

RESOLUTION ON THE JEWISH QUESTION

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Modern anti-semitism, flourishing in the rotten soil of decaying capitalism, is a new phenomenon differing radically from previous forms of anti-semitism and from almost all other forms of national or colonial oppression.

In the past, the anti-semitic program called for the extinction of the Jews as a separate national or religious community and their forced dissolution into the surrounding national or religious community. It offered the Jews a real alternative--expulsion or the adoption of the dominant faith and culture.

Capitalist totalitarian anti-semitism, however, plans and executes an annihilatory policy--the complete and total physical extermination of the Jews. Whether it employs the "cold pogrom" technique of the Polish Endeks, whereby the Jewish population is completely frozen out of the economic life and slowly starved to death, or the more rapid and scientific Nazi process of gas chamber murder, the goal is the same. The arena of annihilation is today no longer limited to single countries. It is continental and worldwide.

The most brutal imperialism on the other hand, generally seeks only the subjugation and exploitation of the peoples it rules and not their full destruction. In non-colonial countries, national oppression seeks only the subjugation and degradation of the oppressed and their extinction only as a national community. Anti-negroism in the U.S. and South Africa seldom goes beyond the desire to exploit and keep the Negro in his place as a servile, second class citizen, to be more easily and cruelly exploited. These subjected peoples are then offered the real alternatives of DEATH OR SLAVERY.

The distinguishing feature of totalitarian capitalist forms of anti-semitism is the total rejection of the Jews even as the most abject slaves.

Thus in a fundamental sense and in a very real personal sense the survival of the Jews is dependent upon the overthrow of capitalism. "The Jewish proletariat is in need of revolution more than any other." The correct use of this concept in our propaganda to the Jewish masses will make the program of the revolutionary party real and vital to Jewish workers and petty-bourgeoisie as the only effective way of defending their own lives.

The cause of anti-semitism is to be found in the nature of capitalist class relationships. The fundamental solution of the Jewish problem lies, therefore in the participation of the Jewish masses in the working class struggle for the abolition of capitalism, and the creation of a free socialist society. This, by itself, is not, however, an immediate nor a sufficient answer to the needs of the homeless, uprooted European Jewry which finds itself in a worse plight than all war torn peoples of Europe.

For the overwhelming majority of these gas chamber escapees, with no real future in their former homelands, the question of uninterrupted and free immigration has become a LIFE AND DEATH question.

The working class movement in every country has the duty to demand the general right of unrestricted emigration and immigration. This principle, long recognized in the international socialist movement as one of the elementary and genuinely democratic rights to be defended by the working class, must be specifically and vigorously fought for in the case of the homeless Jews of Europe. All barriers against their immigration to the countries they chose must be broken down.

For socialists in the United States, 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 the exclusion of Europe's Jews from this country. WE must fight for the realization of the slogan "OPEN THE DOORS OF THE UNITED STATES."

As part of the general desire to emigrate to safe haven, there exists an extremely powerful and spontaneous desire to go to Palestine and participate there in the building of a national territorial center. This fact must play a key role in determining the attitude of socialists towards the DIRECTION of Jewish emigration. In addition to fighting for opening the doors in the U.S., we must join in the struggle, to the extent we are able, to open the doors of Palestine.

The Workers Party recognizes the strong sentiment for a Jewish territorial center and the struggle for its realization as legitimate and progressive in the same sense that revolutionary Marxists thus characterize other national struggles for self-determination.

The Workers Party rejects the old Comintern formulae which failed to distinguish between the legitimate national aspirations of the Jewish masses for survival as a national community and the reactionary and reformist parties that presume to represent them.

Whether this desire for continued national existence is to take the path of national cultural autonomy (as advocated by the Jewish Bund for the Jews of Poland and West Russia with their compact, mass centers of viable Jewish cultural life), or the path of acquiring a territorial, economic strategic base for group survival (territorialism and zionism), is a matter for self determination by the Jewish masses.

The demand for national cultural autonomy is reactionary and anti-democratic only when raised as an alternative to full political independence; to deny an oppressed minority its right to secession (ex. Renner's program of cultural autonomy for the oppressed Slavic peoples of Austria-Hungary).

When, however, an oppressed nationality does not possess a basis for territorial autonomy and political secession by reason of geographical dispersion, it is anti-democratic and false internationalism to deny that people self-direction and self-determination of its cultural and social life in the name of an international fusion of peoples.

As revolutionary socialists we cannot but reject the attempt to impose an assimilationist perspective on the Jewish masses as cultural imperialism. Whether or not the Jews should submerge their identity into the surrounding peoples in whose midst they live or seek to preserve themselves as a nation, it is for them to decide.

Revolutionary marxists recognize that the perspective of assimilation under capitalism is utopian and can only lead the Jewish masses to underestimate the catastrophic weakness of their position in bourgeois and Stalinist society.

The Workers Party condemns the old "propaganda of indifference" with respect to the national aspirations of the Jewish masses. It is patently wrong and anti-democratic to fight for the right of all other oppressed nationalities to self-determination, even under capitalism, and at the same time deny this basic democratic right to the most oppressed Jews.

Those who argue that any organized struggle for a Jewish territorial center or other form of self-determination is utopian and reactionary because unrealizable under capitalism, are repeating the false and objectively anti-democratic thesis of Bukharin-Piatikov, who claimed that "the self-determination of nations is first of all utopian (it cannot be realized within the limits of capitalism) and harmful as a slogan that disseminates illusions." This thesis is just as erroneous when applied to the struggle for a Jewish territorial center as when applied to the national question as a whole.

"It would be a fundamental error to think that a struggle for democracy would be capable of diverting the proletariat from a socialist revolution, or of obscuring, or overshadowing such a revolution. On the contrary, just as victorious socialism is impossible unless it achieves complete democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for a victory over the bourgeoisie if it does not lead a broad, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy. The elimination of one of the paragraphs of the democratic program-- for example, the paragraph about self-determination of nations -- supposedly for the reason of its "impracticability" under imperialism would be no less an error." (Lenin)

It is our task to correctly apply the Leninist program on the national question to the struggle of the Jews for national self-determination, to use this struggle as a lever towards the socialist revolution.

The Jewish struggle must be recognized for what it really is-- a part of the national struggle, and not merely a struggle for civil rights and equality (although it is that too).

Lenin himself erred in this respect by uncritically following Kautsky in considering the Jews a social caste and not a socially heterogeneous nationality. A step forward was made by Trotsky when he came out in favor of a territorial center for the Jews in a socialist world. By implication he thereby rejected the concept of the Jews as a caste but rather considered them a nationality.

We must draw the full implications and make clear that the Jewish question is a national question.

For revolutionary socialists there is no need to set up hard and fast criteria before we permit a group to be considered a nationality. Such tasks we leave to the metaphysicians. For us it is sufficient that the material and historical conditions have created such a strong feeling that the human beings involved think of themselves as a nation or nationality.

The Workers Party rejects as absolutely invalid today the old formulae which proclaimed that "idea of a Jewish 'nationality' has a definitely reactionary character"; that "the idea of a Jewish nationality is a denial of the interests of the Jewish proletariat, introducing within it directly or indirectly a feeling which is hostile to assimilation, a Ghetto feeling."

While supporting the struggle for Jewish self-determination, we must impart a revolutionary socialist direction to that struggle. Revolutionary socialists do not fail to point out to the nationally conscious Jewish masses that their aspirations cannot be fully achieved within the framework of decadent capitalism; that the struggle for their democratic and just national demands can find its only true expression in the struggle for liberating Socialism against both capitalist and stalinist imperialism.

The Workers Party warns the Jewish masses against the danger of a despairing attitude towards the defense of Jewish and other democratic rights outside of Palestine. In countries where an independent labor movement exists such an attitude is not only cowardly but plays into the hands of the reactionary capitalists and can only hasten the development of capitalist totalitarianism. Such an attitude makes the job of the exterminators easier by removing one obstacle in their path, the force of a highly politically developed group --the Jews. Such an attitude will also defeat the territorial desires of the Jews, since there can be no freedom and independence in Palestine in a world dominated by imperialist England and America or by Russian imperialism.

The world character of the Jewish problem and the world wide arena in which the struggle for its solution is fought must lead to a sharp rejection of the false counterposing in practice (by Zionists and anti-Zionists alike) of the struggle for Jewish rights outside of Palestine as against their fight for national rights within that country. To permit one struggle to divert attention and energy from the other, signifies the abandonment of key battle positions in the war against national oppression.

The Jews must and will learn to understand, what many of them already sense; that the Big Three imperialist world is their mortal enemy; that the struggle against anti-semitism and for Jewish national liberation cannot be conducted apart from the struggle for all democratic rights and apart from the fight of the world proletariat for a socialist society.

- The Palestine Problem -

For the Jewish masses, freedom in Palestine means above all the right to free immigration into Palestine. This need has thus far been thwarted by a de facto alliance between British imperialism and the reactionary leaders of the Arab nationalist movement.

British imperialism, in order to retain control in the crucial area of the Near and Middle East, which is a bridge between three continents and a gigantic and relatively unexplored reservoir of oil, deliberately fosters Arab-Jewish hostility. It courts the Arab world by closing the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigrants and deliberately contrives to present the coming of the Jews as the spearhead of a hated foreign invasion. It courts the Jews by pointing to the Balfour declaration and blaming all attempts at restriction of Jewish rights on the necessity of placating the Arab and Moslem world.

The struggle for free immigration into Palestine means, in the first place, a militant struggle against the restrictive barriers imposed by the British colonial office. It also means exposing the lying propaganda of British and Stalinist imperialism and reactionary Arab nationalism that the Jewish movement into Palestine is an imperialist invasion; that the peaceful settlement of the Jews has taken place at the expense of Arab peasantry.

We, revolutionary Marxists, must vigorously champion the demand to "Open the gates to Palestine." We must give critical but unambiguous support to the Jewish Resistance movement in its efforts to break the immigration barriers by constructing an illegal underground railroad and by armed resistance to all police efforts to end illegal immigration.

At the same time we must condemn in the clearest and sharpest terms the reactionary political program of official Zionism which prevents the Jewish masses from becoming "part and parcel of the anti-imperialist revolution which will shape the future of Asia" and condemns the Palestinian and Near Eastern Jews to the "fate of other historic Levantine peoples (the Armenians and Assyrians) who permitted themselves to become the tools of imperialist protectors."

The bankruptcy of all Zionist parties--bourgeois, reformist and semi-Stalinist-- is most clearly demonstrated by their failure to work out a concrete program for international unity of the Arab Jewish masses in Palestine.

Responsibility for the lack of unity between the two peoples must be shared by the Histadruth (General Federation of Labor in Palestine) with the Arab-Jewish reactionaries, and the British colonial office. The organized labor movement follows a short-sighted, ruinous policy of pushing the working masses of the farms and cities into two separate economies (Kibbush Avodah - capture of jobs.).

The organizational consequences of this policy--the formation of separate national unions by Jewish and Arab workers to function

in their separate national economic sectors-- was and is a major obstacle in the path of genuine Arab-Jewish unity/

Only where Arab and Jewish workers work side by side can and does proletarian class struggle succeed in cutting through nationalist barriers as was demonstrated by the exemplary unity of action displayed by Arab and Jewish workers in the recent railroad and postal strikes. "Long live Jewish and Arab cooperation" was a main slogan shouted by the pickets.

These strikes only highlight the need for UNITED trade unions and workers organizations encompassing both Arab and Jewish workers. The revolutionary socialist party of Palestine must place in the forefront the fight against the separation of Palestinian workers into national trade unions and parties. Formation of separate national locals within the same general union would not be an advance over the present--it can only highlight the exclusiveness and bring conflict within the formal arena of an organization.

The demagoguery of the laborites who defend the practice of exclusion on the grounds that the organized Jewish workers with their higher standards would otherwise suffer from the unregulated competition of the backward, low-paid Arab fellaheen must be exposed as false "progressive" camouflage for anti-democratic nationalist politics little different from the open chauvinism of the Arab trade unions.

The defense of this policy that bases itself on the necessity to provide work in Palestine for immigrant Jews is both economically and politically wrong. The inevitable, long-run economic consequences of a policy that splits a small country into two artificial economies is to limit its expansion and absorptive capacity. It is politically self-defeating because it tends to provoke fear and hostility on the part of the Arab workers and fellaheen the only potential allies of the Jews in Palestine. The fact that Jews cannot find employment in the Arab sector (partly as a result of Kibbush Ayode policy) can hardly make reasonable the adoption of a suicidal policy leading to the destruction of all basis for Arab-Jewish unity.

First adruth convention resolutions in favor of Jewish-Arab unity are worse than meaningless as long as that labor federation continues to exclude Arab labor from the Jewish economy and support joint action only for Arab and Jewish workers in the employ of the government or offoreign corporations. The fact that the Arab nationalists are even more guilty of national exclusivism cannot justify this short-sighted practice which destroys the very foundation of unity between the Arab and Jewish proletariat.

The undoubted reactionary character of the official Zionist movement's support of the British mandate -- or a new U.N. trusteeship--must, however, not be permitted to obscure for us the fact that the long run, interests of Jewish nationalism are incompatible with British or other imperialist rule of Palestine.

To cling to the outdated, oversimplified Comintern characterization of Zionism as nothing more than "an agent of British

imperialism" is to ignore the intense anti-imperialist temper and activities of the Palestinian Jewish masses and the ever-growing conflict of interests between these two forces.

It is not at all accidental that the appeal to British imperialism to create what Weitzman called "a Jewish Island outpost for British interests in an Arab sea" or the supposed "Providential basis for a permanent alliance between England and a Jewish Palestine" (Jabotinsky) has failed utterly and proved illusory. Imperialist realities in the Middle East have always favored, and continue to favor, an alliance between British imperialism and the ruling classes of the Arab world.

The Workers Party warns all supporters of Palestinian freedom of the treacherous role of Russia in the struggles for national liberation everywhere and reminds them of the infamous role of the Stalinists in the Palestine pogroms of 1937. During the war Russia attempted to appear as a champion of the Jews in order to enlist their support in the war. This did not induce her to give asylum then or now to the millions who could have found refuge in her vast territories. Her doors remained closed.

Palestine's strategic location between the Iranian oil fields and the Mediterranean makes it a natural object of imperialist struggle and of special interest to Russian imperialism. Russia seeks to exploit the differences in Palestine in order to strengthen her own reactionary influence in that part of the world.

Today, Russia seeks to curry favor with the reactionary nationalist leaders of the Arabs by appearing as their champion against British and American imperialism. 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 other great powers, the United States is motivated by its economic interests--above all by the oil in this part of the world. The somewhat obscure dealings of Roosevelt with King Ibn Saud of Arabia are an indication of the American role of playing both sides--the pro-Arab and the pro-Jewish side in this game, in the interests of American political and economic domination. The hypocrisy of Truman's request for admission of Jews to Palestine is clear when contrasted with his failure to permit entry of Jews into the U.S.

Neither Great Britain nor Russia nor the U.S. nor the Arab League nor the official Zionist organizations can be relied on to conduct a real fight for the interests of the Palestinian masses. The struggle must rest entirely on 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.

The struggle for a free democratic Palestine can be fought only on the basis of Jewish-Arab unity. Every national and religious issue over which the Jews and the Arabs permit themselves to be divided, is another prop for British rule.

The slogan for a free Palestine finds concrete political expression in the demand for the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly elected by direct secret universal suffrage of all men and women over 18. This demand must be a key slogan of a genuinely democratic program for Palestine today.

The reactionary character of the Zionist parties is seen precisely in their opposition to this slogan. From extreme right wing to the most left all Zionist tendencies stand united in opposition to a constituent assembly until a Jewish majority exists. Not only is this position undemocratic, it makes the Zionists dependent on imperialist support with all the evil consequences we are now witnessing, betrayal, etc. It also plays into the hands of the most reactionary Arab nationalist elements. The latter use this 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.

The question of a constituent assembly cannot however, be posed in the abstract, separate from the legitimate fears of the Jewish population, who are well aware that the cardinal demand of all Arab nationalists from the Arab feudal lords to the Arab Stalinists, is the stoppage of all Jewish immigration and that the extreme Arab Nationalists (Istaklil Party) favor the repatriation of all Jews who came to Palestine after World War I.

Revolutionary Socialism cannot and does not ask the Jewish masses to make a unilateral sacrifice of their democratic and national rights.

Similarly, we must understand that the opposition of the Arab masses to the continued Jewish immigration stems from their just fears of becoming denationalized minority in a Jewish state, with nothing more than civil rights as individual citizens.

Only a political program that guarantees the NATIONAL aspirations of BOTH peoples of Palestine can forge the indispensable anti-imperialist unity of the Jewish-Arab masses.

The establishment of a democratic arena (Constituent Assembly) for free resolution of the complex Palestinian issues, though basic is no more than a first step. The fundamental question of how and on what political basis to resolve the conflict between Arab and Jewish nationalism is left virtually unanswered by those for whom the call for a constituent assembly is the crowning slogan of their program for Palestine.

In the given political context, in which all Arab nationalist "parties" strongly favor the establishment of an Arab Palestine where the Jewish masses will be deprived of all national rights and be forced to content themselves with precarious civil rights similar to those accorded Jews in the Arab states of Iraq, Egypt and Syria, merely to call for a Constituent Assembly is tantamount to political support, in effect, of the Arab National state in Palestine. It means political support of the anti-democratic Arab nationalist program which stands on the same plane with that of the maximalist

Zionists who favor a Jewish state in which the Palestinian Arabs will either have to content themselves with civil rights alone or else migrate to adjacent Arab lands.

The call for a Constituent Assembly in Palestine acquires democratic content only when directly linked to a clear demand for a bi-national (Jewish-Arab) Palestine, in which the national rights of both peoples are equally acknowledged.

Palestine is a bi-national country; the home of two peoples. Any other point of departure, no matter how concealed by democratic or socialist phraseology, signifies the acceptance of the domination of one Palestinian people by the other.

The banner of bi-nationalism must be wrested from the two Zionist tendencies that purport to be its bearers. The hypocritical lip-service given to a genuinely bi-nationalist solution by the partly Stalinized, Hashomer Hatzair Party of Palestine is belied by its political practice. The Hashomer Hatzair's support of the Histadruth principle that Jews must hire only Jewish labor with its inevitable corollaries of separate national economies and separate, parallel unions for Jews and Arabs flatly contradicts its most fervent bi-nationalist protestations.

On the other hand the Ichud (Unity) Party, which favors the immediate formation of self-governing institutions in which Arab and Jews are to be represented on a parity basis and the elimination of national discriminatory practices in both communities (i.e. JNF restrictions), places its faith in a tripartite agreement between the "Notables" of both peoples and the imperialist power that controls the country. It vehemently opposes the prosecution of an anti-imperialist struggle against the mandatory power and denounces as "one-sided policy" any Jewish pro-Arab orientation which is directed against the British rulers. The Ichud (Unity) Party's pro-mandate (or trusteeship) position tears the very heart out of bi-nationalist politics, its very reason for being. The bi-nationalist unity of the Arab and Jewish masses can be welded only in the fire of revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle.

Anti-imperialism and bi-nationalism are the two sides of the Palestinian coin of national liberation.

The democratic, colonial revolutions of our epoch have demonstrated that the only class in Palestine which will prove capable of leading a thoroughgoing, bi-national struggle against British imperialism is a united Palestine proletariat. The proletarian class struggle against economic exploitation unites all toilers and serves as the bridge across all nationalist barriers between the Jewish and Arab worker.

The successful conduct of the struggle by a united Palestinian proletariat on behalf of national and social emancipation is inconceivable without the existence of a powerful revolutionary Marxist party firmly rooted amongst the Arabs and Jewish toilers. The contribution of the Fourth International movement, must, therefore begin with all assistance toward the establishment of such a Party in Palestine.

Such a party can be built only with a program specifically designed to answer the peculiar national and social questions posed by Palestine, based on the following platform:

1. Independence from British imperialism and its imperialist would-be heirs, Russia and the United States.
2. Immediate convocation of a constituent assembly.
3. For free and unrestricted immigration into Palestine.
4. For a bi-national, democratic republic--against both an Arab National state and a Jewish National state in Palestine.
5. Land to the peasantry (Arab and Jewish). For the division of the land (governmental and land-owners) to those who till it.
6. Abolition of the usury system. Free credit to the peasantry.
7. For united organs of proletarian class struggle--organize the Jewish and Arab workers into the same unions,--joint cooperatives and organizations for the farmers.
8. For an autonomous, bi-national, Socialist Palestine within a Near East Federation of socialist Republics.