

Continuing Discussion On Palestine Issue

Violence: Condition For Palestine Peace

Superficially the April 5 editorial in **LABOR ACTION** on Palestine seems to be an advance from its previous position. In reality the editors simply added some of their critics' viewpoints to their own old conceptions, with a result of simple ludicrousness. The source of the confusion lies in this sentence: "We recognize the right of the Jews to claim self-determination if they choose to follow that path, so long as they commit no violence against the rights of other people in so doing." This bold assertion establishes our position with the clarity that would have characterized a hypothetical American party in 1860 which fearlessly proclaimed its belief in freedom for all slaves, so long as this did not constitute a violence against the rights of the slave-owners. There can be no movement of liberation, no matter what its character, without violence to the rights of other peoples. If the Jews win, the Arabs will be deprived of the right to dominate 1,006,000 square miles of territory; they will be able to dominate only 1,000,000 square miles. If the Arabs and British win, the Jews will be deprived of the right to live. It is our duty to decide which of these, for socialists, is the more important.

It is no accident that only the imperialists have adopted LA's central slogan of "Cease Fire" as their own. Being unconcerned with the fate of the Jews, they are able to insist on a policy of "Cease Fire" under any (that is, under Arab) conditions. The Arabs have laid down the following as their conditions for a truce: 1) disarming the Haganah; 2) halting of all Jewish immigration; 3) rejection of partition; 4) setting up of an independent Arab State in Palestine. Such conditions could only mean the reduction of the Jews to the same state of helplessness as that of the European Jews, and consequently their inevitable destruction.

TRUCE IMPOSSIBLE

It is irresponsible light-mindedness to talk, as LA does, of a truce as though it might be obtained under some other conditions. The Arabs will accept no proposal whatsoever, whether concocted by the Jewish Agency or by LA, unless it leads directly to the destruction of all Jewish powers of resistance. This intransigence stems from their confidence in their own power and in Britain's backing. Only if they understand that their military superiority is not as complete as they imagine will even a truce of any kind become a possibility.

As an analogy it might be pointed out that there was absolutely no program that the Jews could have advanced which might have induced the German nationalists to abandon their

exterminationist program; for their hatred and determination stemmed simply from the fact that Germany's vast military superiority made it unnecessary to consider any program of compromise. Only if the Jews had used every ounce of violence they could muster, if the German army had been faced with a Warsaw Ghetto battle at every Jewish settlement, could they have been persuaded to become less "heroically" adamant.

LA contends that it is the Jewish Agency's insistence on partition that endangers the existence of the Jewish community, and in its April 19 editorial states that incidents such as occurred at Deir Yassin might be the cause of "covering Palestine with Oswiecims and Majdaneks." This implies that the extermination camps were set up as reprisals for atrocities committed by Jews, or as the result of their outrageous demands (analogous to the demand for partition) on Germany. But our editors will find no record of such provocations. Deir Yassin must be condemned, for we cannot tolerate the killing of civilians. But such incidents are not the cause of extermination; such a statement, with its indecent haste to pin the label "genocide" on a local retaliatory brutality by acknowledged extremists in the midst of a war, serves only the interests of the anti-Semites, and constitutes a back-handed justification for Germany's Majdaneks in the past, and of anticipated Palestine Majdaneks in the future. (The Lebanon spokesman in the UN, Karim Azkoul, has announced that his government approves the practice of genocide as a national policy in some cases).

DEPENDS ON VIOLENCE

Attempts at genocide, whether through assimilation, expulsion or extermination, have little to do with the policies pursued by the minorities (or, for that matter, with their economic roles, as shown by the differences in economic structure among Jews, Gypsies, Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, etc.). They stem from the necessities of nationalist ideology and the fact that the dominant group has all the power, and the minority none. If the Haganah is smashed, there will be extermination camps in Palestine, no matter how exemplary the conduct of the Jews, or how modest their demands. If it retains even part of its power, there will be no "German" atrocities in Palestine.

This is the essence of the situation: everything depends on the amount of violence that the Jews can bring to bear against the Arabs. Not even a truce is possible until the Arabs are convinced that to refuse to cease fire will be very costly to themselves. Even if imperialist troops are sent in, this will not change the situation basically; for the outcome of a trusteeship too will depend upon the effectiveness with which Jews are able and willing to use violence.

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