

RESOLUTION ON THE JEWISH QUESTION AND THE  
MARXIST PROGRAM FOR PALESTINE

1. The barbarous depths to which a decaying capitalism can drag civilization finds its extreme example to date in the physical destruction of some six million Jews at the hands of the Nazis, i. e., all but the total extinction of European Jewry.

The rising, world-wide tide of anti-semitism in the period of capitalist decay again emphasizes the close inter-relationship between the progress of the democratic and socialist struggles of the working class and the liberties of all oppressed and proscribed peoples. The Jews of Western Europe were liberated from their ghetto-existence and their civil and economic disability by the French Revolution, which, though bourgeois in historical form, was achieved by the struggle of the urban and peasant masses and, in large measure, in opposition to the bourgeoisie. The rise of the modern working class and the development of the Socialist and labor movement further fortified these rights and carried them forward across Central and Eastern Europe, culminating with the Russian Revolution which liberated the millions of Jews from the Tsarist ghettos and the periodic pogroms. With the growing inability of capitalism to maintain any kind of stable economic existence, the capitalist class finds all democratic forms and rights increasingly incompatible with their further rule. All the great conquests of the last two hundred years, not only those of the modern labor movement but those of the bourgeois democratic revolutions as well, fall victim one by one to the onslaught of capitalist-totalitarian reaction.

2. The struggle for the defense of the Jewish people, of their full economic, political and social equality and against all forms of anti-semitism is, therefore, an integral part of the struggle in defense of democracy and civilization, a struggle which finds its only complete expression in the struggle for Socialism.

3. The remnants of European Jewry finds itself today in a worse plight than that of any other war-torn people of Europe. Deprived of all earthly possessions, totally homeless, without a means of a livelihood, in most instances bereft of relatives, friends and even families, herded into "Displaced Persons Camps", often little better than the concentration camps they survived, most Jews of Europe see no future in their old homelands and seek to emigrate into other lands to start life anew. The elementary democratic demand of free emigration and immigration, long part of every genuinely democratic program, must be most vigorously fought for in this specific case of the European Jews. All barriers against their immigration to the countries they choose must be broken down. For Socialists in the United States, in this the richest nation in the world and one having industrial and agricultural resources for a population many times the present size, this means, in the first place, the struggle against exclusion of Europe's Jews from this country. We must fight for the realization of the slogan, "Open the doors of the U.S.!"

4. A tremendous desire exists among Europe's Jews to settle in Palestine and take part in the building up of a Jewish community life which will afford them an economic existence and also shield them from the barbarous anti-semitism to which they have been subjected. Their desire to go to Palestine has been continually frustrated by the opposition of the British imperialist regime, which conditions its immigration policy to its own reactionary political needs. It opens and closes the gates to Palestine, (thereby playing with the very lives of tens of thousands of people) in accordance with its deliberate policy of maintaining and fostering Arab-Jewish hostility for the ultimate benefit of British rule. The struggle for the freedom of immigration is, therefore, today largely a struggle against the reactionary British barriers around Palestine. Our English comrades, together with the revolutionary Marxists of the United States and of Palestine, must become champions of the slogan of "Open the doors of Palestine!"

5. The Zionist movement has recently carried on a determined, world-wide struggle for free Jewish immigration into Palestine. While Marxists can give conditional and critical support to this fight, above all to those heroic Jewish youth in Palestine who have taken to direct action to break down the barriers to immigration, we at all times sharply condemn the reactionary political program to which the Zionists tie their fight for free immigration, i.e., the achievement of a Jewish majority and a Jewish state. The reactionary political character of the Zionist movement is revealed precisely in their demand for free Jewish immigration, while opposing free Arab immigration into Palestine. Their fight is not motivated by a genuinely democratic and internationalist position but rather by a narrowly Jewish, nationalist position. This position finds its ultimately reactionary conclusion in their opposition to a Constituent Assembly for Palestine at the present time, on the grounds that the Jews do not yet constitute a majority! This position leads them to prefer continued British rule to a free Palestine with an Arab majority.

6. The problem of Palestine is not, in the first place, a problem of Arab-Jewish relations but rather a problem of British imperialist domination over both Arabs and Jews. The solution of the Palestinian problem must, therefore, begin with the struggle against British imperialist rule. This struggle proceeds under the slogan of "Out with the British! A free Palestine!" Not the British but only the inhabitants of Palestine can decide its future.

7. The struggle for a free Palestine must, therefore, be a struggle fought on the basis of Jewish-Arab unity. Every national and religious issue which Jews and Arabs permit themselves to be divided over is another prop for British rule. It is not a problem, today, of self-determination of Jews against Arab rule or vice versa, but of Palestinian self-determination against British rule.

8. The slogan for a free Palestine finds its concrete political expression in the demand for the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly, elected by direct, secret, universal suffrage of men and women over 18. This demand must be the crowning politi-

cal slogan for any genuinely democratic (not to speak of Socialist) program for Palestine today. The reactionary character of Zionism is seen precisely in their opposition to this slogan. From the extreme right wing to the most left, all Zionist tendencies stand united in opposition to a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage until a Jewish majority is assured. Not only does this position of Zionism make it an obvious tool of British imperialist policy but it plays into the hands of the most reactionary Arab nationalist elements. The latter use this reactionary role of Zionism as a means of assuring their own reactionary domination over the Arab masses and, thereby, to undermine all tendencies toward Arab-Jewish unity.

9. As demonstrated by every other democratic revolution of our epoch, the only class in Palestine that will prove itself capable of leading a thorough-going revolutionary struggle against British imperialism is the Palestinian proletariat. The proletarian class struggle against economic exploitation unites all toilers and serves as the bridge across all reactionary nationalist barriers. Under the political influence of a revolutionary Marxist party the Jewish and Arab workers will find their way to each other in a common economic and political struggle, directed against all exploiters and oppressors, British, Arab and Jewish. The inspiring unity of the Arab and Jewish railroad workers in their recent strike is an example of how the proletarian class struggle can cut through all national barriers. (The strike of the civil service employees which followed likewise demonstrated this.) The fact that the Jewish strikers received no support from the Jewish bourgeoisie and that the Arab strikers were viciously condemned by the Arab landed aristocracy on the grounds that they were forsaking the Arab national front reveals how proletarian class action not only forges the unity of the Arab and Jewish masses from below, but also takes the national struggle out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and landowners and places it in the hands of the proletariat.

The organization of the Palestinian proletariat demands the fight against all attempts at setting up separate Jewish or Arab workers organizations. The trade unions and other working class organizations that are founded on the principle of the class struggle must encompass all workers, regardless of nationality. The organization of a specifically Jewish trade union movement by the "Socialist" Zionists is but another reactionary Zionist blow against genuine Arab-Jewish unity. The Palestinian workers organizations will, of course, guarantee the fullest freedom of Arabs and Jews in the use of their own language, in the conduct of meetings and will foster a bi-lingual workers press and literature.

10. As in every democratic revolution, the demands of the masses for political freedom take on real meaning only as they relate these to their economic needs, so the struggle for a free Palestine must be linked to the economic needs of the Arab and Jewish masses. The key slogan in such demands for Palestine must be the slogan of "Land to the peasants!" This slogan, like all demands directed against the privileged, possessing classes, strikes a blow at the British, Jewish and Arab interests simultaneously. The

fight for "a free Palestine" and "land to the peasants" will guarantee the best possible road to a liberated Palestine in which the Arab majority preponderantly composed of landless peasants and day-laborers, will wage an agrarian revolution against the Arab land-owners, a struggle which will link up with the fight of the city and town proletariat against its capitalist oppressors. To the democratic demand of "land to the peasants" must be linked the transitional program of the Fourth International, as adapted to the specific economic conditions of Palestine.

11. The Workers Party warns all supporters of Palestinian freedom against the treacherous role of Russia in the struggles of national liberation and of the infamous role of the Stalinists everywhere in relation to the Jewish question and Palestine. Russia's interest in the Middle East is that of an imperialist rival of the British Empire. Russia will seek to exploit the differences in the Palestinian situation, not to advance any democratic cause, but to strengthen her own reactionary influence in that part of the world. Palestine's strategic location between the Iranian oil fields and the Mediterranean makes of it a natural pawn in the struggles of the great imperialist powers, and in this period, of special interest to Russia. Russia sought to enlist the support of world Jewry during her role as a war-ally of the United States and England against Germany. During this period, above all, in the light of the pro-Axis role of the Arab nationalist leaders, Russia sought to appear as the champion of the Jews. (This did not prevent the GPU from murdering Ehrlich and Alter and thousands of other Jewish anti-Stalinist Socialists.) Today, Russia seeks to curry favor with the reactionary Arab nationalists by appearing as the champion of the Arab world against British oppression. Nothing but disaster will result from either Jews or Arabs placing the slightest confidence in Russia's role in the Middle East.

The Workers Party likewise warns all supporters of Palestinian freedom against any faith in the "democratic" intentions of American imperialism in the Middle East. As with the other great powers, the United States is motivated by its economic interests in this part of the world, above all in oil resources. The somewhat obscure dealings of Roosevelt with the King of Saudi Arabia are an indication of the American role of playing both the pro-Arab and pro-Jewish game in this sphere in the interests of American political and economic domination. The United States seeks to garner the maximum advantages from the Palestinian situation, without, however, openly taking political responsibility. It prefers to leave the latter in the hands of the British, thus freeing itself from the obvious blame for the reactionary results of what is, in the last analysis, Anglo-American policy.

Neither Great Britain, nor Russia, nor the United States, nor the Zionist world organization, nor the League of Arab states, can be relied upon to conduct a fight on behalf of the interests of the Palestinian masses. This struggle must rest entirely in the hands of the masses. Their only real allies are to be found in the world struggle of the working classes and the colonial peoples.

12. The successful conduct of the struggle of the Palestinian proletariat on behalf of national and social emancipation can only be guaranteed by the existence of a powerful revolutionary, Marxist party, firmly rooted among the Arab and Jewish toilers. The contribution of the Fourth Internationalist movement toward the solution of the Jewish question and the Palestinian question must, therefore, begin with all assistance toward the establishment of such a party in Palestine.

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(For submission to the Plenum of the Nat'l. Com.)