations, in this way preventing the economic, cultural and political unity of India from being really complete. To say, therefore, that imperialism suppresses the national movement, does not mean to say that it itself did not provide the impetus for its creation.

It is unquestionable that the Arab national movement would have come to life in Palestine in the same way that it came to life in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, without Zionist expansion. Zionist expansion served not as the generator of the Arab national movement, but only as its distorter. Let us analyse this statement.

While with the first contact of imperialism and a colony it is natural for the feudal class to lead the resistance to imperialist penetration -- even though this class is internally disorganised, and ready to compromise with its foe -- the continuation of imperialist rule and the changes in the economy, make the feudalists the best allies of imperialism, and it is the industrial bourgeoisie which then appears as the leader of the national movement. The increasing numbers of proletarians, superexploited in the enterprises both of foreign and of local capital, are extremely antagonistic to imperialism, and with the deepening of the struggle for national and social liberation, naturally become the leaders of the millions of peasants, the leaders of the anti-imperialist struggle. All these processes in Palestine were greatly distorted by Zionism.

In all the colonies the struggle between the local bourgeoisie and imperialism is a struggle over the division of the surplus value, expressing itself in a struggle over the local markets, and over the ownership of the key positions of the economy. In Palestine the secondary positions of the economy, such as light industry, are not in the hands of Arab capital, as in Egypt, Syria or Iraq, but in the main in the hands of Jewish capital. The junior partners of imperialist capital are not Arab, but in the main Jewish, capitalists. We may assume without fear of error, that three-quarters of the capital invested in industry and transport, belongs to imperialism, about a fifth to Jewish capitalists, and only two to three percent to Arab capitalists. These conditions blunt the contradictions existing between the Arab bourgeoisie and imperialism, and intensifies those existing between the Arab bourgeoisie and the Jewish bourgeoisie. And as it is the feudalists in all the colonies who are the most extreme communal leaders, Zionism serves not as a factor which deepens the cleavage between the bourgeoisie and the feudalists, but on the contrary, closes the cracks. We know that the colonial bourgeoisie is not consistently anti-feudal, but in Palestine it is even much less so than in other colonies. After L.L.'s odes to the

progressive role of Jewish immigration and colonisation in Palestine, perhaps he can answer these questions: Why, in Egypt, Syria, Iraq or Lebanon, does a clerical leader not stand at the head of the movement, while in Palestine the Mufti of Jerusalem is the most prominent leader? Why, in Egypt, for instance, is it the Wafd party, representing the middle bourgeoisie, which is the biggest party, while in Palestine all the nuclei of bourgeois parties (the main example, the Nashashibis instead of building up an organisation, became more and more subordinated and merged with the Mufti's party?

The role of Zionism, as a distorting factor, as a brake on the Arab national movement, is most clearly shown in its influence in the development of the Arab working class towards becoming the leader of the national and social liberation struggle. The congruence of class and national antagonisms in, for example, imperialist owned enterprises, brings class consciousness very clearly to the fore. On the other hand, national competition between workers blunts class consciousness. If not, therefore, for Jewish immigration and colonisation, if not for the always threatening conquest of labour, the class consciousness of the Arab masses would have been much clearer than it is today.

Zionism serves as a factor diverting the development of the Arab national movement in another way too. Imperialism does its best to widen the unevenness in the development of the different Arab countries, to connect these countries economically not with one another, but with the "mother" country. In this it is assisted by the hundred years old inheritance of feudal rule. Zionism appears as an added factor separating the line of development of Palestine from that of the other Arab countries. By threatening to break this link from the chain of the Arab countries it serves imperialism and its feudal agents in the Arab East in two ways: firstly, it diverts the responsibility for the splitting of the Arab East into different states from the main sponsor of the splitting -- imperialism -- on to Zionism; secondly, it helps to galvanise the Arab League, an association of the Arab countries which has nothing to do with real economic, cultural and political unity, the only point of agreement among its members being anti-Zionism. This "unity" can, with the help of imperialist and Zionist provocation, stir up anti-Jewish pogroms.

#### Our Position Towards the "Jewish Resistance Movement"

L.L. writes: "The Jewish Resistance represents a progressive force against British imperialism. As such it merits revolutionary support."

L.L. derives the progressive character of the resistance movement not from an analysis of the place of the Zionist "resistance" movement in the agrarian, anti-feudal revolution or in the class struggle of the workers exploited by foreign capital and imperialism, nor from the relation between this movement and the struggle against the boundaries between the Arab countries which are a result of feudalism and imperialism and are strengthened by Zionism. All these problems are not even posed by L.L. Has L.L. ever heard of the theory of the Permanent Revolution?

Instead, according to the best tradition of petty bourgeois idealism, he bases his entire "analysis" on pure sentimentalism, on impressionism.

For a Marxist the programme of any political movement is derived from its social character. For L.L. the tasks of the Haganah are to be derived not from its social characteristics, but from his abstract definition of what is a progressive movement. L.L. therefore comes to the most ridiculous conclusions when he puts before the Jewish "Resistance" movement the two slogans of Free Immigration and the Convocation of a Constituent Assembly. About the latter he writes: "Every slogan that can bring about Arab-Jewish collaboration must be seized hold of.

"Foremost of these is the slogan for the immediate (and the emphasis is important) convocation of a representative Constituent Assembly."

For 29 years a struggle has taken place in Palestine over this issue between the Arab national movement on the one hand, and imperialism and Zionism on the other. While the Jewish "resistance" movement is opposed to this slogan as long as the Jews are in a minority in the country, and demand Jewish immigration, the Arab masses oppose Jewish immigration and demand the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. There is consistency as well in the position of the Arab national movement as in the position of the Jewish "resistance" movement. It is clear that a Constituent Assembly would have meant the stopping of Jewish immigration into Palestine, as the Arab masses unanimously oppose this and the Zionist colonisation of the country. It is no accident that in the whole Zionist camp, in the whole "resistance" movement there is not a single leader or rank and filer who does not violently oppose any plan of substituting the imperialist government by a democratically elected government, or even any proposal for democratic legislative bodies. To unite the Jewish "resistance" movement with the Arab masses struggling for social and national liberation is no more possible than to unite the anti-British Dr. Malan with the struggling Negro workers and peasants in South Africa. The Jewish "resistance" movement is an anti-democratic movement, as it is against the interests of the majority of the people not only in Palestine, but in the whole Arab East, as it is a movement directed towards strengthening the closed economy of the minority and preserving its privileges, the abolition of which would put a stop to its very source of life -- the desire for immigration and colonisation.

In our eyes it is no accident that strikes in foreign enterprises which have the greatest weight in the national liberatory movements in the colonies, do not play any role whatsoever in the Jewish "resistance" movement in Palestine. It also follows from the character of the movement that the petty bourgeois, chauvinistic elements, the Irgun Zvai Leumi and Stern Gang, are getting the upper hand in it.

I permit myself some repetition of what I wrote in a former article:

"If the Zionists are not anti-imperialist (and of course to be against the Arab people and imperialism at one and the same time is impossible), then why all these terroristic acts? The answer is simple. The Zionists have come into a blind alley. The victory of the proletariat of the West and the masses of the East will put an end to Zionist dreams. The continuation of the existing social regime makes every little people into a puppet in the hands of big imperialist powers. This is especially true as regards the Jews of Palestine whose relations with their neighbors are very strained.

"If imperialism continues to rule over the world, then whatever the Jews do they are doomed. If the world revolutionary wave rises to the heights, then all the weak peoples, including world Jewry, will be saved. But the Jews of Palestine in their special position can be saved only if they cease to be buffers between the national and social liberation struggle of the Arab masses. The Jewish capitalists of Palestine as a class are doomed whatever happens. They are therefore incapable of anything except blind adventurism based on belief in miracles or at best, a struggle to hold out a little longer.

"The best prospect the Zionists can hope for is that Britain will give them a Jewish State, even though a pocket state in a small part of tiny Palestine. They think that the partition plan for Palestine can suit the interests of British imperialism under certain conditions. Such a plan will ensure the existence of two irridentist movements, a sharp Zionist struggle for every place of work and foot of ground in the Jewish State, and economic weakness of the mutilated Arab State. These are the pros of the plan from the standpoint of imperialism.

"The Zionists base their calculations on this factor and on one other. It is true that the position of Zionism in the struggle between the different imperialist Powers is not predetermined. Ben-Gurion and Weizmann can be American agents with the same enthusiasm as they have been British agents for nearly thirty years. The recent Zionist terror was intended to threaten Britain with the possibility of a Zionist switchover to America, and at the same time to make it easier for the British politicians, if they so desire, to permit the construction of a Jewish State in spite of Arab opposition. (They would be able to say to the Arabs that there was a material and moral necessity to give in somewhat to the Zionists.)

"Even if this 'solution' is arrived at -- which is far from being certain -- it will be only a temporary, short-lived postponement of Zionism's burial. The Jews of Palestine and the Arabs will only be involved by this plan in terrible sacrifices, clashes and bloodshed. The only real solution for the Jewish workers of Palestine is to bridge the gulf between themselves and the tens of millions of Eastern peoples by renouncing Zionist dreams of domination."

(I continue, using the present in place of the past tense).



"The . . . terroristic acts . . . in reality do not harm imperialism but instead serve it very well. They intend to 'compel' the British government to open the gates of Palestine to Zionist immigration and colonization despite the opposition of the Arab inhabitants of the country and those of neighboring countries (the former having discovered the true face of Zionism from first hand, and the latter learning from them). It therefore only adds fuel to the fire of the Arab-Jewish hatred. The bombardment of the railways on the eve of November 2 (1945, for instance) was an excellent weapon in the hands of British agents for the organisation of pogroms in Cairo, Alexandria and Tripoli."

### Why the Displaced Jews Want to Go to Palestine

After the terrible sufferings which they underwent through the long years of Nazi rule, the Jews in the Displaced Persons Camps need an asylum where their wounds can be healed, and where they can begin life anew. Their sufferings did not end with the fall of the Nazi regime, and even if many of them could have found some possibility of living in Europe today, the fear of the future is not so easily to be wiped out. Owing to the lack of a revolutionary leadership the class struggle in Europe has not yet assumed big revolutionary proportions; and under the conditions of hunger in Europe, the petty trading activities in the main of the returning Jews who lack any economic positions whatsoever, necessarily give rise to new sprouts of anti-semitism. These sprouts are directly or indirectly fed in those parts of Europe occupied by Stalin's stooges, by the regime of looting, the hunger connected with it, the consequent black market, and the chauvinistic propaganda put out by the Stalinist parties. Although open fascist movements do not dare to rear their heads, anti-semitic propaganda has by no means died away. Under such conditions the desire of the Jews in the Displaced Persons Camps to leave Europe is entirely understandable, and it is the duty of the world proletariat to help to ease the lot of these victims of capitalist barbarism.

Can Palestine help in the solution of this problem?

For many years the Zionists have consistently posed the question to the Jewish masses in the world as though it is an alternative between death and immigration to Palestine. British and American imperialism have therefore got away with impunity with their quota policies, being left free to prepare any deal they like against the Jews of Europe, or tomorrow against those of Palestine.

The Jews in the DP Camps have behind them the terrible massacre in Europe, and around them suffering and abounding anti-semitism. The Zionists tell them that all the gates of the world are closed to them, the only one which can be opened being that of Palestine, as the Jews there are a third of the population, and very strong. They do not tell them that Palestine is only a province of the big Arab countries, that there is a movement growing in strength for the unity of these countries, that Jewish existence in Palestine is endangered by the imperialist policy of diverting the Arab

national movement against the Jews, that if the gates were opened to any degree, it would not be as a result of the pressure of the Jewish force (which is incomparably smaller than the force of the Arab masses resisting this immigration), but of the interests of imperialism in sharpening the conflicts between Arabs and Jews. The Jews in the DP Camps are not told by the Zionists that it is incomparably easier to open the gates of the USA to Jewish refugees than to open the gates of Palestine. They are not told that the struggle for their immigration into Palestine cannot afford them a peaceful home, but on the contrary even endangers the existence of those Jews who are in Palestine.

Besides this, quite a few lies have been spread by the Zionists about the extraordinarily good economic position of the Jews in Palestine. It is indeed true that the Jewish workers are much better off than the mass of Arabs, but if we compare their standard of life with that of the American or English workers, it is very low. This fact, together with the feeling of uncertainty in Palestine, drive many thousands of Jews in Palestine to seek ways and means of emigrating from the country. No Zionist paper will tell you, for instance, that when UNRRA asked for fourteen textile experts to go to Europe, about three thousand applied; or that hundreds of Czech and Austrian Jews have already returned to their countries of origin. If one went to the Labour Exchange, one would hear a veritable torrent of anti-Zionist declamations from the mouths of the unemployed. The facts about the slums of Tel Aviv (Shchunat Hatikvah, Shchunat Shapira Florentine Quarter, Shchunat Maccabi, etc.) which contain at least fifty thousand of Tel Aviv's 250 thousand Jews, or those about the even worse slums of Jerusalem, are kept discreetly out of Zionist propaganda pamphlets or speeches.

The Jews in the DP Camps are desperate, and they seek consolation even in illusions. Those who know Jewish history will know that it is not the first time that suffering Jews look for salvation in a Messianic movement (note, for example, Shabtai Zvi). When a Jew came and pretended to be a representative of the Lost Ten Tribes was it not logical that the pogrom ridden Jews accepted him as the God-given Messiah? The Zionist leaders today find the Jews in a much more terrible situation, so that the ground is even more ready to be sown with illusions even than formerly.

A progressive movement, a real liberatory movement, is not afraid to tell the truth. But Zionism is nourished on lies. During the time of the decline of world capitalism, the petty bourgeoisie, which suffers from the pressure of the trusts, the banks, etc., revolts against capitalism. If, in this revolt, it is not led by the only power which can expropriate the big capitalists, the proletariat, it tries as an independent power to do so (as was the case in Germany), in reality, however, only serving the big capitalists against the workers and against itself.

It looks to the past to find its programme, and in place of the trusts and the banks, it hopes to put small private enterprise. But the wheels of history cannot be turned back, and this is only a dream. The big enterprises that came into existence do

not cease to exist. The only problem is, in whose hands will they be: in those of the proletariat for the benefit of the whole people, or in those of the big capitalists, against the interests of all the toilers (petty bourgeoisie included)? The Jewish petty bourgeoisie, cast out of the economy during the decline of capitalism, and massacred, also looks for its ideal in the past. If world capitalism has no place for the Jews in the capitalist countries, the Jewish petty bourgeois says: 'Let us find our place outside this system, in the Jewish State that once existed.' It cannot directly follow in the path of the anti-capitalist petty bourgeoisie which, dreaming of smashing the trusts and the banks, helped Hitler to power. Instead, it intends running away from them, making itself immune from the pressure of world capitalism by building the Jewish closed economy. This plan is not more realistic, however, than the dreams of the German petty bourgeoisie. Nor is it less reactionary.

As regards the Jewish workers in USA and England, insofar as they support Zionism, they do so not because they themselves intend emigrating to Palestine, just as no Jewish worker from Poland or other East European country emigrated to Palestine before the war. They feel that their fate is bound up with the fate of the country in which they live, and they are absolutely right, being part and parcel of the working class of those countries. The fact that the Jewish workers in USA and England have recently turned to some extent toward Zionism is the result of their will to help the Jewish refugees of Europe and their feeling that the gates of their own countries are closed. The Trotskyists must not give way to the reactionary illusions that it is possible to open the gates of Palestine to Jewish refugees more easily than those of England and the USA. As we have already shown, the opening of the gates of Palestine can be the result only of reactionary pressure by British imperialism against the wish of the millions of Arabs; and this can serve only to endanger the position of the Jews all over the Middle East.

#### The Jewish Workers of Palestine Need the Help of the International Proletariat

The words of Trotsky, that "The attempt to solve the Jewish question through the migration of Jews to Palestine can now be seen for what it is, a tragic mockery of the Jewish people," become more and more clear to many of the Jewish workers in Palestine. The feeling will grow from day to day that the Jews in Palestine are not an independent factor but a buffer between the Arab masses and imperialism, and that they are impotent in the face of these world powers. Till now these feelings did not bring forward any considerable organised anti-Zionist movement, for which there are two reasons. First of all, the Jewish masses in Palestine do not yet see in the Arab proletariat a strong ally, which will protect them from all the intrigues and provocations of imperialism, feudalism and Zionism, as till now the Arab working class of the whole East has not come to maturity. Secondly, the international working class has not yet appeared as a power struggling for the right of asylum in their countries. These two reasons, together with the fact that big

sections of the working class in the USA and England, while not ready to struggle for the opening of the gates of their countries, are ready to demand the opening of the gates of Palestine, despite the opposition of the Arab labour movement, all strengthen Zionist illusions. Many Jewish workers in Palestine are driven to the idea that the AF of L and CIO are much more important allies for the Jewish workers of Palestine than the Arab trade unions of Palestine, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. By their support of Jewish immigration to Palestine, the CIO and AF of L, while not helping one Jew to come to Palestine, (because of the objective conditions) do help to maintain the Zionist illusions among the Jewish workers in Palestine, and help objectively to widen the abyss between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine, which more and more endangers the positions of the Jews in the whole of the Middle East.

The American and English working class must not support the Zionist drive for a Jewish State (or what, under existing conditions means the same thing, a drive for Jewish immigration and colonisation) which, while benefitting imperialism, opposes the most elementary interests equally of the Arab masses as of the Jewish. Instead they must support the struggle of the millions of Arab toilers for the independence of the Arab countries, for the lodging of the fate of the country in the hands of its inhabitants, and for liberation from the yoke of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism.

December, 1946

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PALESTINE AND THE JEWS

A Reply to Comrades Leo Lyons and Dave Jeffries

By Hosea Jaffe, Capetown, South Africa

Two articles in the SWP Internal Bulletin, October 1946 by Comrades Lyons and Jeffries, on the Jewish Question, reveal a high degree of ideological degeneration and receptivity to the ideas of Zionism. Above all, they strike at important principles of the struggles of colonies and semi-colonies and, if left unanswered, can do our movement considerable harm.

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On Free Immigration

Both Comrades Lyons and Jeffries call for unrestricted immigration into Palestine. (Incidentally the same stand was taken by Shachtman, and criticised in an article of mine reprinted a little while back in an SWP Internal Bulletin. The stand of the Shachtmanites on Zionism is but a facet of its general revisionism.) Now, this slogan might seem to be quite innocent and in order. But we cannot consider the shell of a slogan without its substance. It is possible for one and the same slogan to be progressive under certain conditions and holding a certain meaning, and also to be reactionary under other conditions, implying another meaning.

Marxists have regarded the slogan of free immigration to be progressive for three main reasons.

Firstly, because free immigration helps to break down national boundaries.

Secondly, because free immigration helps to foster internationalism among the workers and to broaden the outlook of the natives of a country when they intermingle and cooperate with the immigrants.

Thirdly, because it provides an asylum for persecuted people and peoples.

If free immigration into a particular country does not have these three effects, if, in fact, it produces directly opposite effects, then it no longer holds a progressive content but becomes a stumbling block in the path of the toilers.

Does unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine produce any of the above three results, justifying that it "must be championed by the entire International" (Lyons)?

Far from helping to break down national boundaries and the isolation of one national group of the toilers from another, free immigration into Palestine on the one hand alienates the Arab masses from the Jewish invaders into their home-land; and, on the other, fortifies Jewish chauvinism, isolationism. It tends to set up not a state which can live in harmony with surrounding terri-

tories, but a Jewish state which cannot but be viewed with hostility by the encircling Arab countries, and which cannot but drive the Jews more within themselves. It would be different if the Jews were to enter a free country or even a country where they could integrate themselves with the class and national struggles of the native oppressed toilers. A large number of socialist foreigners entering a bourgeois democracy can infuse their ideas into the struggles and programmes of the workers in the country to which these immigrants have come. Shachtman, in "Labor Action" has used this argument to justify Jewish immigration into Palestine. But this does not happen in most colonial countries. Take South Africa, for example. Any number of "socialist" white workers have come here. Their "socialism" speedily dissolved in the colour bar atmosphere pervading this country. Any number of "advanced" European workers have come here, and ended up in the segregationist Labour Party. White immigration into South Africa is of no assistance whatsoever to the struggles of the Non-European millions, indeed it strengthens the social base of the reaction here. As a result most Non-European organisations and people fear white immigration and regard it as retrogressive. While every foreign immigrant is a distantly potential recruit for the national liberatory movement, he is an immediate recruit for the reaction. It all depends on the forms of oppression prevailing in the given country. Here where the black worker is the slave and the white worker a "boss" -- free immigration must have this reactionary effect. It is piffle to say that the immigrants will bring their socialist ideas into the country. On the contrary, their ideas rapidly evaporate and take the shape, if anything, of "white socialism". In Palestine the situation is not very dissimilar, in this particular regard. There the Arabs are the bulk of the oppressed, driven off their land by the Jews, kept out of Jewish economic units and organisations (including "Labour" organisations). The Jewish immigrant rapidly becomes absorbed into the Jewish economy, becomes isolated from the Arabs, and feels himself bound, in self-defence, to defend "himself" (in reality Zionism).

This does not mean that the Jews have no right to a territory of their own. I am not contesting the correctness of Comrade Lyons remark that -- "the prolongation of capitalism in its declining stage forces the reconstitution of Jewry upon a territory of its own as a compelling historical tendency". This was Trotsky's own viewpoint. But Comrade Lyons falls into a fatal trap when he assumes with the Zionists, that Palestine must be this territory. Why Palestine? Why a country inhabited for ages by the Arabs, foreign to the tradition of the modern Jew, held dear only by the Biblical Jew? The majority of the Jews are not and never can be held in Palestine. Before the series of emigrations from Europe the bulk of modern Jewry were in Europe, mostly Eastern Europe. Surely any creation of a Jewish State must take place in these areas, if it is to be done? This however, raises a moot point, which it is not necessary to discuss at length here, particularly since it is inextricably linked up with the triumph of the European revolution which will solve this, and many other, national problems of this epoch, considering not only the national desires of the Jews, but the feelings of other affected national groups in these regions.

The demand for a Jewish State can only have a progressive meaning if it forms part and parcel of the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe. Otherwise it is thoroughly reactionary, the more so when attention is focussed on Palestine as the way out. To raise this demand, under capitalist conditions, with "free immigration" as the spring-board, is not only utopian but reactionary. Free immigration, with such a content, does not help to overcome national boundaries, but to create new and reactionary boundaries. It does not help to bring about internationalist cooperation between Arab and Jew but to drive Arab and Jew apart, to isolate the Jew and provoke the wrath of the Arab -- a justifiable wrath, let it be said.

The last line of defence for the slogan of free immigration into Palestine is that, at least it provides an asylum for the Jews. Comrade Lyons quotes Trotsky (quite irrelevantly) when it suits him, but conveniently forgets Trotsky's remark that Palestine is a "death-trap" for the Jews. From concentration camp into a death-trap! Is this all that Comrades Lyons and Jeffries can suggest for the Jews who went through hell under Hitler? Yet Comrade Jeffries can write:

"The Jewish worker reading our press can justifiably say: 'Well, the Zionist programme may be difficult to realize, but it is better than nothing, and that is what you have to offer.'"

This thinly veneered apology for Zionism cannot hide the facts of the hopelessness of the Jews' position in Palestine, so long as they line up behind Zionism; cannot hide the double fear of the Jews in Palestine -- of Britain and of the Arab masses, cannot hide the fact that the Jews are a mere plaything in the hands of British Imperialism, especially, a useful prop to be stiffened and knocked down as the occasion demands. Rather than go to Palestine to aid Imperialism and to instil anti-Semitism among the Arabs, it would be far better to remain in Europe and integrate themselves with the struggles of the workers of European countries. Are Cyprus and disease-infected ships, terror and martial law so much better than Europe today as to call for free immigration, even from a purely Jewish-humanitarian viewpoint?

There is no Marxist justification for the slogan of free immigration into Palestine under conditions of imperialist domination of the Middle East. It is a deceitful slogan, as far as the Jews are concerned. It shelves the demand, or obscures the demand, for opening the gates of the major powers to Jewish refugees. Any attempt to make out that Palestine is the key to the solution of the Jewish problem, any attempt to focus attention on Palestine as any kind of solution at all, is a blow at the real solution, immediate (integration with the workers where the Jews are; opening the gates of the big countries) and final (the socialist overthrow opening up opportunities for the creation, for those Jews who desire it, of a Jewish State) for the Jews themselves. Further it is a blow at the slogan of self-determination for the Arabs, and for the colonially oppressed in general.

### On Self Determination

For a colonial country the struggle for self-determination is a vital one. It must not alone receive priority over the slogan of free immigration, but can even preclude this latter slogan and be damaged by it.

If the emphasis is placed on free immigration into Palestine and not on self-determination, it means that the emphasis is placed on the Jews in Palestine as the main social lever for revolutionary progress and not on the Arabs. Jewish immigration into Palestine cannot bring "socialist" or any other kind of "enlightenment" to the "backward" Arab masses, but only more suffering, humiliation, degradation -- apart from provoking anti-Semitism, apart from its boomerang character. But the Jews are not the main social force of the struggle in Palestine. The main force is the Arab, who, even in Palestine is more than twice as numerous as the Jew and who is thrice oppressed: by British Imperialism, by Zionism and by the Arab capitalists and landowners. And the main struggle in Palestine is not between Jew and British Imperialism, but between the trebly oppressed Arabs and their oppressors. The Jewish "national" (Zionist) movement is completely retrogressive as a whole (and not only a part of it as Comrade Jeffries would have us believe); the Arab national movement is fundamentally progressive and will become a revolutionary factor of great weight when the Arab proletariat, aided by the Jewish workers (on what basis we shall discuss later), leads the Arab peasants and poor in general and solves the national problem. Down with Imperialism! For self-determination! For a Constituent Assembly! These, and not free immigration are the major slogans to advance the national liberatory movement in Palestine. To the extent to which the Arab is the major social force of the Arab revolutionary national and class movement, and Zionism a major obstacle in the way of this movement, to the same extent does the slogan of self-determination exclude the slogan of free immigration.

### On Zionist "Left" and "Right"

Comrade Jeffries writes:

"the Zionist IDEOLOGY can never be anti-imperialist, but . . . out of the Zionist movement, and even temporarily under Zionist leadership, there can emerge an anti-imperialist force" (This is supposed to be an attack on the sound articles of Comrade Cliff).

and Comrade Lyons says:

"The Jewish Resistance" (Haganah, according to Comrade Lyons) "represents a progressive force against British Imperialism. As such it merits revolutionary support."

and disagrees with Comrade Cliff's proposition, which Lyons words as:



"That since Zionism is an agent of British Imperialism, the Jewish national movement is essentially a force designed to oppose the Arab movement for national liberation. Therefore the Zionist movement is reactionary in its entirety."

Comrade Lyons maintains that the Zionist movement is not reactionary "in its entirety". It has, therefore, a progressive wing. For one who is close to Shachtman this is uncomfortably close to Stalinist ideas of the Zionists. This would be comical, if dialectics were not so serious.

The entire Zionist movement is reactionary -- from the Irgun Nvai Leumi and the Stern Gang to the Hashomair Hatzair. It is a reactionary ideology, and every wing, every facet of it is reactionary. The ideology, the programme, is decisive. To be sure the Hashomair Hatzair Zionists are easier converts to socialism than the fascist-Zionists. But that does not mean that they are not adherents to a reactionary movement and have to break totally with it before becoming socialists. They are a useful left-cover for the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Organisation as a whole. There is no left or right in the Zionist movement, but only a Right.

The entire Zionist movement is reactionary because it is an agency of Imperialism, and indeed would cease existing without British Imperialism. It is not made progressive by the fact that any of the Irgun, Stern or Haganah groups are waging a war of terror against the British. To take a South African example: a military war by the Nationalists, backed up by the 1½ million Afrikaner workers, against Britain, would not be progressive, because the Nationalists (White) are a reactionary force inside South Africa. Zionism, in this connection, is on a par with the Nationalism of the Afrikaners in South Afrikaner. The only usefulness of such a struggle between the Nationalists and the British would be to utilize the differences, wherever possible to press forward the struggle of the Non-Europeans, but not to support the Nationalists against the British.

The whole Zionist movement is reactionary, further, because its ideology. Because every Zionist grouping, from "right" to "left" supports and fights for the idea of a JEWISH NATIONAL HOME IN PALESTINE. And this idea is a reactionary utopia. Those Zionists who want a Jewish State in Palestine hold to this idea.

Those Zionists who call for a Jewish-Arab State (bi-Nationalism, which Comrade Lyons says we must support) hold to this idea of a Jewish State in Palestine. And those Zionists who want a Jewish State within an Arab State are also wedded to this basic tenet of Zionism. In whatever form the demand for a Jewish State in Palestine is put forward, whether exclusively Jewish, or Jewish-Arab, it remains the demand for a Jewish State in Palestine. And this demand is reactionary. Since it is held by all Zionist groupings, the whole Zionist movement is reactionary.

The reactionary nature of this demand for a Jewish State in Palestine is due to its coming into conflict with the demand and necessity for free Arab States, with self-determination and

independence; and because it serves as the main lever of British rule in Palestine. Without Zionism the divide and rule policy of Britain in Palestine would be impossible, and at any rate on the scale and with the ferocity with which it is practised today.

Not a Jewish State in Palestine. Not a Bi-National State. But a free Palestine, as part of a Federation of Free Arab Republics, with full, equal rights for minorities, including the Jews; i.e., the struggle is for independence from imperialism and not for a Jewish Home. Again, the backbone of the struggle is the Arab national movement, which only the Arab proletariat, supported by the Jewish workers, can solve.

### On Arab Nationalism

Comrade Lyons uses a queer argument. He says:

"It is oversimplification to state that Jewish immigration is a force 'oppressing the Arab movement for national liberation'. As a matter of fact, Zionism was the very factor that developed Arab nationalism in Palestine. This is easy to demonstrate."

This is really ridiculous, if it is not a joke. Zionism "developed" Arab nationalism precisely because it is a "force oppressing the Arab movement for national liberation." Without it, Arab nationalism, as it exists today, would not exist. One might as well thank the capitalists for producing the proletariat. As a matter of fact Comrade Lyons turns the joke on himself when he writes a little further on:

"The development of the productive forces in Palestine by Jewish and Arab capitalists produced the phenomenon of Arab trade unions."

While both these statements are true, what point is Comrade Lyons trying to prove with them? Must we thank the Zionists for developing the Arab national movement? Must we congratulate the capitalists for producing the proletariat? What has this to do with the issue, or with anything? If it establishes anything, then it establishes the very opposite of what Comrade Lyons suggests. It shows that Zionism oppresses the Arabs and that the Arabs have reacted, *inter alia*, by means of an increased influx into Palestine (which Comrade Lyons shows with figures), and that therefore the position of the Jews has become even more untenable. The more Jews come into Palestine the more Arabs come in, and the struggle is increased in scope. Otherwise this funny argumentation proves nothing.

What is more serious and important is Comrade Lyons' patronizing, Zionist-like attitude to the Arabs. He wants to win, not the Jews to the Arab struggle, the main struggle; he wants to win the Arabs to -- Zionism, their accursed enemy! He is going to bring about Arab-Jewish unity by bribing the Arabs to accept free immigration. And the bribe is. . . the Constituent Assembly! Comrade

Lyons transforms a vital slogan into a sugar-coating for a bitter pill. But let him speak for himself:

"This slogan (Constituent Assembly) would be a powerful lever with which to win over the Arab masses (to whom? Obviously to the Zionists). . . The slogan, if adopted by the Jewish labor movement, would not only have a tremendous effect in winning over the Arab masses TO SUPPORT OF JEWISH IMMIGRATION, but. . . ." (My emphasis).

Never mind the "buts." This is a contemptible trick, to use a progressive slogan as bait for. . . "free immigration", i.e., for Zionist ambitions. The best effect of such a device would be to make still more difficult Jewish-Arab unity.

### The Basis of Arab-Jewish Unity

The only basis of Arab-Jewish unity is the joint fight against imperialism. This means first of all a JOINT fight against Zionism. This means the rejection of Zionism, lock, stock and barrel by the Jewish masses. This is the main basis of the fight against imperialism. If the Jewish labour movement were to propose to the Arabs a joint struggle against Zionism, the Middle-east would flare up in revolt against imperialism. This must be the main plank on which unity can be founded. Otherwise it is impossible. The struggle against the Arab effendis is necessary to such a unity programme, but not the fundamental plank.

DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM!

DOWN WITH ZIONISM!

DOWN WITH THE LANDOWNERS!

FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO CREATE A FREE PALESTINE AS PART OF A FEDERATION OF FREE ARAB REPUBLICS!

These are the slogans around which the Arab national movement will surge forward, and around which Jewish-Arab unity will be built. The question of free immigration is a Zionist red herring to lead the people away from the path of progressive struggle. It is a question which cannot be solved now, but only by a free Palestine. As a matter of fact, to raise it at this stage does incalculable damage to the cause of the Arabs, of the Jews and of Arab-Jewish unity.

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