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# EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

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# Israel and the Arab Revolution

Fundamental Principles of Revolutionary Marxism  
by Gus Horowitz



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Contents	page
The Revolution in the Arab East Since 1967: Draft Theses, by Gus Horowitz	3
Israel and the Arab Revolution: Resolution Adopted by the 1971 Convention of the Socialist Workers Party	11
The Marxist Position on Israel and the Arab Revolution: Report Adopted by the SWP National Committee Plenum, March 1971, by Gus Horowitz	17
A Reply to Comrades Langston, Langston, and Rothschild, by Gus Horowitz	27
The Major Disputed Issues on Israel and the Arab Revolution: Report Adopted by the SWP Convention, August 1971, by Gus Horowitz	35
APPENDIX: Counter Draft Resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution: Resolution Rejected by the SWP Convention, August 1971, by Berta Langston, Bob Langston, and Jon Rothschild	43
NOTE ON APPENDIX: References to the <i>Counter Draft Resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution</i> can be located in the present text by adding 40 to the page num- ber cited.	

### *Introduction*

The articles in this collection were written for the purpose of setting down the fundamental revolutionary Marxist principles on Israel and the Arab revolution. For that reason, they tend to be condensed statements of position, and polemical or theoretical in style, rather than popular essays.

With the exception of the first item, these articles were written as part of a discussion that took place within the Socialist Workers Party in 1971. The resolution, *Israel and the Arab Revolution*, was adopted by a plenary meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on March 13, 1971. It was then presented to the delegated national convention of the SWP in August, 1971. The convention was attended by 1,100 delegates and visitors. This collection includes the resolution and the reports

on it that were adopted by the National Committee and the convention, respectively.

Prior to the convention, there was a three-month written discussion in the party, where a counter-resolution was submitted by Berta Langston, Bob Langston, and Jon Rothschild. There ensued a lively debate in the party's discussion bulletin and on the floor of the convention. *A Reply to Comrades Langston, Langston, and Rothschild* was published in the pre-convention internal discussion bulletin. The counter-resolution which was rejected by the convention after the discussion is included as an appendix to this collection.

The first article in this collection, *The Revolution in the Arab East Since 1967: Draft Theses*, was written at the end of 1972. The circumstances are described in an introductory note preceding the article.

## THE REVOLUTION IN THE ARAB EAST SINCE 1967:

Draft Theses, by Gus Horowitz

### Introductory Note

The following theses were initially written as a contribution to a discussion taking place in a drafting committee designated by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to prepare a draft resolution on the revolution in the Arab East. The political line of the theses below is based upon the theses contained in the first part of the 1971 SWP resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution, but this article deals with some questions at greater length. Even so, the theses below do not give an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Like the SWP resolution, these theses deal only with some of the broad general questions, and do not deal thoroughly with all the conjunctural developments in the Arab revolution during this period.

These theses were drafted in November, 1972. They have been edited for publication now. As a result, in Part I, thesis no. 7 there is a reference to the October, 1973 war, but the theses as a whole do not include a balance sheet of this war. They cover the period roughly from 1967-1971. — G. H., November, 1973

### PART I. THE ARAB REVOLUTION

#### 1. *The Arab People*

The Arab people are presently divided into more than a dozen different countries, each with its own particular economic, social, and national dynamic. At the same time, they constitute a single nationality,\* faced with the task of national unification.

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\*A note on terminology: I have used the term "nationality" rather than "nation" to describe the Arab people, because a pan-Arab nation-state has not yet been established. Although Arab national unification is a central task and the most likely course of development, it has not yet occurred. Until such a development occurs, I think it is preferable not to utilize the term Arab "nation," because other historical variants can occur; for example the situation of Germany and Austria or in Latin America. The term "nationality" indicates that a historical process is still occurring, and is not definitively settled.

Similarly with the use of the term "nationality" to describe the Palestinians or the Algerians, or Egyptians, or Iraqis, etc. Here, too, it indicates that a process is occurring. The process of formation of separate Arab nations may be much weaker than in Latin America, for example, but it nevertheless is also a process taking place alongside the process of formation of the pan-Arab nation. The existence of separate Arab states reinforces this process. A prolonged delay in the formation of a pan-Arab nation state could strengthen tendencies to individual nations-in-formation. This may be unlikely but, if one is to be scientific, it should not be excluded. For this reason, I think the terms "nationality" and "nationalism" are more useful in describing the Palestinians and Palestinian consciousness than other possible terms such as "sub-nationalism" or "regionalism."

The co-existence of both processes should not be a dilemma for Marxists. History is full of such dialectical phenomena. And all existing nations have been formed in such a dialectical manner. — G. H.

The internal links within the Arab world have been woven together through a generally common history, language, culture, religion, and by similar economic and social conditions that are generally found throughout a vast and contiguous geographic area. This has led to the development of an Arab national consciousness and aspiration for Arab unity which is more strongly rooted among the oppressed and exploited masses than any other social class or strata.

The political fragmentation of the Arab people in no way reflected a desire of the broad masses for national separatism. It was forced upon the Arab people as a product of imperialist domination. It has been maintained throughout the Arab world by new means developed following the second world war. The imperialists today exert themselves to maintain the forced political fragmentation of the Arab people (a form of national oppression).

The imperialist-organized splintering of the Arab world has tended to heighten national particularism. The different strata of the Arab ruling class (the semifeudal landlords and aristocracy, the merchant and comprador bourgeoisie, the nascent industrial bourgeoisie) and the social strata allied to it (the clergy, the military officer and governmental/administrative castes, sectors of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, etc.) have a stake in maintaining the particularist and rival interests of their national states and some of their individual ties of dependency with imperialism. Although sectors of the industrial bourgeoisie have an interest in extending the capitalist market and increasing the potential for utilization of the economic resources and labor power of the Arab world, they have been unwilling to take the decisive steps necessary to achieve Arab unity: a definitive break with imperialism, possible only through a profound mobilization of the Arab masses.

The achievement of Arab unity corresponds most to the needs of the oppressed and exploited Arab masses, who have no real historical interest in maintaining national particularism or artificial political divisions. To bring about their economic and social advance requires mobilizing the vast, still largely untapped human and natural resources of the entire Arab world through a planned, socialized economic system. Thus, the achievement of Arab unity, a bourgeois-democratic task, requires the liberation of the Arab people from both foreign imperialism and Arab capitalism. The pan-Arab nationalist consciousness of the Arab masses, which is fundamentally directed against their national oppression, is objectively in the interests of the Arab socialist revolution (the term "pan-Arab," being used here in the generic sense).

The Arab revolution will not advance simultaneously and uniformly in every part of the Arab world. It will make advances first in one or a few countries in accordance with the relation of class forces in each specific case. But experience has shown that advances of the Arab revolution in any one country or region of the Arab world (e. g. Algeria, Egypt, Palestine) affect all the Arab

masses and impel the entire Arab revolution forward.

## 2. *Basic Tasks of the Arab Revolution*

The Arab revolution is a permanent and massive component of the colonial revolution. It is confronted with many of the same basic tasks, and shares many of the same problems as in other sectors of the colonial revolution.

In addition to national unification, some of the key tasks facing the Arab revolution are the following:

a) A genuine, thoroughgoing land reform, carried out through the revolutionary mass mobilization of the rural poor. This must be accompanied by measures to increase labor productivity such as large scale investments in agriculture (fertilizers, irrigation, mechanization, etc.) and a program for social and cultural advance in the countryside (public health and literacy campaigns, etc.)

b) A crash program for industrial development, as part of a balanced, overall economic plan. This requires nationalization of industry without compensation, state control of foreign trade, centralized economic planning under workers control, accompanied by a general program to raise the skills and cultural level of the working class.

c) An end to the oppression of national, religious, and ethnic minorities. In the case of oppressed nationalities, such as the Kurds and South Sudanese Blacks, this will include implementation of the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination.

d) The complete emancipation of women.

e) Winning the democratic civil and political rights characteristic of earlier "classical" bourgeois revolutions, and vastly expanding the rights of the toiling masses through establishment of a workers democracy.

f) A massive educational campaign to eliminate cultural and religious backwardness, the product of centuries of class society, which has been reinforced by imperialist domination.

g) Genuine independence, breaking the economic and political subordination of the Arab people to the imperialist powers. Continued imperialist domination is the central obstacle to Arab national unification and the economic and social advance of the Arab people.

The imperialist powers consider it a vital interest to dominate the Arab world, particularly because of the need to protect their oil supplies and investments. As a crossroads of Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Arab East has for a long time been important to imperialism because of its strategic location from the military and economic points of view. Its position on the southwestern flank of the USSR makes it a strategically vital area in imperialist military strategy against the workers states.

Throughout most of the Arab world, direct political domination by the imperialists has been abolished. Israel remains as a settler-colony and imperialist beachhead. A few small states on the Arabian peninsula have gained formal independence, but remain essentially imperialist puppets. In other cases, a more indirect form of imperialist domination is the norm. Several bourgeois Arab regimes have been able to gain a margin for maneuver, taking advantage of interimperialist rivalry and the conflict between imperialism and the workers states. But this maneuvering room is strictly limited by the confines of continued economic subordination to imperialism and the

threat of direct military intervention by the imperialists or their client states in the area. Israel has been designated by the imperialists to play a permanent major military role against the revolution in the Arab East. Iran and Turkey have been built up militarily by imperialism as part of their encirclement of the USSR, and also as potential spearheads against the Arab revolution.

A particularly important task facing the Arab revolution is the destruction of the Israeli state and its replacement with a unitary Palestine. Israel is a settler-colonial, expansionist capitalist state, tied to imperialism, particularly American imperialism. It was set up as a settler-colony apart from and in opposition to the Arab people, particularly the Palestinians. It functions today as an imperialist beachhead and spearhead against the Arab revolution. We support the Arab states in any military confrontation between them and Israel, regardless of the nature of the regimes of the Arab states.

## 3. *The Permanent Revolution and the Arab Revolution*

While the immediate objectives of the Arab revolution include a series of bourgeois-democratic tasks, these objectives can only be achieved through the process of permanent revolution: a revolution led by the working class at the head of a vast revolutionary mobilization of the oppressed and exploited toiling masses, chiefly the poor peasantry, culminating in the establishment of a workers state. This will necessarily be a socialist revolution directed against imperialism and its local agents, including the Israeli settler-colonial state, and against the Arab bourgeoisie and semifeudal remnants.

Only by championing the democratic demands of the rural poor and the oppressed masses in the Arab world can the working class summon them behind its program for the proletarian socialist revolution.

The proletariat can win over sectors of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie as its allies in struggle and can draw them behind its program; but the petty bourgeoisie, however radical, can play no independent historical role.

The proletariat and its allies in the poor peasantry and most oppressed strata cannot in any way subordinate their interests to the "national" or "progressive" bourgeoisie, which everywhere holds back, diverts, and betrays the colonial revolution.

## 4. *The Fourth International*

The victory of the Arab socialist revolution can be assured through consistent development of the class struggle. This strategy is summed up in the program of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution, on the basis of generations of experience. The national sections of the Fourth International adopt tactics and strategy to implement the program of revolutionary Marxism in their countries.

On this program, mass Leninist parties can be and must be constructed in the Arab countries and in Israel. Only these can provide an adequate revolutionary leadership capable of winning victory in the momentous struggles that lie ahead.

## 5. Petty Bourgeois and Bourgeois Leaderships

Along with the entire colonial revolution, the Arab revolution registered great advances in the years following the second world war. But in no part of the Arab world has the revolution been able to take a decisive, qualitative step forward towards real social advance through the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a workers state. The most advanced upsurges of the mass movement have been inadequately led, limited, and held back by the petty bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships of different varieties that have predominated in the Arab nationalist movement during this period: these include the FLN leadership in Algeria, Ba'athism in Syria and Iraq, Nasserism in Egypt, as well as other, less influential currents.

The Algerian revolution involved a revolutionary mass mobilization sufficiently strong to break the direct colonial hold of French imperialism and to move on to establish a workers and farmers government in 1963. But this revolution was led by a multiclass front representing divergent class interests. In the absence of an adequate proletarian revolutionary leadership, the mass mobilizations after 1963 did not extend much beyond the agricultural proletariat; the probourgeois elements of the army were able to consolidate themselves and overthrow the workers and farmers government through a military coup in 1965.

Although developments in Egypt did not reach the stage of a workers and farmers government, Nasserism has been the most influential current in the Arab nationalist movement since the end of the second world war, particularly in the Arab East, both because of the radical nationalist and anti-imperialist measures it undertook, and because of Egypt's great specific weight in the entire Arab world.

The "Free Officers" coup of 1952 led to the installation of Nasser in power as spokesman for a radical petty bourgeois leadership revolting against the old corrupt regime's incapacity to modernize the country and stand up to imperialism. To the Arab masses, Nasser seemed to embody their most profound sentiments, and every progressive step taken by the Nasser regime met with a favorable echo from them: the defiance of Israel and imperialism, including the dramatic nationalization of the Suez canal and the turn towards the USSR for military and economic aid; the popularization of the idea of Arab unity; the agrarian reforms; the beginnings of industrialization; the expansion of education and skills; etc.

But while carrying out progressive measures that gained great support among the masses, the Nasser regime prevented the development of any independent mass organization or mobilization. It played an essentially Bonapartist role, seeking to utilize the pressure of the masses against imperialism and those sectors of the Egyptian ruling class most subservient to it—the landowning aristocracy, the merchant and comprador bourgeoisie—for the purpose of fostering the development of an industrial bourgeoisie. The Nasser regime broke the power of these backward strata of the ruling class and initiated extensive intervention into the economy by the capitalist state for the purpose of industrialization. But, while it needed to utilize the pressure of the oppressed and exploited masses, the Nasser regime above all dreaded their mobilization in struggle, even for its own proclaimed goals, for fear

that once set into motion, the action of the masses could have threatened capitalist rule entirely.

As a result, the measures taken by the Nasser regime offered only limited and partial solutions to the immense problems of social and economic advance facing the Arab masses.

Although it was dealt a stunning blow by the 1967 defeat, Nasser's Bonapartist regime lingered on for a while. The effect of the defeat was cushioned by the tremendous mass demonstrations that occurred after Nasser offered his resignation; and the regime was buoyed up for a few years by the political revival of the Arab masses that accompanied the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement. The crushing blow delivered to the Palestinian resistance movement by the Hussein regime in Jordan in September, 1970, set the stage for a general turn to the right in the Arab world. It was at that point that Nasser died. His successor, Sadat, proceeded rapidly to denationalize key sectors of the economy, encourage private domestic and imperialist capitalist investment, and liquidate key features of the Bonapartist political regime.

The balance sheet of Nasserism leaves it clear that the basic tasks facing the Egyptian masses still remain to be solved. It proves clearly that even the most radical petty bourgeois leadership, unless it transforms itself qualitatively and undertakes proletarian revolutionary actions, as the Castro leadership did, cannot solve these basic social and economic problems.

This failure of Nasserism typifies the failure of all the other bourgeois and petty bourgeois leaderships within the Arab nationalist movement.

Nevertheless, the real socio-economic changes produced by the Nasser regime (particularly increasing the size and raising the cultural level of the proletariat) has greatly strengthened the objective potential for the emergence of an alternative proletarian revolutionary leadership capable of offering an adequate revolutionary solution to these problems.

## 6. Moscow, Peking, and the Communist Parties

In order to gain greater room for maneuver vis-a-vis the imperialist powers and to advance their economic development, the bourgeois regimes in several Arab states have turned to the USSR and other workers states for military and economic aid. This has enabled Moscow to gain greater military and diplomatic influence in the Arab world, primarily in the Arab East.

However Moscow's policy in the Arab world is fundamentally governed by its global strategy of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism on the basis of the status quo—which implies the maintenance of capitalism in the Arab world. The Stalinist bureaucrats view the Arab revolution as a threat to their goal of stabilizing and extending their military and diplomatic influence with the bourgeois Arab regimes.

As far as the struggle against Israel is concerned Moscow's counterrevolutionary role has been blatant, beginning with its support for the establishment of the Israeli state. It opposes the Arab revolution's goal of destroying the Israeli settler-colonial state and has instead systematically encouraged the inclinations of the bourgeois Arab regimes to come to a *modus vivendi* with Israel.

The Arab Communist parties are viewed by Moscow as

no more than pressure instruments and sacrificial pawns in their diplomatic bargaining with the imperialists and the Arab regimes.

As in other parts of the colonial world the Stalinist policy "socialism in one country"/"peaceful coexistence" has been reflected in the line of the Arab Communist parties. These parties promulgate the "two-stage theory of revolution," which in practical terms, means subordinating the interests of the workers and oppressed masses to the "national" bourgeoisie.

Peking's policy toward the Arab world is conditioned by its rivalry with Moscow, but it is governed by the same fundamentally Stalinist "socialism in one country"/"peaceful coexistence" line. Although Peking has not yet found the practical means of applying this policy on a scale comparable to that of Moscow, Peking's goal is basically the same: the extension of its military and diplomatic influence with the bourgeois Arab regimes at the expense of the Arab revolution. Like the pro-Moscow Communist parties, the Maoists in the Arab world also promulgate the Stalinist "two stage theory of revolution".

### *7. The Danger of Nuclear Holocaust*

The Arab East has been a center of confrontation between U. S. imperialism and the Soviet workers state. On the one hand, the imperialists consider domination over the Arab East to be a vital interest; while on the other hand, the area's proximity to the USSR means that imperialist military advances in the area directly affect Soviet strategic interests. Thus, the great danger exists that imperialism's attempts to contain and crush the Arab revolution could lead it to escalate its intervention into a nuclear world war. The Israeli settler-colonial state has been the source of four wars in the first twenty-five years of its existence, with each new one bringing the danger of nuclear confrontation closer.

Moscow's attempts to achieve "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism in the Arab East — at the price of guaranteeing the existence of the Israeli settler-colonial state, and thus denying the national rights of the Palestinian people — are illusory. No agreements between Moscow and Washington or between the existing regimes in the area can prevent a renewed upsurge of the Arab revolution or change the inherently expansionist nature and counterrevolutionary function of the Israeli state. Each new concession to imperialism does not lead to long-term stability, but only whets the imperialist appetites for more. Only the victory of the Arab revolution against Israel and imperialism can bring peace and stability to the area, and defuse the danger of a world nuclear conflict originating out of a war in the Arab East.

## PART II. THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE

### *8. The Palestinian People*

Among the Arab peoples, the Palestinians have suffered the most from the Zionist colonization of Palestine.

A separate, independent Palestinian nation-state has never existed. After World War I, British and French imperialism displaced the Ottoman Empire in the Arab East, and artificially carved out Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq as their colonies. In this way, a specific

Palestinian national unit was created. But in 1948, the settler-colonial state of Israel was established through the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes. The Palestinian people were dispersed into the neighboring Arab states, where their social condition was epitomized by their consignment to refugee camps. Zionist aggression against the Arab people in 1967 led to the creation of hundreds of thousands more Palestinian refugees.

The pressure of imperialist rule and the Zionist colonization of Palestine and the heroic struggle waged by the Palestinians for their liberation led to the development and reinforcement of a Palestinian national identity within the broader Arab national consciousness. This identity is illustrated by the widespread popularity of slogans proclaiming the demand for a unitary Palestine. Thus, as with other Arab peoples, the Palestinians form a distinct nationality within the broader Arab nationality.

The Palestinian people have a long history of struggle against Zionism, with the mass movement reaching earlier high points in the 1930s and in 1947-48. But after the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, the Palestinian movement subsided for two decades under the demoralizing impact of the 1948 defeat, the resulting geographical dispersion and political disorganization, and the lack of a revolutionary-Marxist leadership.

The various Arab regimes, despite their proclaimed support for the Palestinians, attempted to prevent the independent mass organization and mobilization of the Palestinian people. It was not until after the defeat in 1967 that a new upsurge of the Palestinian masses developed.

### *9. The Rise of the Palestinian Resistance*

The defeat of the Arab armies in 1967 was a stunning blow that shocked the Arab masses. The Nasserite leadership, upon which the Arab masses, including the Palestinians, had pinned their hopes in the struggle against imperialism and Zionist Israel, was exposed by the 1967 debacle as incapable of leading this struggle.

A new generation of Palestinian fighters now began to look for ways to take their destiny into their own hands and involve themselves directly and independently in struggle for the liberation of Palestine. This led to the growth of the Palestinian resistance organizations, which achieved mass support among the Palestinians and all the Arab people. The upsurge of the Palestinian resistance had a profound effect in reversing the demoralization among the Arab masses which had set in following the 1967 defeat.

The Arab regimes initially sought to utilize the renewal of anti-Zionist struggle by the Palestinian movement both in trying to recover their lost prestige and as a lever in negotiating for a "peaceful" settlement with Israel. The petty bourgeois leaderships of the Palestinian resistance organizations were financially and organizationally tied to various Arab regimes, and an independent revolutionary-Marxist party was not built. Nevertheless, the development of the Palestinian resistance as a mass movement with the proclaimed goal of winning Palestinian self-determination registered a big advance for the Arab revolution and posed an implicit threat to the established Arab regimes.

Revolutionary socialists give unconditional support to the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people

against Israel and imperialism; that is, support regardless of agreement or disagreement with the political line being put forward by the leadership of the movement at a given time.

The strength of the Palestinian resistance derived from three basic factors:

a) The movement was centered around the demand for Palestinian self-determination, as expressed in the call for the liberation of Palestine and the replacement of the Israeli state with an independent, unitary Palestine. The various Palestinian groups expressed this demand in the form of different slogans, and it was most widely voiced in the slogan — "for a democratic, secular Palestine." The struggle around this self-determination demand and other democratic demands (such as secularism, political democracy, rights for women) helped advance the Palestinian struggle and helped set an example for the entire Arab revolution. In particular, the determination not to give up the struggle for Palestinian self-determination differentiated the Palestinian resistance from the Nasserist, Ba'athist, and other Arab regimes which announced their willingness to reach an accommodation with the Israeli state.

The demand for a unitary Palestine does not stand in the way, but helps advance the goal of unification of the Arab nation. Regardless of the practicality or likelihood of the creation of an independent Palestinian state prior to the unification of all or part of the Arab nationality, or prior to a victorious socialist revolution in one or more Arab countries, the demand itself helps mobilize the Palestinians and all the Arab masses in struggle against Israel and imperialism. That is decisive in our evaluation of the demand for a unitary Palestine. The upsurge of the Palestinian resistance around this demand helped deepen the anti-imperialist and Arab nationalist consciousness of the masses throughout the Arab world, as experience has shown. This shows the indissoluble link between the Palestinian liberation struggle and the entire Arab revolution.

b) Although the leadership of the Palestinian resistance was mainly petty bourgeois in outlook and social composition, the movement had a mass base among the most oppressed layers of the Palestinian people. The masses of Palestinian urban and agricultural workers and poor peasants, above all those in the refugee camps, suffer most from national oppression. It is on these social strata that the Palestinian struggle must be based to assure its success.

c) Even though the leaders of the Palestinian resistance stated that they did not want to intervene in the internal affairs of the Arab states, the resistance had a big effect in radicalizing the masses throughout the Arab world; the resistance very quickly became a central element in the internal life of several Arab states, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, where it had great mass support and a sizable number of fighters under arms. This posed an objective threat to the bourgeois regimes in Jordan and Lebanon and spurred tendencies toward independent mass action in an anticapitalist direction; these reached their high point during the 1970 civil war in Jordan, where in a few areas there emerged popular assemblies that were embryos of dual power.

In addition, the Palestinian resistance registered an advance over Nasserism, Ba'athism, and similar political currents in its extensive efforts to win international support

for its democratic goals. It also took steps to appeal to the Israeli Jewish masses with the aim of winning them away from Zionism.

### *10. The Defeat of the Palestinian Resistance*

In view of the irreconcilable conflict of interests between the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and the willingness of the Arab regimes to accept the Israeli state, a test of strength between the resistance and the Arab regimes was inevitable.

The regimes in Jordan and Lebanon recognized the danger they faced and very early initiated clashes with the Palestinian resistance in an attempt to whittle down its strength (April and October 1969 in Lebanon; November 1968 and February and June 1970 in Jordan). The compromises reached after these clashes proved to be transitory. The announcement of the Rogers Plan (conceived with the complicity of Moscow) set the stage for an all-out attack on the Palestinian resistance as the prelude to an attempted settlement between the bourgeois Arab regimes, Israel, and imperialism at the expense of the Palestinian people.

In September 1970, the Hussein regime in Jordan launched its bloody civil war against the Palestinian resistance; this, together with the subsequent repressive operations against the resistance in Lebanon and Jordan constituted a major blow to the Palestinian liberation struggle. The so-called "progressive" Nasserist and Ba'athist regimes in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, which were also threatened by the development of a mass Palestinian movement, sat back, hoping to see the resistance weakened, but wanting the Hussein regime to appear to bear the responsibility for the repression.

After the defeat of the Palestinian resistance, the mass movement went into a decline. This objective situation served to reinforce both right-opportunist and terrorist tendencies within the Palestinian movement, and enabled the various bourgeois and petty bourgeois Arab regimes to reassert and reinforce their influence over the resistance organizations.

An explanation for the defeat of the Palestinian resistance cannot be reduced merely to pointing to the military superiority of the Jordanian and Lebanese regimes over the resistance. It is necessary to understand the political limits of this leadership of the Palestinian struggle.

The central political error was most clearly and fully expressed in the notion of "primary" and "secondary" contradictions — the primary contradiction being that between the Palestinian people on the one hand, and imperialism and Zionism on the other; the secondary contradiction being that between the Palestinian struggle and Arab reaction. According to this theory, the struggle against Arab reaction was to be put off to a later stage of the revolution. From this flowed two serious errors in the practical policy of the leadership of the Palestinian resistance:

a) The policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of the various Arab states. This disarmed the Palestinian masses politically by leaving them unprepared for the inevitable confrontation that was to develop between the resistance and the bourgeois Arab regimes and led the leadership of the resistance to refrain from drawing the non-Palestinian Arab masses into their struggle in an organized way.

It was correct for the Palestinian resistance leadership to seek military and financial help from the Arab regimes and to center its propaganda against Israel and imperialism rather than the bourgeois Arab regimes. But at the same time it was necessary to prepare the masses for the inevitable confrontation with the bourgeois Arab regimes. The best way of doing so was through exposing the capitulatory policy of these regimes towards Israel.

b) The failure to independently organize the Palestinian working class, refugees, and poor peasants to fight for their own independent class interests, which are necessarily anticapitalist. This reflected the theory of "revolution in stages," which holds that the class struggle has to be subordinated for a certain period in order to achieve the national unity of all classes against the imperialist and Zionist enemy.

One way in which this theory was expressed was in the call for the establishment of a democratic *state*, that is, a state whose class character is left unspecified. This demand has historically been raised, particularly by the Stalinists, as a means of covering up the goal of establishing a bourgeois state. The popular and progressive self-determination slogan of the Palestinian resistance, "for a democratic Palestine," was confused with the incorrect and disorienting slogan, "for a democratic *state* in Palestine."

A revolutionary-socialist leadership would have clearly differentiated between these two slogans. It would have pointed out that the democratic objectives expressed in the call for a "democratic, secular Palestine" could only be achieved through a socialist revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state.

There are two other errors that must be pointed out.

c) The overemphasis on the importance of military techniques in comparison with political program — despite the fact that the effectiveness of the Palestinian resistance did not stem from its military activity (which was at a relatively low level), but from the popular appeal of its call to struggle around the demand for self-determination and the degree of mass mobilization that it began to set into motion.

The prerequisite for militarily effective armed revolutionary mass action against the Israeli state is the popularization of a clear political program designed to mobilize the Arab masses in struggle for their own independent interests, to win the broadest possible international support, and to split off as large as possible a section of the Israeli Jews from their support of Zionism.

d) Although the leaders of the resistance correctly emphasized the central demand of self-determination, they failed to popularize immediate demands, such as "immediate Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories." Demands such as this could have further helped mobilize the Arab masses and expose the maneuvers between Israel, imperialism, Stalinism, and the Arab regimes.

Although the Palestinian resistance movement registered a political advance over Nasserism, Ba'athism, and similar petty bourgeois tendencies, the leadership of the Palestinian resistance never completely surmounted its initial political background and training in these tendencies. It remained a radical petty bourgeois leadership.

In social composition, the leadership of the Palestinian resistance was closely tied to the Palestinian bourgeoisie and upper petty bourgeoisie, which throughout the Arab

world play an important economic and political role, but which still remain subordinate to the already established ruling bourgeoisie in the Arab states. The leaderships of the central organizations of the Palestinian resistance were closely tied to the various Arab regimes upon which they relied for weapons, money, and other forms of material aid, but which, in turn, exerted great influence on their policies. These factors served to reinforce the policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of the Arab states and the policy of subordination of the class struggle to national multiclass unity.

Moscow and Peking, although not forming the primary political influence over the Palestinian resistance leadership, also helped reinforce these errors.

The central lesson to draw from the experience of the Palestinian resistance movement is clear: the validity of the theory of permanent revolution to the Palestinian liberation struggle. Several key points stand out in particular:

a) The power of the democratic demand for self-determination in mobilizing the dispossessed Palestinian masses in struggle against Israel and imperialism and winning the support of the masses throughout the Arab world.

b) The inadequacy of *limiting* the national liberation struggle to this demand. To mobilize the masses in an effective revolutionary struggle requires a program of democratic and transitional demands in the independent interests of the urban and rural proletariat, and all oppressed strata. Such a program would aim at the mobilization of the Arab masses of the entire region for the defeat of Israeli settler-colonialism and the achievement of Palestinian self-determination.

c) The vacillating and treacherous role of the bourgeoisie in the Arab world, which will hold back, betray, and turn upon the Palestinian liberation struggle. The petty bourgeoisie, however radical, cannot offer an independent alternative leadership. The task of winning the Palestinian liberation struggle requires the political leadership of the working class at the head of the oppressed and exploited masses which have the power to win this objective.

d) Once mobilized, these forces will set into motion a revolutionary process that can end successfully only in a socialist revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state.

e) This revolutionary process is interlinked with the advance of the revolution throughout the Arab world. Thus, there can be no complete separation between the program for the Palestinian revolution and the program for the Arab revolution as a whole. This overall program includes a program of demands designed to mobilize the support of the masses internationally and to draw the masses within Israel away from Zionism.

f) To successfully lead this mass revolutionary struggle requires the creation of mass revolutionary-Marxist parties, in both the Arab states and Israel, linked together as part of a world revolutionary-Marxist party.

### PART III. ISRAEL AND ZIONISM

#### 11. *The Revolutionary Struggle Within Israel*

A key task of the Arab revolution, and the central task of the Palestinian liberation struggle, is the destruction



of the Israeli settler-colonial, expansionist, capitalist state. To accomplish this task requires, first of all, the revolutionary mobilization of the Arab masses; and secondly, within Israel, winning the largest possible support for the Arab revolution and neutralizing the opponents of the Arab revolution. The process of weakening and breaking the support that Zionism has among the Israeli Jews is at the same time the process of weakening and breaking the strength of the Israeli army and the entire state apparatus. The struggle of the Arab masses against Israel must therefore find its points of support within Israel itself and link up with them.

In the first place, the Arab revolution will find a powerful ally in the oppressed Palestinian Arab population living on the territory controlled by the Israeli state. This includes the 300,000 persons in the Palestinian Arab community who remained within Israel borders after 1948 and the nearly one million Palestinians living in the territory that came under Israeli control as a result of the 1967 war. The struggle for the social and economic rights of the Arabs within Israel cannot be realized within the framework of maintaining a Zionist state, a state that by its very nature is organized along racist lines. The democratic struggles of the Arabs within Israel thus raise an objective challenge to Zionism. Among the central demands of these struggles are the immediate elimination of all laws and practices conferring privileges on Jews, particularly the law of return; the immediate withdrawal of Israel from all the territories occupied since 1967; the immediate right of return to their homes of all Palestinian refugees who wish to do so.

The territorial expansion of the Zionist state following the 1967 war has had dual consequences. While its purpose was to augment the resources of the Zionist state, the numerical increase in the Arab population within Israeli borders has greatly exacerbated the internal contradictions of Zionist society and helped expose Israel's carefully built up image as a democracy. For example, the tremendous sympathy for the Palestinian resistance among the Arabs inside the territories occupied after the 1967 war, especially in the Gaza strip, made the Israeli occupation there more difficult, unmasking the image of "liberalism" that the Zionist authorities had hoped to project.

In contrast to the original Zionist conception of creating an exclusively Jewish state through the expulsion of the Arab people living on the coveted territory, this development has brought Israel much closer to the classical form of colonialism, and has served to undermine the ideological credibility of Zionism.

There are potentially powerful allies of the Arab revolution among the Jewish population within Israel. These social strata include the working class and those sectors of the Jewish population who are also the victims of Zionist ideology, practices, and institutions. To mobilize these forces as allies of the Arab revolution requires a program of struggle which must be directed not only against the "classical" capitalist structures of Israel, but also against Zionist ideology, institutions, and practices.

The Jewish workers in Israel are economically and socially privileged compared to the Arab workers, both within Israel and the Arab East. But they have also been entrapped by their support to Zionism. In the name of safeguarding the Jewish nation against the "threat" of the Arab revolution, the Zionist leaders have been able to

bring about a "sacred unity" between capital and labor. The chief organizations through which this has been carried out have been the Histadrut and the Zionist political parties which have the allegiance of the working class, particularly Mapai and Mapam. These organizations originated as part of the Zionist colonization project rather than as independent workers organizations; they exist today as an integral part of the Zionist state.

The bureaucracies at the head of these institutions have consistently sacrificed the needs of the working class within Israel to the maintenance and expansion of the Zionist state. They have opposed all independent workers' struggles on the grounds that these conflict with the interests of the Zionist state.

There are no mass independent trade unions within Israel. The only non-Zionist political party of significant size is Rakah, a Stalinist party of several thousand members, mostly Arabs, which supports the existence of the Zionist state while calling for democratic rights for the Arab minority. In order to organize effectively to win significant gains, even on the limited field of struggle around immediate economic issues, the working class in Israel must form its own independent trade unions and other class organizations that reject the Zionist argument against class struggle in the face of the "threat" of the Arab revolution. This is part of the necessary process by which the Israeli working class can be drawn consciously into opposition to the Zionist ideology and institutions which hold back its struggle.

Like the labor movement in Israel, all progressive movements there, to struggle effectively for their immediate aims, must of necessity challenge Zionist propaganda and practices. Some examples are the following:

a) The struggles of the "Sephardic" or "Oriental" Jews within Israel. The discrimination they suffer in housing, jobs, education, etc., shows that anti-Arab racism in Israel logically spills over to foster racist practices against the Sephardic Jews by the Zionist establishment, which is of East European origin.

b) The women's movement in Israel. The oppression of women in Israel is reinforced by the requirements of maintaining the Zionist state. For example, the unrestricted right to abortions is opposed by religious and Zionist authorities on racist, demographic grounds as well as on sexist grounds.

c) Democratic struggles within Israel against censorship, repressive police practices, "emergency" regulations, curtailment of academic freedom, religious restrictions on civil rights, etc. Propaganda about the encirclement and siege of Israel by the Arab revolution is employed by the Zionist regime to justify repressive measures directed against Jews as well as Arabs.

d) Antimilitarist struggles within Israel. These struggles immediately raise the question of opposition to Zionism. The Israeli army's great strength as a mass army with popular support is also its potential Achilles' heel. The growth of the antimilitarist, antiwar, and anti-Zionist sentiment among the masses can have a devastating effect on the army. A well-applied proletarian military policy can greatly aid the revolutionary struggle.

e) The youth and student radicalization in Israel. These movements are part of the international radicalization of youth, which has been particularly inspired by the colonial revolution, including the Palestinian liberation struggle.

Identification with radicalizing youth in other countries combined with the general antiauthoritarian attitudes of rebelling youth will help lead Israeli youth to challenge Zionism.

The revolutionary perspective within Israel is to link up these and all other progressive struggles with the Arab revolution. This can be accomplished under the leadership of a mass revolutionary-Marxist party based on a program of transitional and democratic demands, in particular, anti-Zionist demands, which can lead to the abolition of the Zionist state, the realization of self-determination for the Palestinian people, and the victory of the Arab socialist revolution. This is the only perspective in the interests of the Jewish masses as well.

## 12. *The Future Status of the Israeli Jews*

Revolutionary Marxists differentiate between their attitude towards imperialism, the Zionist political movement, and the Zionist state on the one hand; and their attitude towards the masses of Israeli Jews on the other. Despite the artificial and reactionary manner in which the Israeli state was created and by which it is maintained today, the Hebrew-speaking Jewish masses have the right to live within a socialist Arab East, with their democratic rights guaranteed.

This is not reducible to a question of the treatment of a religious minority. The Israeli Jews are a nationality, as is confirmed by their language, culture, and their own consciousness. But, in relation to the Arab people, and the Palestinians in particular, they are an oppressor nationality, and recognition of this fact must be the starting point for Leninists in resolving the question of their status within a socialist Arab East.

The central task of the socialist revolution, insofar as the national relations between the Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs are concerned, is to take whatever steps are necessary to insure that the national oppression of the Palestinian Arabs is ended. This means defense of all democratic rights of the Palestinian Arabs, up to and including their right to self-determination. The right of the Palestinian Arabs to self-determination includes their right to a unitary Palestine embracing all of the pre-1948 borders, even if this is a part of a larger unified Arab state.

The right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination is a *unilateral* right. That is, it is the right of the presently oppressed Palestinians to determine unilaterally whether or not they and the Hebrew-speaking Jews will live in a unitary state or in separate states. The Israeli Jews, as the present oppressor nationality, do not have that right. But within this framework, the Hebrew-speaking Jews, a small minority within the Arab East, are guaranteed all democratic rights of a national minority, such as language, culture, religion, education, etc. If appropriate, this can include the right to local self-administration in Jewish areas, but not the unilateral right to form a militia or other armed force; any form of local self-administration must be subject to the approval of the central government of the unitary workers state.

The purpose of fighting for the right of the Palestinian Arabs to self-determination is to guarantee to them whatever means they feel are necessary to end their national oppression. This fight is directed against imperialism and the Israeli state. Support for this fight helps forge an in-

ternationalist alliance between the Jewish and Arab proletariat in the Arab East and helps advance the socialist revolution.

A key problem after the victory of the Arab revolution will be ending the current inequality between the Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs in various areas. Preferential measures must be adopted to assure that the economic and technical resources of a unitary state, including those resources that exist within Israel today, are used to bring about equality between the two peoples.

It cannot be predicted in advance what particular methods and institutions will be worked out to administer a future unitary state. The specific features will depend to a large extent on the process by which the revolution is achieved.

The Fourth International vigorously and completely rejects the racist Zionist propaganda to the effect that the Arab revolution constitutes a threat to the survival or well-being of the Jewish masses now living in Israel. To the contrary, the dynamic of the Arab revolution, like that of the world revolution as a whole, is directed against oppression of any kind, not towards introducing new forms of oppression. The entire history of the colonial revolution has borne this out.

By making its democratic perspective clear in its propaganda, the revolutionary movement in the Arab East can help dispel the Zionist lies portraying the Arab revolution as the enemy of the Israeli Jewish masses. This will help develop an internationalist consciousness among the Israeli Jewish workers and their allies within Israel, and will thus help to augment the forces that can be mobilized to carry out the socialist revolution in the Arab East.

## 13. *Zionism and Anti-Semitism*

A key distinction must be made between the Israeli Jews, who are an oppressor nationality in relation to the Arab people, and the Jewish people in many other countries who are victims of anti-Semitic oppression. Revolutionary Marxists, the strongest opponents of Zionism, are also the strongest opponents of anti-Semitism. The goal of ending the oppression of Jews is a key goal of the world socialist revolution, including the Arab revolution.

In the Western imperialist countries, anti-Jewish oppression was carried to the most barbaric extremes by German imperialism under the Nazi regime. Anti-Jewish racism is still strong in these countries, and a new rise of virulent anti-Semitism will remain a danger until imperialism is destroyed.

In the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe, the Stalinist bureaucracy maintains and fosters national oppression, including oppression of Jews, and attempts to use anti-Semitism against dissidents of many varieties. The struggle of the Jewish people against their oppression in these workers states is part of the antibureaucratic political revolution.

In several colonial and semicolonial countries, Jews have been subjected to racist oppression, as have other national, religious, and ethnic minorities. The Zionists have been able to take great advantage of the reactionary policy that the Arab regimes have generally pursued in regard to the Jews in Arab countries. The advance of the colonial revolution, particularly the Arab revolution, will show a completely different alternative to the Jewish people and will undercut Zionist propaganda.

Zionism claims to be a national liberation movement. This is completely false. Zionism gained its initial base of support among the oppressed Jews in Eastern Europe; but it has always been a reactionary, racist political movement that developed for the purpose of establishing a settler-colonial state in Palestine. Zionism utilized the persecution of the Jews in Europe, particularly the Nazi holocaust, as the pretext for achieving its aims at the expense of the Arab people, who had no responsibility for the oppression of Jews in Europe, and who are themselves victims of imperialist oppression.

The settler-colonial nature of the Zionist movement fitted

it perfectly to the imperialist process of controlling and Balkanizing the Arab East. Imperialism, and in the first place American imperialism, has played the major role in the creation, maintenance, and development of the Israeli state.

Zionism does not advance the interests of the Jewish people—in Israel or anywhere else in the world. It counsels them to oppose the advance of the world revolution and entraps them into support of their own worst enemies: the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Only the victory of the world socialist revolution can end the oppression of the Jewish people.

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## ISRAEL AND THE ARAB REVOLUTION

Resolution Adopted by the 1971 Convention of  
the Socialist Workers Party

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### PART I

**1** The Socialist Workers Party gives unconditional support to the national liberation struggles of the Arab peoples against imperialism, that is, we support all these struggles regardless of their current leaderships. Our foremost task in implementing such support is to educate and mobilize the American people against U. S. imperialist actions in the Mideast.

2. Israel, created in accordance with the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state, could be set up in the Arab East only at the expense of the indigenous peoples of the area. Such a state could come into existence and maintain itself only by relying upon imperialism. Israel is a settler-colonialist and expansionist capitalist state maintained principally by American imperialism, hostile to the surrounding Arab peoples. It is an imperialist beachhead in the Arab world that serves as the spearhead of imperialism's fight against the Arab revolution. We unconditionally support the struggles of the Arab peoples against the state of Israel.

3. The principal victims of the creation of Israel were the Palestinians—i.e., the Arabs who inhabited the region where Israel was established, who have been driven from their homes or placed in subjugation within Israel and the newly occupied territories. The Palestinians are a part of the Arab peoples, but they also form a distinct national grouping, with its own history of struggle against imperialism. There were Palestinian uprisings in 1921, 1929, and during the 1930s, reaching a high point in 1936-1939. At the height of the 1936 rebellion, the Palestinians conducted a six-month general strike. Expulsion from their homeland through the creation of Israel greatly intensified national consciousness among the Palestinians. The upsurge of Palestinian nationalism in the recent period, especially after the 1967 war, was particularly marked in the refugee camps and newly occupied territories as a result of the direct oppression these people have suffered at the hands of Israel. The September 1970 civil war in Jordan further intensified Palestinian national consciousness.

The struggle of the Palestinian people against their oppression and for self-determination has taken the

form of a struggle to destroy the state of Israel. The currently expressed goal of this struggle is the establishment of a democratic, secular Palestine. We give unconditional support to this struggle of the Palestinians for self-determination.

An integral part of our program for the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole is support of full civil, cultural, and religious rights for all nationalities in the Mideast, including the Israeli Jews. The major Palestinian liberation organizations also advance this concept and view it as essential to their attempt to win the Israeli Jewish masses away from support to Israel.

4. Our revolutionary socialist opposition to Zionism and the Israeli state has nothing in common with anti-Semitism, as the pro-Zionist propagandists maliciously and falsely assert. Anti-Semitism is anti-Jewish racism used to justify and reinforce oppression of the Jewish people. Marxists have been and remain the most militant and uncompromising fighters against anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews.

The source of the oppression of the Jewish people in this era is the capitalist system, which in its period of decay carries all forms of racist oppression to the most barbarous extremes. This was horribly illustrated in the holocaust directed against the Jews of Europe by German imperialism under the Nazi regime. Today, anti-Semitism remains widespread in all of the Western imperialist countries. Until the capitalist system is abolished in these countries there is the ever-present danger that a new variety of virulent anti-Semitism can arise.

In the Soviet Union and the workers states of Eastern Europe the privileged Stalinist bureaucracies perpetuate and reinforce many forms of racism and national oppression inherited from the previous capitalist era, including anti-Semitism and oppression of Jews. In these countries a political revolution is needed to sweep away the reactionary bureaucracies and institute the norms of proletarian democracy, equality, and internationalism.

In the colonial and semicolonial countries, including those in the Arab world, the bourgeois regimes perpetuate and foster racism and oppression against na-

tional minorities, including the indigenous Jewish population. Only when the colonial and semicolonial countries win complete national liberation, through the process of permanent revolution culminating in a socialist revolution, can the oppression of these national minorities be ended.

The struggle against anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews is part of the struggle to abolish all forms of racism and national oppression. This struggle can be fully and finally won only in alliance with all the oppressed of the world.

Zionism is not, as it claims, a national liberation movement. Zionism is a political movement that developed for the purpose of establishing a settler-colonialist state in Palestine and that rules the bourgeois society headed by the Israeli state today in alliance with world imperialism.

Zionism does not represent or promote the interests of the Jewish people. Within Israel, the Zionists lead the Jewish masses into the trap of opposing the national liberation struggle of the Arab peoples, a just and democratic struggle that will ultimately be victorious. The racist oppression of the Israeli state against the Arabs is paralleled by racist oppression within Israel against Jews who come from the Arab countries and other colonial and semicolonial countries. Israeli capitalism exploits the Jewish workers in addition to superexploiting the Arab workers. Police repression against Arabs carries over to increasing repression against those Jews who oppose Zionism. Clerical restrictions on civil liberties affect Jews, and Arabs even more.

The Zionists promulgate the lie that to be Jewish is to be a Zionist, and therefore a supporter of Israel and imperialism. They thus make it easier for racist demagogues in other countries to foster anti-Semitism among the masses. The Zionists and their imperialist allies, who were incapable of fighting for the salvation of the Jews against Nazism, are incapable today of defending the interests of Jews where they are oppressed.

Cynically utilizing the crimes of the Nazis as a pretext, and with the complicity of the Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist movement, the imperialists and Zionists created the state of Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, who had nothing whatsoever to do with the Nazi crimes. Portraying the victim as the criminal, imperialist and Zionist propaganda now attempts to equate the Palestinian goal of national liberation with the barbaric genocidal actions of the Nazis. One of the factors enabling the imperialists and Zionists to make this false comparison is the widespread racism against the Arab peoples that exists in Europe, North America, and Israel.

The imperialists and Zionists to the contrary, the basic interests of the Jewish masses of Israel reside in alliance with the Palestinian liberation struggle and support of the goal of a democratic Palestine. We have incessantly warned Jews throughout the world: Zionism leads you into conflict with your potential allies—the oppressed of the world—and has led you to ally with your worst enemy, imperialism. Imperialism in its death agony has already led to one holocaust against European Jewry; it can inflict similar catastrophes again unless it is overthrown in time by the

mass force of the socialist revolution.

5. In the epoch of imperialism, neither the Palestinians in particular, nor the Arab peoples in general, can fully attain the goals of their struggle for national liberation, national economic development, and other democratic tasks, except through the process of permanent revolution. These objectives can only be fully realized and guaranteed by the victory of the working class at the head of the toiling masses, chiefly the peasantry, in a revolution against the imperialists, their Israeli agents, the Arab national bourgeoisie, and Arab feudal remnants. The program of this revolution will combine democratic and transitional demands directed toward the creation of a workers state. This proletarian strategy implies unconditional support for carrying out the democratic tasks. The national bourgeoisie, whether "progressive" or "conservative," cannot lead the struggle for national liberation and democratization to victory over the imperialists, but instead limits, diverts, and suppresses it.

6. To lead the struggle for national liberation to completion through the process of permanent revolution, the creation of mass revolutionary-socialist parties is absolutely essential in both the Arab countries and Israel.

7. Such parties do not yet exist either in the Arab countries or in Israel. At the present time, only a few Trotskyist cadres are active in those countries. In Israel, a small group of Trotskyists participate in the Israeli Socialist Organization, a heterogeneous grouping yet to be won to political support of the Fourth International and Leninist organizational concepts. In Europe and North America a promising development has been the winning of a number of Arab cadres from different Mideast countries to Trotskyism.

None of the various Palestinian liberation organizations meet the criteria for such revolutionary-socialist parties, in theory, program, or organization. However, among these groupings numerous militants have appeared who can potentially be recruited to the Trotskyist movement. The best of them are to be found in the major Palestinian liberation organizations. The September 1970 civil war in Jordan demonstrated that the Palestinian liberation organizations have deep ties with the Palestinian masses. An important and hopeful sign is that Stalinism has not succeeded in attracting, holding, or shaping the major Palestinian liberation groups.

At the present time, in view of our limited information and the lack of clarity among the Palestinian groups about the political issues behind their splits and their organizational differences, and the fact that no one of these organizations has incontestably become the decisive leadership of the Palestinian struggle, it would be premature for us to give any one of them special support over the others. We should maintain an attitude of general support to the Palestinian struggle and in that sense to all the main struggle organizations, reserving full freedom to present our own views on program and other issues.

8. Although one of the goals of the Arab revolution will be the unity of the Arab peoples, we cannot approach this perspective schematically or formally. Historical developments, not least the divisive role of imperialism, have created separate Arab states and dif-

ferences among the Arab peoples. The revolution will therefore unfold in an uneven way throughout the region, and can leap ahead or suffer setbacks in one or another of the Arab states or Palestine. We envisage the establishment of a united socialist Middle East. But such a political formation will not issue from a simultaneous and uniform revolution throughout the area.

The dialectical relationship between the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole was graphically illustrated at the time of the 1970 civil war in Jordan. The logic of the Palestinian struggle against Israel led to a situation approximating dual power in Jordan and a new stage in the independence of the Palestinian fighters from the Soviet bureaucracy and those Arab regimes that accepted the Rogers plan. This pitted the Palestinian masses in a revolutionary struggle against the Hussein regime.

9. The bourgeois regimes in several Arab states have turned to the USSR for economic and military aid to help their economic development and to counterbalance imperialist pressure. As a result, in recent years the Soviet Union has become more deeply involved diplomatically and militarily in the Middle East. The Middle East, which borders on the Soviet Union, is an area where imperialist power immediately endangers the workers state, and is consequently an area of vital importance for Soviet foreign policy.

But the international policy of the Soviet bureaucracy is predicated on its conservative and narrowly conceived identification of the bureaucracy's own interests with the interests of the workers state. It sees the Arab liberation struggle as a pawn that can be sacrificed in its dealings with imperialism. Moscow's goal is a Middle East settlement based upon the maintenance of the capitalist status quo and a division of this area into stable spheres of influence between it and imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties in the Middle East oppose all independent revolutionary developments that threaten this status quo fundamentally, such as the Palestinian liberation struggle.

However, despite the enmity of Washington and the double-dealing of Moscow, the Arab revolutionary struggle will continue in spite of temporary setbacks and defeats until complete national liberation is attained. The central role played by U. S. imperialism in continually attempting to contain and crush the Arab revolution raises the dangerous possibility that it will force the Soviet Union into a military confrontation in the Middle East that can easily escalate into a worldwide nuclear war. This places special obligations upon the SWP to educate the American people about, and mobilize opposition to, Washington's aims and actions in the Mideast. The perilous situation there highlights the mutual interrelation and interdependence of the three main sectors of the world revolution: the socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries; the political revolution in the bureaucratically deformed or degenerated workers states; and the combined democratic and socialist revolutions in the colonial countries.

## PART II

**T**his resolution aims to outline only the basic general points of political principle involved in a Marxist approach to the Mideast crisis.

It would be wrong to attempt to draw a blueprint for the exact juridical and governmental forms of a democratic Palestine or a united socialist Middle East. We cannot predict the length, severity, or the vicissitudes of the revolutionary struggles in the Middle East or provide a recipe for the tactics that will be employed. All of this depends upon many factors, including the development of the revolutionary struggle in the imperialist countries and the workers states, the pace of development of Leninist parties in the Middle East, and the extent to which the Israeli Jewish masses can be won away from adherence to the Israeli state to active support of the Palestinian and general Arab liberation movements.

Our program for the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole includes support of full civil, cultural, and religious rights for all nationalities in the Mideast, including the Israeli Jews. But, while we support the right of the Israeli Jews to pursue their national culture within the framework of a democratic Palestine, we are opposed to the Israeli state.

Two of the key arguments used by Zionists in defending the Israeli state are: (1) The Jewish people, an oppressed nationality throughout the world, have a right to self-determination. The existence of the Israeli state is the realization of that right. Because of the historical oppression of the Jewish people, the right to maintain the Israeli state supersedes the national rights of the Palestinian Arabs; (2) However one may disagree with the present policies of the Israeli state or the manner of its creation, the Israeli state must be defended against the Arab peoples, because a victory for the Arab revolution and the destruction of the Israeli state would result in genocide, mass expulsion, or the oppression of the Jews presently living in Israel.

Both of these arguments are false to the core.

The situation of the Israeli Jews is essentially different from that of Jews in other parts of the world. The struggle against anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews in other countries is a progressive struggle directed against their oppressors. In some circumstances the demand for self-determination for oppressed Jews, directed against the oppressor nation, could become appropriate. Thus the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky recognized the right of the Jews in Russia to set up a state on their own territory, if they wished. However, the oppression of Jews in other countries does not justify the creation and maintenance of the existing Israeli state at the expense of the Palestinians, who were not and are not responsible for the oppression of the Jews. There, the situation is the reverse. The Israeli Jews form an oppressor nationality of a settler-colonial character vis-a-vis the Arab peoples. The Israeli state is the means by which this oppression is maintained.

From the point of view of the Leninist concept of the right of nations to self-determination, the key fact is whether the given nationality is an oppressed nationality or an oppressor nationality. Revolutionists call for the right of self-determination for *oppressed* nationalities, those that are being denied their democratic rights through national oppression. This demand means that the oppressed nationalities have the right to decide to form a separate state, or to exist in a unitary or federated state alongside a former oppressor national-

ferences among the Arab peoples. The revolution will therefore unfold in an uneven way throughout the region, and can leap ahead or suffer setbacks in one or another of the Arab states or Palestine. We envisage the establishment of a united socialist Middle East. But such a political formation will not issue from a simultaneous and uniform revolution throughout the area.

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ity, or to adopt some other form of self-determination, as the oppressed nationality so chooses. The oppressor nationality has no right to decide this question. The purpose of fighting for the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities is to guarantee them whatever state forms they believe are necessary to end their oppression. In the epoch of imperialism, the national liberation struggles of oppressed nationalities tend to merge with the world socialist revolution against imperialism through the process of permanent revolution.

This revolutionary dynamic is entirely missing from the concept that the Israeli Jews—an *oppressor* nationality vis-a-vis the Arab peoples—have a right to a separate state. Proletarian internationalism includes the recognition that the struggles of the oppressed nationality and the toiling masses in the oppressor nationality have the same enemy. But it does not at all endorse the concept that oppressed nationalities must support the right of self-determination of the oppressor nationality.

The burden for forging a fighting internationalist alliance rests on the proletarian movement of the oppressor nationality or country. It must prove in deeds that it is opposed to its own bourgeoisie on this question by fighting side by side with the oppressed nationalities and supporting their right to self-determination. There is no equation between the demand for self-determination for the Vietnamese, which is directed against imperialism and its lackeys in Saigon, or for the Palestinians, which is directed against their imperialist and Israeli oppressors, and the demand to support the Israeli state. The latter is directed on behalf of the imperialists against the Arabs, primarily the Palestinians. In the current situation, this demand mobilizes the Israeli Jews against the Arabs, who are oppressed by Israel.

The second argument of the Zionists is equally false. It is not justifiable to assume that a likely development of the Arab revolution will be the future oppression of the Israeli Jews. There is no reason to believe that the Arab liberation movement—contrary to the dynamic of such struggles everywhere else, contrary to the basic principles being put forward by its most advanced components (the Palestinian liberation fighters)—will institute a system of national oppression against the Israeli Jews. To consider that the Arab revolution will necessarily threaten the national oppression of the Israeli Jews is an unfounded *fear of the revolution itself*, a fear which is incited for counterrevolutionary reasons by the imperialists and Zionists.

Of course, the possibility of future oppression of the Israeli Jews cannot be theoretically excluded. A bureaucratic deformation or degeneration of the state power issuing after a successful revolution in Palestine could conceivably result in systematic oppression of the Jews. Under such circumstances, the demand for their right to self-determination could become appropriate. But this unlikely future *possibility* does not justify the *existing* oppression of the Arab peoples through the maintenance of the Israeli state.

In contrast to this speculative future danger, there

are real problems which will definitely have to be surmounted after the victory of the Arab revolution. Even under the most favorable conditions in which the socialist revolution in the Middle East can take place, many vestiges of national oppression suffered by the Arab peoples will still remain for a time. The revolutionary policy is to give *preferential* treatment to the formerly oppressed nationalities as the only means by which they can overcome all the economic, social, and cultural deprivations that they have suffered at the hands of Israel and the imperialist countries.

Within the revolutionary movement there have been some different but nevertheless mistaken positions regarding the right of the Israeli Jews to self-determination. Some of the spokespeople for the Israeli Socialist Organization have raised these arguments in the most clearly developed form. We differentiate their motivations and positions from those of the Zionists. They are courageous Israeli revolutionaries who oppose Zionism and call for the integration of the Israeli Jews in a socialist federation of the Mideast.

Their reasoning goes along the following line:

The Israeli Jews form a new Hebrew nationality separate and distinct from the Jewish people in other parts of the world. After a victorious socialist revolution, this minority nationality within the Mideast should have the right to self-determination. In such a revolutionary context, self-determination for the Hebrew nationality would not result in a Zionist-type settler state opposed to the Arab revolution. Although this demand is not meant to be applied now, and is not designed to imply support to the maintenance of the Zionist state, it should be raised now as part of a revolutionary program for the Mideast in order to facilitate the process of winning the Hebrew masses away from Zionism.

This argument is wrong.

The question of whether or not the Israeli Jews form a separate nationality from Jewish people in other parts of the world is subject to theoretical investigation. But that issue is not relevant to the matter under discussion. It does not follow that because an Israeli Jewish nationality exists, either as a separate entity or as part of world Jewry, we must automatically support its right to a separate state in the Mideast. Nor does the right of self-determination flow from the fact that a given nationality may be numerically a minority nationality. Each case must be examined separately within the totality of the given conditions, the key fact being whether a given nationality is an oppressor nationality or an oppressed nationality.

To Leninists, the right of self-determination is not an abstract moral right belonging to all nationalities at all times and under all circumstances. It is a political demand for oppressed nationalities that is raised for the following purposes: (a) by guaranteeing them whatever state forms they feel are necessary to end their national oppression, it mobilizes the presently oppressed nationalities in struggle against their oppressors; (b) it mobilizes the working class of the oppressor nations to struggle against its own ruling class on this question; (c) in this way it lays the basis for forging a genuine internationalist alliance between the national liberation struggle of oppressed nationalities and the class struggle of the working masses in the oppressor countries.

These are the main reasons why the self-determination struggles of oppressed nationalities lead in the direction of a socialist revolution, which will eventually lead to the abolition of the nation-state. These three factors are all missing from the demand for self-determination for oppressor nations.

Even if the demand for self-determination for the present oppressor nationality—the Israeli Jews—is to be implemented only after a socialist revolution, the raising of it at the present point can only be interpreted as directed against the presently oppressed nationality—the Arab peoples. As such, there is no revolutionary thrust to this demand.

Since the Leninist demand for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination is designed to guarantee them the state forms they feel are necessary to end their oppression, the implication of the argument for future Hebrew self-determination is that this demand is necessary to guarantee that the Israeli Jews will not face national oppression after the victory of the Arab revolution. As was said before, this danger is not at all real and pressing. Leninists raise demands that speak to the actual situation, which is the exact opposite: the Israeli Jews are the oppressor nationality vis-a-vis the Arabs. To raise such a demand now as a safeguard against a possible future danger is unfounded, obscures the present reality, and diverts from the struggle going on right now for the rights of the oppressed Palestinians and other Arabs against the imperialist and Israeli oppressors.

On the tactical level it is also wrong to raise the demand for the right of self-determination of the Israeli Jews, even if the right were not to be applied now, but only within the context of a successful revolution in the Mideast. Among the Israeli Jews, such a demand would reinforce the racist fears, fears fostered by the imperialists and Zionists that the Israeli Jewish masses do have something to fear from the victorious Arab revolution. It is unlikely that Israeli Jews will be convinced to support the Palestinian struggle to destroy the state of Israel on the ground that the Palestinians and other Arab peoples promise them the right to set up another state in the future to protect themselves from oppression by these same Arabs. Such a demand would be easily twisted by the Zionists to their own advantage. The Zionists would argue that the Israeli Jews have a state and self-determination today, and that the duty of those who believe in this right for the Israeli Jews is to fight now to preserve Israel, even though they may disagree with many aspects of the Zionist state.

Moreover, such a demand would certainly be understood by the Arab masses as a disguised form of Zionism. To advance such a slogan in the present circumstances would call into question the genuineness of our support to the Palestinian struggle for national liberation.

Instead of raising slogans which reinforce the racist fears that Zionism and imperialism foster among the Israeli Jews, it is the duty of revolutionists to show the Israeli Jews how Zionism is wholly and completely against their interests, how it has led them into the trap of opposing the Arab liberation struggle and of aligning themselves with imperialism, the worst enemy of the Jewish people everywhere. We explain to the

Israeli Jews, as we have in the past, that their future lies only in aligning themselves with the Palestinian and general Arab liberation movements, wholeheartedly and without any reservation whatever. It will be to the extent that they do this that they can escape from the trap that Zionism and imperialism have set for them in the Mideast.

A related slogan that has been raised by spokesmen of the ISO is for the de-Zionization of Israel. This slogan is wrong if it is counterposed to the demand of the Palestinian liberation movement for a democratic Palestine, because in that case it can be interpreted to mean support for the maintenance of Israel. Revolutionists support all struggles within Israel against every Zionist discriminatory law and practice, but since the national oppression of the Palestinians cannot be ended within the framework of the maintenance of the Israeli state, these struggles must be linked with the goal of replacing Israel with a democratic Palestine.

### PART III

A focal point of the world revolution, the revolutionary struggle in the Mideast has become even more important since the 1967 war. The 1967 military defeat was followed immediately by a mass upsurge in Egypt that prevented the replacement of the Nasser regime by one more directly tied to imperialism. The most significant development after 1967 was the subsequent growth of the Palestinian resistance movement, reflecting the heightened Palestinian national consciousness after the 1967 defeat. The Palestinian resistance based its fight around the demand for self-determination through the establishment of a democratic Palestine. This put it into direct conflict with any attempted denial of this right through a settlement between imperialism, Stalinism, the Israeli state, and the bourgeois Arab regimes. The independent struggle for Palestinian rights gained widespread support among the masses throughout the entire Arab world. It has also won widespread solidarity in other sectors of the world revolution, particularly the colonial revolution. In the imperialist countries of Europe and North America, the democratic goals of the Palestinian revolution have helped dispel the impact of imperialist and Zionist propaganda among large sections of the radicalizing vanguard. Since 1967, important sections of the radicalizing youth have been won to support of the Arab revolution.

The outcome of the 1970 civil war in Jordan was a severe setback for the Palestinian resistance and the entire Arab revolution. The Palestinian resistance was able to deepen its ties with the Palestinian masses in the course of the battle and in certain areas large masses were involved in the struggle against the Hussein regime, but Hussein was able to win a military victory. Although the Palestinian resistance was not destroyed, it was forced to accept severe limitations on its ability to function politically and militarily. Since then, the Hussein regime has pushed forward with military and political measures to diminish the remaining power of the Palestinian resistance. After the civil war in Jordan several Arab states moved closer to an accommodation with imperialism.



The continued drive by imperialism and the Israeli state, in collusion with the Kremlin and the bourgeois Arab regimes, to impose a "settlement" with Israel that would deny Palestinian national rights will generate a new resurgence of struggle by the Palestinian people. The experience of other sectors of the colonial revolution shows that this can occur within a relatively short span of time. The ongoing political discussion among the Palestinian fighters after the experience of the 1970 civil war in Jordan can mean that this new resurgence of struggle will occur on a more advanced political level.

The fact that the United States is the chief imperialist power involved in the Mideast makes opposition to Washington's aims and actions there our central task in defending the Arab revolution. During the 1967 war itself, the SWP was the only major organization on the left to rally to an internationalist defense of the Arab revolution. Since then, as the importance of this sector of the world revolution has increased, defense of the Arab revolution has been an increasing part of the SWP's political activity. During the 1970 civil war in Jordan, the SWP campaigned against the threat of direct U. S. military intervention.

The SWP's political work in this area has centered on an educational campaign to counter imperialist and Zionist propaganda against the Arab revolution. Continuing this campaign remains the central focus of our political activity in defense of the Arab revolution. This campaign takes the form of thorough press coverage of developments in the Mideast, expanded publication of literature, participation in debates, teach-ins, organizing speaking tours, and other means of educating the newly radicalizing forces to an internationalist position on this question.

While support to the Arab revolution is still limited to a small vanguard in the United States, this support has been growing steadily since 1967. Key reasons for this are the impact of the actions of imperialism and Israel in the Mideast; the growing radicalization in the U. S., with its tendencies towards internationalist and anticolonialist consciousness; and an identification of the Palestine fighting forces with the Vietnamese. The growing national liberation struggles within the U. S., primarily those of the Black and Chicano peoples, generate solidarity among these nationalities and supporters of their struggles with the struggles of nationally oppressed peoples everywhere. The mass antiwar movement has sensitized large numbers of people to the role of U. S. imperialism and to solidarity with the

colonial revolution. The expansion of these movements will be important factors in the increasing growth of sentiment in solidarity with the Arab revolution.

The key slogans around which a broad-based, united-front opposition can develop to Washington's aims and actions in the Mideast are analogous to the slogans around the issue of Vietnam. No U. S. troops to the Mideast!—if the threat of direct U. S. military intervention is again posed. Bring the Troops Home Now!—if the threat becomes actual. During the 1970 civil war in Jordan, the slogan of no U. S. troops to the Mideast won wide support within the organized antiwar movement.

An important side of the SWP's work in defense of the Arab revolution is the opportunity it provides to gain a hearing for our ideas among Arab, Israeli, and other Near Eastern students in the U. S. It is our obligation to try to convince as many Near East revolutionaries as possible of the ideas of Trotskyism. Consistent work along this line can help lay a basis for the formation of Trotskyist parties in the Arab countries, Israel, and other Near East countries when these students return home. The development of such parties will be key to the success of the socialist revolution in the Near East.

Another important side of the SWP's work in defense of the Arab revolution is the increased opportunities it provides to explain our position on the Jewish question. This question is important internationally, because of the history of past and present anti-Semitism and the potential that this danger can become virulent in the U. S. Combined with opposition to Zionism and the Israeli state is our irreconcilable opposition to any form of anti-Semitism or oppression of Jews. We must make it clear that revolutionary internationalists are the best and most consistent fighters for the rights of Jews wherever they suffer oppression, and that the oppressed peoples everywhere are the only reliable allies of the Jewish people. This is important in countering the appeal of reactionary hooligan groups like the Jewish Defense League, which pretend to be fighters for the rights of Jews, while trying to draw the Jewish masses into support for their enemies and opposition to their potential allies.

The Zionist establishment is disturbed because so many radical Jewish youth in the United States have turned away from Zionism and toward the Arab revolution. Many of them are in the Trotskyist movement and a firm and clear policy on the Arab revolution, Israel, and the Jewish question will win over many more.

# THE MARXIST POSITION ON ISRAEL AND THE ARAB REVOLUTION

Report Adopted by the SWP National Committee Plenum

March, 1971, by Gus Horowitz

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Ever since the 1967 war, when Israel attacked Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, the Mideast has not ceased to hold the attention of the world. Next to the war in Indochina, political developments in the Mideast have probably been the major international issue in the world press. Even before 1967, in fact, politics in the Mideast -- and in Palestine in particular -- has been a central factor in international politics.

One of the reasons for the importance of the Mideast was dramatically illustrated in the past couple of months by the disputes between the world oil trusts and the major oil producing countries over the price of oil. These disputes threw a spotlight on the importance of this commodity in the Mideast. The most recent figures reported in the New York Times showed that "Western Europe relies on the Arab countries and Iran (a non-Arab country in the Mideast) for nearly three-quarters of its supply, while Japan is 90 percent dependent on the same area" (January 2, 1971).

Of the major capitalist countries of Europe, the following is the breakdown: Britain gets 70 percent of its oil from this general area; France gets 80 percent; West Germany, 90 percent; Italy, 95 percent. Except for Libya and Algeria in North Africa, the rest of these big oil producing countries in the area are in the Mideast proper.

And although the U.S. presently draws only three percent of its oil consumption from this area, Mideast oil is strategically vital for U.S. imperialism in the long run, because of the vast reserves of oil that exist in this area. Moreover, American oil corporations own the controlling interest in most of this oil. Their investment and profits both run into the billions of dollars.

These figures alone illustrate the key importance of the Mideast to imperialism.

In addition, by its strategic location in terms of military and trade routes, and by its function as a link with Black Africa and India and the rest of South Asia, the Mideast has long figured high in international strategy of the imperialist powers. It was a key area to their strategy during both world wars.

We should also keep in mind that Iran and Turkey border directly on the Soviet Union, and several Arab states are close by, making this a key area in

the confrontation between the workers state and U.S. imperialism. It is not accidental that the confrontation between them in the Middle East has the potential to escalate into a world-wide nuclear war.

The strategic importance of the Mideast for world imperialism and its importance in the conflict between the world's two super-powers heightens the international impact of politics in this region of the world. Political developments in the Arab Mideast, and the conflict between Israel and the Arab peoples, strongly affect developments in the rest of the Arab world, and have an impact on politics in Turkey, Iran and sections of Black Africa. If the Arab people succeed in tearing the Middle East out of imperialism's control, this would have a profound impact on these and all other colonial and semi-colonial areas of the world, and would deal imperialism a mighty blow -- as well as dealing a blow to the Stalinist bureaucracies in the workers states. The worldwide impact of the Palestinian resistance movement and the solidarity that it has received in all sectors of the colonial revolution give but a small preview of the effect that a victorious revolution in this area would have.

In addition, as we have seen already, political developments in the Arab Mideast have a deep impact within the capitalist countries of Europe and North America. Part of the growing radicalism in these areas is the fact that mass consciousness of, and solidarity with, the colonial revolution has been increasing. The spotlight of attention focused on the Mideast has accelerated the process of solidarity with the Arab revolution, one part of the colonial revolution. Next to the Vietnamese, the Palestinian liberation fighters have been seen by increasing numbers of new radicals as an inspiring example of the worldwide upsurge of the colonial masses.

Another factor which makes developments in the Mideast important in terms of domestic politics in North America and Europe is the interrelationship between Israel and the Arab revolution and the Jewish question, which is important here and in Europe.

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The draft resolution does not attempt to deal in comprehensive fashion with all aspects of the Arab revolution. It concentrates on the Mideast, and in particular on the dynamics of the Pales-

tinian liberation struggle and the relationship of Israel to the Arab revolution.

In many ways, Palestine is key to the Arab revolution in the Mideast. As we know, one of the results of World War I was that the entire Mideast came completely under the control of British and French imperialism. Imperialism, following the strategy of divide and rule, carved up the Arab area generally known as Syria into four states: Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan. Though this nation-state division was artificial, and the Arab peoples were not consulted at all, it was, nevertheless, a major factor in shaping the nature and dynamics of political developments that were to come later.

The most important result of this division was the opening up of Palestine for colonization by Jews from Europe, who came in accordance with the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state there. Despite the fact that most of the Jews who came to Palestine were themselves victims of oppression, this colonial settlement, just like others of its kind in other parts of the world, was directed against the indigenous Arab peoples of the area. The Israeli state that was finally established in 1948, a state founded at the expense of the oppressed Arab peoples, could only come into existence and maintain itself by relying on imperialism -- as it turned out, primarily U.S. imperialism, which displaced British and French imperialism as the dominant one in the area after World War II. The settler-colonial, capitalist, and expansionist state of Israel functions as a beachhead for imperialism in the Mideast, a spearhead against struggle of the Arab masses to liberate themselves from imperialist domination. The wars of 1948, 1956, and 1967 bear out this assessment completely. They show that the national liberation struggle of the Arab people in the entire Mideast must be directed against both imperialism and its Israeli beachhead.

Most of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs who inhabited the area where Israel was established were driven from their homes, while those who remained were forced to live as an oppressed minority within Israel. Israel's attack against the Arab states in 1967 led to the creation of hundreds of thousands of new refugees.

We characterize the Palestinians as an oppressed nationality, a people who are oppressed not simply as Arabs in general, but also specifically as Palestinians. They are a people whose consciousness of their oppression as Palestinians, in addition to being part of the oppressed Arab peoples, has

heightened dramatically after 1967. This affords a good illustration of how imperialism itself, and the nationalism of oppressor nations, can condition, mold, and even help create the nationality and nationalism of oppressed peoples.

The Palestinian struggle for national liberation, for self-determination, is directed against the Israeli state, which is the cause of their oppression. Although the capitalist regimes in the neighboring Arab states try to come to a modus vivendi with imperialism's Israeli beachhead, the Palestinians cannot do so without denying their own existence as a people. This gives the Palestinian struggle for self-determination a particularly sharp thrust vis-a-vis Israel and imperialism, helps impel it forward independently and in opposition to the policy of the bourgeois Arab regimes and the Stalinists, and means that the Palestinian liberation struggle has a deep affect on the revolutionary struggle in other Arab countries. The growth and development of the Palestinian resistance movement after 1967 has borne out this assessment too.

Thus the nature and function of Israel, and the dynamic of the Palestinian struggle for national liberation, make the question of Palestine central to the entire Arab revolution. It is this aspect of the Arab revolution that the draft resolution concentrates on.

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At the time of the 1967 war, the SWP was the only major radical organization in the U.S. to put forward a clear line in defense of the Arab revolution against imperialism and Israel. This flowed from our basic line on the colonial revolution, as applied to the concrete situation in the Mideast. Since 1967, we have continued with a propaganda campaign to educate the American people about the role of U.S. imperialism and Israel in the Mideast, and to win support and solidarity for the Arab revolution.

In the course of this propaganda campaign, as increasing numbers have been won to support of the Palestinian liberation struggle, and as the Palestinian struggle itself grew, it has become necessary for party speakers and publications to deal much more often with a whole range of political issues involved in the Mideast. Thus it is appropriate and necessary to state the party's line on Israel and the Arab revolution in clear and comprehensive resolution form.

The resolution is in three parts. The first part is a basic statement, in thesis form, of our general line. The second part is a more extended explanation of our position on self-determination as it relates to the principles behind

the future state forms that will arise in the Mideast -- as opposed to both the Zionist position and to some mistaken positions taken by anti-Zionists. The third part gives a brief summary of what has happened in the Mideast since 1967, and the role and tasks of the SWP.

This report will point out and expand upon a few of the key points that are in the draft resolution.

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The first point to single out is our support to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, as opposed to Israel and imperialism. The current goal of this struggle is the destruction of the Israeli state and its replacement by a democratic, secular Palestine. It is the elementary duty of revolutionists to give unconditional support to this struggle of the Palestinians for self-determination.

Support to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination is one of the dividing lines between revolutionary socialism and Stalinism. The resolution points out how, although Moscow has become more deeply involved in the Mideast, it sees the Arab liberation struggle as a pawn to be sacrificed in its dealings with imperialism. Its goal is the maintenance of the capitalist status quo in the Middle East, including the maintenance of Israel, and a division of this area into stable spheres of influence between it and imperialism. Thus, Moscow opposes the Palestinian liberation struggle as a threat to its policy. In fact, the Stalinists have been opposed to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination for a long time. As we know, Moscow supported the establishment of Israel in 1948 against the Arab peoples and against an independent Palestine.

There is a good illustration of this that appeared a couple of weeks ago in the Christian Science Monitor. Their reporter interviewed David Ben Gurion, and this is what Ben Gurion said:

"We cannot forget that the Russians were the first people to help us, and before 1948 were the only ones to stand sincerely with us when the United States put an arms embargo on us."

"One of Andrei Gromyko's speeches in the U.N. then was one of the most Zionist speeches I have ever heard."

"They sent us arms through Czechoslovakia when we needed them most. I doubt whether we would have been able to defeat the Arabs in 1948 and 1949 without their help." (February 20, 1971)

The position of the American Communist Party is the same as Moscow's: for the imposition of a settlement in

the Mideast which would deny the Palestinian people the right to self-determination. To justify this, the CP propagates the illusion that the oppression of the Palestinian Arabs stems, not from the settler-colonialist nature of the Israeli state, but from the policies of the present government of Israel, and that consequently a just solution to the Mideast conflict can be attained through a reform of the Israeli government.

Herbert Aptheker, one of the leading CP spokesmen, gave a speech on October 21, 1970 in which he spelled this out:

"A change for the better is therefore altogether possible.... To secure peace in the Middle East and the future of Israel, a reversal of the present Israeli policies is required. The Israeli government must accept the U.N. resolution in its entirety and agree to proceed on its basis...To accept the 1967 Resolution means and requires, of course, abandoning the policy of annexation. It means accepting a just solution to the refugee question -- again as recommended first by the U.N. in 1948 and reiterated every year since. Fundamentally it means a turn in the government of Israel -- a policy of alliance with the Arab peoples against imperialism and not an alliance with imperialism against the Arab peoples." (Emphasis in original)

Aptheker concludes his speech by attacking the Palestinian liberation movement: "Ultra-Left and ultra-Right always and everywhere in fact work together. So in the present case, those who in the name of some mythical radicalism or some fanatical nationalism demand an end to Israel are exactly the ones who most strengthen the extreme right forces in Israel and in Saudi Arabia and in the United States.

"No, the survival of Israel is a matter of grave concern for all enlightened mankind; but the survival of a racist, expansionist, aggressive tool of oil cartels and of Nixon is not the same as the survival of Israel!" ("For a Just and Durable Peace in the Middle East," published by Committee for a Just Peace in the Middle East)

If the position of the Stalinists is opposed to self-determination for the oppressed Palestinians, the position of the social-democrats is even worse. The Socialist Party and its youth group, the Young People's Socialist League, support Israel and American imperialism against the Arab peoples. In fact, they have gone on a campaign in defense of Israel, considering this their special responsibility in view of the growing disaffection and opposition to Israel in the radical movement. This was spelled out by one of the organizations in which they play a key role, the Youth Committee

for Peace and Democracy in the Middle East, whose two directors are social-democrats. This group states in its basic piece of literature that:

"This [campaign] is especially urgent now because some political groups with influence among young people are trying to turn our generation's justified opposition to imperialism and war into support for the anti-democratic, militaristic campaign against Israel being waged by some Arab governments, Arab guerrilla movements, and their international allies."

It goes on to call Fateh "fascist-like" and says that "an Arab victory could quite possibly bring the Middle East, with its important strategic location and its vast oil reserves, under Soviet domination." The social-democrats' conception of peace is to call for greater U.S. arms aid to Israel.

This group, and SP literature in general, makes a special point of red-baiting the SWP for our party's active campaign in defense of the Arab revolution. A particularly malicious feature to this SP campaign is the false charge that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are identical. The SP is one of the major sources of this lying slander.

The Progressive Labor Party has not said much or done much in relation to the Mideast. But its position of opposition to the nationalism of oppressed peoples sets it against the Palestinian liberation movement and its struggle for self-determination.

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Our position of support for self-determination for the Palestinians not only differentiates us from our major opponents in the left, but has also helped to deepen our understanding of the national question in general, an understanding which we have been applying to a variety of particular situations all over the world. Some important aspects of our position on the national question are developed further in the second section of the draft resolution, which explains how this relates to our program for the Jews living in Israel. While we are for their full democratic rights within the framework of a democratic Palestine, we are opposed to the Israeli state and the concept of self-determination for oppressor nationalities.

As the resolution points out, we do not regard the right of self-determination as an abstract moral right for all nationalities at all times and under all circumstances. Each particular situation must be examined separately, within the context of the given overall situation. The key principled question is whether or not a given nationality is

an oppressor nationality or an oppressed nationality. Even in the latter case raising the demand for self-determination may or may not be appropriate. But we never demand self-determination for oppressor nationalities.

There are analogous cases in other parts of the world. In South Africa and Rhodesia, there are presently white states, which are the means by which the Blacks in these countries are oppressed. One of the goals of the revolution in both of these countries is the overthrow of white rule by destroying these settler-states and establishing democratic Our program includes democratic rights for whites, but we do not think that the whites have a right to a separate white state. That would be a demand directed against the oppressed Black Africans, who would see it as a means of defending and perpetuating the special acquired privileges of the whites.

It is worthwhile to take a moment to review what Trotsky had to say about this situation as it related to revolutionary strategy in South Africa. On April 20, 1933 he wrote a letter discussing some programmatic theses that had been drafted by a group of Left Oppositionists in South Africa. Excerpts from this letter appear in Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination. Trotsky said, in part:

"Under these conditions the South African Republic will emerge first of all as a 'black' republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for the whites, or brotherly relations between the two races -- depending mainly on the conduct of the whites. But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.

"Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relations between the classes, but also between the races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the state which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will the social revolution in South Africa also have a national character.

"We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands....

"When the thesis says that the slogan of a 'Black Republic' is equally harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a 'South Africa for the Whites,' then we cannot agree with the

form of the statement. Whereas in the latter there is the case of supporting complete oppression, in the former there is the case of taking the first steps toward liberation.

"We must accept decisively and without any reservation the complete and unconditional right of the blacks to independence. Only on the basis of a mutual struggle against the domination of the white exploiters can the solidarity of black and white toilers be cultivated and strengthened." (pp. 59-60, 1970 edition)

When we raise the demand for self-determination for oppressed nationalities, we do not do so because of the abstract or moral idea that all nationalities are entitled to statehood, but as a means of mobilizing the oppressed nationalities against their oppressors, mobilizing the working class in the oppressor nation against its own ruling class on this question, and thus laying the only basis for a genuine internationalist alliance between them. As we know, the liberation struggles of oppressed nationalities lead in the direction of a socialist revolution, while the nationalism of oppressor nationalities acts to perpetuate national oppression and capitalist rule.

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The second section of the draft resolution also takes up the false argument raised by the Zionists that the victory of the Arab revolution will result in the oppression of the Jews presently living in Israel. This is perhaps the central argument that the Zionists rely on. While the traditional Zionist arguments have had limited appeal, even among the majority of Jews, this particular argument plays upon the tremendous horror and revulsion that the masses of people have over the Nazi holocaust, and the determination that such a thing must not happen again. But it is totally false and slanderous to equate the Palestinian liberation struggle with Nazi-type fascism. It is false both subjectively and objectively -- both in terms of the stated goals of the Palestinian resistance organizations, and in terms of the objective political dynamic of national liberation struggles. The dynamic of the liberation struggles of oppressed peoples is directed against oppression -- beginning with their own national oppression and extending to all forms of oppression and exploitation. The entire history of national liberation struggles has borne this out.

At bottom, these unjustified fears about the future of the Israeli Jews are psychologically based upon projection, that is, the assumption that the Palestinians would do to the Israeli Jews what

the Israeli state is now doing to the Palestinians. They reveal a racist attitude toward the nature, motives, goals, and aspirations of the Palestinian people as a whole.

It is our duty to strongly combat this attitude toward the Palestinian people. We cannot give one inch to this fear of the victory of the Arab revolution.

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The final portion of this section of the draft resolution deals with some mistaken arguments that have been raised by members of the Israeli Socialist Organization. We should bear in mind that the ISO is not a Trotskyist organization, although a small group of Trotskyists do participate in it. The ISO has a great deal of prestige in the radical movement because of its forthright anti-Zionist stance taken within Israel itself, and as such, the positions taken by its representatives have had considerable authority within the radical movement. Various individuals and organizations have raised arguments similar to some of those ISOers have raised. But the ISO members have expressed these arguments in the clearest and most fully developed form, so that is why the draft resolution deals with these arguments as expressed by various members of the ISO.

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Another important part of the draft resolution is the section dealing with our line against anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews in the United States and other countries. By the nature of the situation in the Mideast, discussion on this question is usually interlinked with discussion on the Mideast.

The Zionists and their supporters argue, not only that the Palestinian liberation struggle is against the interests of the Jewish masses in Israel, but also that those who support the Palestinian liberation struggle are anti-Semitic. They have gone on a veritable campaign propagating this slander. One of the bases of their argument is the lie that to be a Jew is to be a Zionist.

The resolution clearly spells out, along with our opposition to Zionism, our opposition to all forms of anti-Semitism and oppression of Jews. We differentiate between the situation of the Israeli Jews, who form an oppressor nationality vis-a-vis the Arab peoples, and the situation of the Jewish people in the western imperialist countries, the European workers states, and several colonial and semi-colonial countries. In these latter areas, the Jewish people have generally formed an oppressed nationality or grouping. We have always supported the struggle in these countries

against anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews. It is part of the struggle for the socialist revolution.

Our clear line on this question shows how Zionism is against the interests of the Jewish people, as well as being against the Arabs. We point out how the Israeli state functions against the interests of the masses of Israeli Jews. In addition, we expose the inability of the Zionists to fight for the interests of Jews where they are nationally oppressed or subject to the danger of a virulent anti-Semitism. Our line on the Jewish question is not only a powerful aid to our defense of the Palestinian liberation struggle, but is important in itself.

In areas like the United States and capitalist Europe, where there is a large Jewish population, there still remains the danger that a virulent form of anti-Semitism can revive. Anti-Semitism has always been one of the key forms of racism propagated by the ruling class, and has often figured as one of the ideological underpinnings of reactionary political movements.

In addition to their crimes in the Mideast, an additional crime of the Zionists is that they call upon Jews in the United States to support and rely upon the ruling class, and to look upon national liberation struggles -- not only the Palestinian but all national liberation struggles -- as the enemy of the Jewish people. This is the road to another catastrophe for the Jewish people. We point out that the only way to successfully counter anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews, is by fighting imperialism in alliance with these national liberation struggles.

Another important side to this is the necessity of distinguishing our position from that of the Stalinists as it relates to the Jewish question. There are some three million Jews in the Soviet Union and several hundred thousand in the other countries of Eastern Europe. In these countries, the Stalinist bureaucracy perpetuates and fosters racism and national oppression inherited from the capitalist past. This poison is directed against a whole range of nationalities in these countries, including the Jews. One of the results of this is that the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy in these countries includes a struggle against national oppression. This is something that we see developing as part of the new opposition that has been arising in these countries.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, which supports the maintenance of Israel and opposes the Palestinian liberation struggle, engages in a verbal anti-Zionism that is often just a disguise for

anti-Semitism. This is something that we resolutely oppose and condemn. Not only does this type of Stalinist propaganda damage the struggle against Zionism in the Middle East, but it also drives Jews in Eastern Europe into the arms of the Zionists, and bolsters imperialist propaganda against the workers state.

One function of Stalinist anti-Semitism, portrayed as so-called anti-Zionism, is its use to attack opposition movements that develop in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In Poland, for example, the bureaucracy made a big point of the Jewish background of several defendants in the 1969 trials of Kuron-Modzelewski and other students, and falsely labelled these revolutionaries as Zionists. In Czechoslovakia, the Communist party has been singling out Jews for special attack in regard to the 1968 developments. Referring to 1968, the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party just recently issued a statement that said "Zionists" were behind "the struggle against socialism in Czechoslovakia." On February 19, 1971, in Moscow, Pravda carried a major article saying, "Zionists strived to seize leading posts in all the mass information media of Czechoslovakia so as to carry out a frantic propaganda campaign against the socialist system in Czechoslovakia, against the Communist party of Czechoslovakia, against the Soviet Union, against the Soviet Communist party, against Communist parties of fraternal countries." (reported in the New York Times of February 20, 1971)

Our opposition to Zionism has nothing whatsoever in common with this type of Stalinist anti-Semitism. Our revolutionary approach, which combines opposition to Zionism with opposition to anti-Semitism, strengthens the struggle on both of these fronts.

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Much has happened in the Middle East since the defeat of 1967, and it would be impossible to go into a detailed history here. All that can be done is to summarize a number of the key developments.

After 1967, Israel moved quickly to consolidate its gains and lay the basis for large scale annexation of new Arab territory. During the war and immediately after, Israel proceeded to drive out the Arab inhabitants in a number of key areas, and to set up its own settlements in their place. Hundreds of thousands of new Arab refugees were created as a result of the war. In the Golan heights of Syria, only 6,000 Arabs remain today out of a former Arab population of 80,000. About fifteen Israeli settlements have already been established in this area, and the Israeli government has just released

a ten-year plan to settle 50-60,000 Israelis there in the next ten years. We are all familiar with the latest Israeli plans regarding the Jerusalem area -- the construction of housing in the newly-seized territories around Jerusalem for the purpose of settling 122,000 Israelis there -- and that is but the first stage of a larger plan. Israeli settlements have also been established in certain areas of the West Bank and Sinai.

As the Palestinian resistance in the newly occupied areas has grown, so has the Israeli repression. Thousands have been restricted in their movements, jailed, beaten and tortured, or forced to leave their homes and go to one or another of the neighboring Arab states. Under the barbaric principle of collective responsibility, Arabs suspected of aiding the resistance, or those who refuse to collaborate with the police, can be arrested and their homes dynamited. This is a frequent occurrence. The repression in the Gaza strip has been one of the most severe, for the opposition has been great there. The New York Times described the situation there last month as so severe that "the Israeli Cabinet voted on January 3 for a stringent new security policy.

"It has been widely regarded as the first reversal of the so-called liberal occupation policy instituted by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan in the first days after the war of June 1967.

"The army garrison in Gaza was more than doubled -- with cease-fire in effect along the Suez Canal, the Israeli Army could spare the troops. A unit of tough border police, called the Green Berets of Israel, was dispatched to Gaza town, armed with truncheons.

"Entire refugee camps, housing nearly 200,000 people [one-half of the population of the Gaza strip], were placed under 20-hour curfews. Army and police patrols began unannounced hut-to-hut searches for weapons and known members of the Palestinian guerrilla cells.

"The results after a month are a perceptible decline in the number of terrorist incidents though Israeli officers are divided about how significant that is. The cost was loud accusations of brutality, torture and Gestapo tactics from critics all the way from the Israeli left to Tass, the Soviet press agency." (February 2, 1971)

There was a demonstration in Israel against this repression in the Gaza strip.

Combined with this occupation policy, was a policy of continued military pressure on the Arab states, with Israeli commando raids against guerrilla bases and other targets, and, until the

cease fire last August, large scale air attacks, primarily against Egypt. According to some reports, these attacks were so severe that at the most intense point Egypt may have lost 10,000 dead and many more wounded in a three month period.

Despite the terrible defeat in 1967, and the continuing Israeli pressure thereafter, the Arab revolution was able to rebound after 1967 and move forward. One of Israel's goals in the 1967 war was to cause the downfall of the Nasser regime and its replacement by one more directly tied to imperialism. This would have had repercussions in propelling and strengthening a swing to the right in a whole number of other Arab states. But this was prevented by a mass upsurge right after the war, in Damascus, Beirut, and especially in the major cities of Egypt. Up to two-and-a-half million people came out into the streets of Cairo. This was an important development in starting the process of turning the 1967 defeat around.

But by far the most important development after 1967 was the emergence of the Palestinian resistance movement as an independent force in its own right. Prior to 1967, there had been Palestinian organizations established under the auspices of the Arab governments. But by virtue of this fact they were politically tied to these governments and to the twists and turns of their policy. In this period, there also developed the initial nuclei of some of the major Palestinian resistance organizations that we know today, but these groupings were neither large, nor politically effective.

After 1967, however, things changed considerably. Nasserism and Baathism, two of the most important political trends in the Arab Mideast, were proven to be incapable of defending the interests of the Arab masses against Israel and imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy, and the Arab Communist parties were discredited. At the same time, the new defeat suffered by the Palestinians, further intensified their national consciousness and determination to fight against the attempt to forever deny their national rights. In this context, the Palestinian resistance organizations, basing themselves around the irreconcilable demand for self-determination, grew and developed relatively independently of Stalinism and the Arab national bourgeoisie.

One of the key early developments after 1967 was the battle of Karameh, on March 21, 1968. There, the Palestinian fighters took on an Israeli army contingent that had crossed the Jordan. Although the Israelis used tanks and had air cover, the Palestinians fought them



for twelve hours, and the Israeli force had to leave the field with heavy losses, leaving some destroyed tanks behind. This and other actions had a tremendous impact in proving that it was possible to fight against the Israeli conquerors, and that the Palestinian resistance movement was willing and able to do so.

The Palestinian resistance grew considerably, attracting many of the best militants to its ranks, and gaining widespread support among the masses, not only in Palestine, but all over the Arab world. This generated sympathy with the Palestinian cause internationally.

A large number of Palestinian organizations developed, both political organizations and guerrilla organizations. Aside from the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which is evidently a coalition including various groups, the largest and best known is Fateh. Other organizations that are wellknown in the radical movement here, are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Two other large groups are the Saiqa and the Arab Liberation Front, which have ties respectively to the Syrian and Iraqi Baathists. Aside from these, there are half a dozen or more smaller organizations. And at present there is a process going on of fusions and splits, which may possibly create entirely new alignments.

We must keep in mind that none of these organizations are Leninist, nor are there at present sections of the Trotskyist movement on the spot, in either the Arab countries or in Israel. Our previous experience in dealing with situations in which there is no section of the Trotskyist movement shows that it is necessary to proceed very cautiously in evaluating the differences among national liberation organizations. The political differences among these organizations are far from being clear, nor is it clear how directly the stated strategy of each of the various organizations conforms to their day-to-day practice. None of these organizations has emerged as the decisive leadership of the Palestinian struggle. Thus, our policy is to give general support to all the main organizations fighting for self-determination, without singling out any one of them for special support. As the situation evolves, this policy can possibly change.

We see as essential to the revolution in the Mideast the creation of mass Leninist parties, in both Israel and the Arab countries. Many of the best militants who can be won to the Trotskyist movement are in the Palestinian liberation organizations. Through our campaign in defense of the Palestinian liberation

struggle as a whole, in the context of which we present our own ideas on revolutionary strategy for the Middle East, we can considerably aid the process of creating Leninist parties in this area.

As the Palestinian resistance grew, it became a pole of attraction for the Arab masses in the surrounding area. Its independent stance, its mass base and its refusal to capitulate to imperialism and the Israeli state, also put it in conflict with the bourgeois regimes of the Arab states. Clashes between the Palestinian resistance and the Hussein regime in Jordan took place in November, 1968. In April and October, 1969, there were armed clashes between the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese regime. The Palestinian resistance continued to gain in strength, particularly in Jordan, to the extent that it was objectively in a position to pose as an alternative power to the Hussein regime. Thus, the logic of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination pitted it against the bourgeois regimes in the Arab world, showing the dialectical interrelationship between the Palestinian struggle and the Arab revolution as a whole.

Aside from the growth of the Palestinian resistance movement, other developments after 1967 included the military reformist coups in the Sudan and Libya in 1969, verbal shifts to the left in the Syrian and Iraqi governments, moves towards the possible federation of the U.A.R., Sudan, and Libya, and greater Soviet military and economic aid.

The announcement of the Rogers plan was the next step by imperialism and Israel, with the complicity of Moscow and the bourgeois Arab regimes, to impose a so-called settlement in the Middle East. With this development, the stage was set for the attempt to crush the Palestinian resistance movement, because this movement, based around the self-determination demand, was unalterably opposed to this kind of settlement which would sanctify the denial of the national rights of the Palestinians. The crushing of the Palestinian movement, with its independent stance and mass base, became the first order of business in the implementation of such a settlement.

On September 17, 1970, the Hussein regime launched an all-out massive attack designed to crush the resistance, while U.S. and Israeli armed forces stood by to help out if it proved necessary. Although the Jordan regime was ultimately able to win a military victory, the Palestinian movement put up a far greater resistance than Hussein had expected, and it could not be totally crushed. The Palestinian masses, especially those in the refugee camps, generally rallied to

the support of the resistance organizations. This was most dramatically illustrated in the northern region of Jordan, where the mass mobilizations were the deepest and most extensive. In Irbid, the second largest city, in Jordan, a popular assembly was established.

But overall, it was a serious defeat for the Palestinian liberation movement. Since then, the Hussein regime has been proceeding to try to whittle away at the remaining power of the resistance -- driving the armed Palestinians out of the major cities, disarming the militia, placing restrictions on their freedom of movement and civil liberties generally. The main Fateh newspaper in Jordan was forced to close down both because of financial difficulties, and restrictions that the Hussein regime placed in the way of its distribution. The Hussein regime has announced that the resistance fighters will no longer be allowed to mount operations against Israel from Jordanian territory. It has made Iraq and Syria withdraw the troops that they had stationed in Jordan.

The Rogers plan maneuvers and the civil war in Jordan had their effects in other Arab countries as well. One of Nasser's first moves after accepting the Rogers plan was to close down the Fateh radio in Cairo. After his death, the new Sadat government announced a reversal of some of the nationalizations in Egypt, and Sadat has issued a statement agreeing to recognize Israel and calling for compensation for the Palestinian refugees, rather than self-determination. A coup in Syria signaled a shift to the right by the new regime there, which has retreated from earlier criticism of the Rogers plan, and has placed limitations on activities of the Palestinian resistance against Israel. In Lebanon, the new government that took office in August has instituted severe restrictions against the Palestinian liberation movement. In the Sudan, the regime has announced a reappraisal of the earlier nationalizations and has instituted a purge against the Communist Party. The Libyan regime has put out feelers for friendlier relations with the U.S. Financial aid that some Palestinian organizations had been receiving from several Arab states has been severely curtailed.

In defeat, too, these examples afford an illustration of the inter-relationship between the progress of the Palestinian revolution and that of the Arab revolution in general.

The experience in other sectors of the colonial revolution show that the type of setbacks sustained by the Palestinian resistance can be reversed in short order. The upsurge of the Pales-

tinian revolutionary movement after the much more serious defeat of 1967 gives one indication of what can happen. The Palestinian movement cannot accept the type of settlement envisaged by the Rogers plan without losing its reason for existence. We can be sure that the continued attempt to deny self-determination to the Palestinian people will generate a new resurgence of the struggle. The Palestinian organizations, even now, still retain a great deal of strength. Indications are that there is going on right now in the Palestinian movement a continual process of political discussion. This implies the possibility that important lessons can be drawn from the past, and that the new resurgence of the struggle can be initiated on a more advanced political level.

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Because of the central role of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, we have proceeded on the basis of a special responsibility to campaign in defense of the Palestinian revolution and educate and mobilize the American people against U.S. imperialism's actions in the Mideast. This has taken the form of an intensive propaganda campaign, primarily in terms of press coverage, literature publication and speaking tours. The party branches and YSA locals have undertaken to participate in and organize an increasing number of forums, debates, and teach-ins around the issue of the Middle East. We have made this issue an important part of our election campaigns. In addition, along with others, we have helped organize a national tour for Arie Bober of the ISO, and just concluded a national speaking tour for Peter Buch. The YSA also sponsored a number of speaking tours last fall in which the Mideast was one of the foci. Continuing this propaganda campaign remains our number one task in defense of the Arab revolution.

Another important aspect of our work was the campaign against U.S. intervention at the time of the civil war in Jordan. The slogan of "No U.S. Troops To The Mideast" won considerable support in the antiwar movement. As we know from the antiwar movement, this type of slogan is the key to the organization of united front action against Washington's imperialist ventures. For the purpose of building mass action, it is not appropriate to demand agreement with our entire position in defense of the Arab revolution. By focusing in on the danger or actuality of U.S. troop intervention, we can put the pro-Israeli forces in the worst possible tactical situation. We can win over in action those who are confused or uncertain about the entire range of political issues involved in the Mideast, but who can agree to oppose American intervention. We can also

take steps to win away from Zionism many of those who have not thought out to the end the logic of supporting Israel against the Arab revolution.

While support to the Arab revolution is still limited to a small vanguard in the United States, the situation has changed significantly since 1967. There has been a steady rise in interest in the Middle East, a growing alienation from Israel, and a growing support for the Arab revolution. The literature we publish and the speakers we sponsor have been getting an increasingly positive response. There has also been a general rise in the number of talks and in the amount of literature published on this question in the radical movement as a whole.

This should be seen in the context of the growth of the antiwar movement and national liberation struggles in the United States, which increasingly identify with all aspects of the colonial revolution, and which are increasingly sensitized to the phony propaganda that is put out in defense of colonialism in any form. Thus, the prospects are favorable for continuing to win over increasing numbers to support the Palestinian revolution.

One result of this is that the Zionist forces are being put more and more on the defensive. They are much less confident now of public sympathy than they used to be. This is evidenced in Peter Buch's tour, for example, where Zionist heckling and hooliganism have been at a minimum, compared with earlier times.

The progressive image that Zionism used to have on the left has been steadily eroding. One illustration of this was reported by Peter Buch in connection with a debate he had in Atlanta with a leading left-Zionist. The Zionist tried to calmly present his usual line, but, as Peter Buch reported, "he sort of lost his cool toward the end of the debate, because he couldn't sell his radicalism to the radicals in the audience, nor satisfy the patriotic Israelis, either."

One of the things that most enrages the Zionist organizations is the fact that increasing numbers of Jewish youth are being won over to support of the Arab revolution. The Zionists see this as a tremendous long-term threat. The Zionist movement in the United States, which is a key financial base for Israel, has rested on the near unanimous support of the Jewish population, and they see this unanimity crumbling among the youth. We should bear in mind that until the end of World War II, the majority of Jews were either indifferent to or

opposed to Zionism, and this can once again become the situation.

Indications from Zionist publications and reports of Zionist conferences indicate that they will be stepping up a campaign on two fronts: 1) to continue slandering supporters of the Palestinian liberation struggle as anti-Semitic; 2) to single out radical Jews for special attack on the grounds that, as one leading Zionist stated recently, they "represent a social and religious danger to the American Jewish community." This theme was repeated and taken a step further in a recent series of articles in Commentary magazine, which argued that the growing radicalization in the United States was itself a threat to the Jewish community. In reality, however, it is forces like the Zionist movement which represent the real danger to American Jews, by counselling support to the ruling class.

One group which has grown and gained some notoriety recently is the Jewish Defense League. This is a reactionary hooligan group based around support to Israel and opposition to the Black liberation struggle. But, in contrast to the majority of Jewish community groups or Zionist organizations in the United States, the JDL tries to cultivate the image of being a group of fighters for the rights of Jews, rather than being like the so-called moderate and responsible traditional organizations. The only way that this type of group can be effectively countered is through the combination of politically taking on their reactionary political line and hooligan methods, and at the same time making it clear that the revolutionary movement, the national liberation struggles, and the other social forces involved in the radicalization are the only ones who can be counted on to fight as allies of the Jewish people against the rebirth of anti-Semitic reaction.

Our experience has shown that around a clear and principled revolutionary line on Israel, the Arab revolution, and the Jewish question, we have been able to recruit and hold revolutionary-minded youth, including Jewish youth.

One additional important result of the increasing support for the Palestinian revolution in the U.S. has been the effect this has had on the many thousands of Arab students in the United States who have previously felt themselves to be politically isolated. The changing conditions have given them growing confidence to express their ideas publicly and organize politically. In the process, there has been greater openness on the part of many Arab students to the ideas of

Trotskyism. By paying special attention to this work, we can win Arab students to Trotskyism, and help in the critically important task of building Leninist parties in the Middle East. We should bear in mind that in the early days of the Communist International, many of its sections in the colonial countries were originally founded or strongly aided by the recruitment of students from these countries who were studying in Europe.

There are today many thousands of Arab students in the United States, among whom there are tremendous opportunities for recruitment to Trotskyism. In addition, in a number of cities, such as Detroit and New York, there are large Arab-American communities which we can reach with our program. There is a similar situation in Europe, with many thousands of Arab students, and hundreds of thousands of Arab workers on the continent.

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A REPLY TO COMRADES LANGSTON, LANGSTON  
AND ROTHSCHILD  
by Gus Horowitz

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There are now two resolutions before the party on the subject of Israel and the Arab Revolution. As is the case whenever the party must decide between two opposing political lines, the discussion of the disputed questions can bring our analysis into sharper focus. Through a thorough discussion of these questions, the party has an opportunity to clarify and deepen its understanding of the dynamics of the Arab revolution and the national question in general.

This article is a contribution to that discussion, in answer to the counter-resolution submitted by comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild. I will concentrate only on the central points of political line that are in dispute. These can be enumerated as follows:

1. The National Committee draft resolution expresses unconditional support to the struggle of the oppressed Palestinian people for self-determination and supports the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine as "the currently expressed goal of this struggle." Thus, this demand is incorporated as part of the revolutionary socialist program for the Mideast. Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild reject the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine on the grounds that it reflects the interests of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie.

2. The National Committee draft resolution states that "an integral part of our program for the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole is support of full civil, cultural and religious rights for all nationalities in the Mideast, including the Israeli Jews. It rejects the call for the right of self-determination for the Israeli Jews. The Langston, Langston, Rothschild counter-resolution calls instead for the right of self-determination for the Israeli-Jewish nationality—that is, the right to form a separate state. We note that Langston, Langston and Rothschild are opposed to the present Israeli state, and say that this Israeli-Jewish right to self-determination can be recognized only "within the framework of the future workers power in Palestine."

3. A third difference is interrelated with the two above. Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild present the party with a new and different evaluation of the role of the national bourgeoisie in the colonial world, and of the revolutionary socialist attitude toward bourgeois democratic demands.

4. Another important difference is methodological. The counter resolution, with all its qualifications, provisos, and contingency analyses, professes to be a model of the dialectical method. It is not. The method of Langston, Langston and Rothschild is schematic and formal.

The political line of the National Committee draft resolution is set forth in clear and concise thesis form in part I of the resolution. Parts II and III of the National Committee resolution deal with some current developments and expand upon a few of the points contained in these line theses.

Unfortunately, the counter draft resolution does not present its line in this clear and concise fashion. It incorporates verbatim much that is contained in the National Committee draft resolution, while appending to these sections a counter-line contradicting them.

This counter line can be most easily picked out beginning with those sections that attempt to summarize the feudal perspective, the bourgeois democratic perspective, and the revolutionary socialist perspective for the future of Palestine.

We may note at the very outset that this division itself conveys a certain political appreciation. One can talk of a "feudal" perspective, if by that is meant a political program in the interests of the Palestinian landowning aristocracy or pre-capitalist remnants. One can talk of a revolutionary socialist perspective, meaning by that a program representing the interests of the working class and its allies among the masses of peasants and refugees. But what is a bourgeois democratic perspective?

It would have been more appropriate to counterpose to the "feudal" and revolutionary socialist perspectives, the *bourgeois* perspective, that is, the program of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie. But, as we shall see later, Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild incorrectly identify this class with a program of bourgeois democratic demands.

A discussion of the basic policies of the contending classes among the Palestinian people is both useful and necessary, but only on the condition that it be rooted in reality, that is, in an examination of the material interests of the various social classes in the political situation of the present day. In the counter-resolution, however, this element of reality is lacking.

Let us first discuss what they call "the feudal perspective." We leave aside the question of the accuracy of the term, "feudalism," to describe present-day social relations on the land, or whether feudalism ever actually existed in the Mideast. (Marx characterized the system there before the penetration of imperialism as the "Asiatic" mode of production.) The more important question is the interests and objectives of the landowning aristocracy.

Langston, Langston and Rothschild maintain that the determining factor behind "feudal consciousness" is that "the national territory appears as the sum of specific parcels of land, each of which is the material base for traditional social relations of privilege and exploitation between a specific landholding family and its peasantry. To this consciousness, the Israeli-Jews constitute simply an invading force occupying—contrary to all traditional rights—these parcels of land." Flowing from this feudal-type outlook, the counter resolution maintains, the goal is the "physical expulsion from Palestine of the Israeli-Jewish people as a whole." (page 14)\*

Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild make a serious methodological error here. They begin by looking at the Palestinian landowners or former landowners as if they were abstract feudalists, with the same basic outlook, and motivated primarily by the same general considerations as the landed nobility in Europe in the age of feudalism centuries ago.

Now, it is true that the landowning aristocracy sees its basic interests bound up with the maintenance of traditional relations on the land. It is also true that the interests of the landowning aristocracy often conflict with those of Israel. And it is certainly true that this class would view with favor the re-extension of its power throughout all of Palestine.

But it is not true that this class is putting forward a program designed to expel all the Israeli Jews from Palestine. The flaw in the parcels of land theory is that it bears absolutely no relation to the real program of the present-day Palestinian "feudalists."

One of the typical representatives of this social layer is King Hussein of Jordan. And what is his program? Is he determined to struggle against Israel, with the object of expelling all the Israeli Jews from Palestine? Far from it. His program is to recognize Israel and come to terms with it, to crush the Palestinian liberation movement, to keep the Arab masses oppressed and exploited for the benefit of Israel and imperialism—all at the cheap price of a privileged position for himself and the landowning aristocracy and comprador elements in Jordan. Whatever conflicts of interest the big landowners have with Israel and imperialism are in the last analysis subordinate to their basic policy of accommodation and subservience to imperialism and the Zionist state.

This should not surprise us. This approach has been the line of the Palestinian landowning aristocracy throughout the twentieth century. What is more, this is the same basic line followed by all the "feudally conscious" elements in the Arab world.

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\*References to the *Counter Draft Resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution* are to the page numbers in *SWP Discussion Bulletin* vol. 29, no. 10, in which the counter-resolution was first published. They can be located in this bulletin by adding 40 to the page number cited.

This is so because, in addition to their general consciousness about social relations on the land, they are also conscious that waging a struggle to overthrow the Israeli state will set social forces in motion that can well lead to their own overthrow. The landed aristocracy is forced to adapt and alter its general "feudal" type outlook to take account of the far more powerful political and social forces at work around them in the world of today.

It is a fatal mistake for a Marxist to confuse rhetoric and abstract desires for a basic line. Hussein and others of his ilk may dream occasionally about extending their control over all of Palestine, and they have talked about "driving the Israeli Jews into the sea," but that is not their real program, that is not their real consciousness, and a fight for that aim is not in their real interests.

What of the slogan of expelling all the Israeli Jews from Palestine? It is simply a nationalist slogan expressing hatred for the oppressor. It is an incorrect slogan, and has been rejected by the Palestinian liberation movement.

Langston, Langston and Rothschild proceed in a similar abstract manner to discuss the basic program of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie. But here the consequences of their analysis are far more serious, for they are led to reject support for the perspective of a democratic, secular Palestine, the perspective being raised by the Palestinian liberation movement today.

"The consciousness underlying this perspective," they say, "is a bourgeois democratic one for which the national territory does not appear as constituted by particular parcels of land bound up with particular persons, but rather of land as such, land which can be exchanged and is thus indifferent to particular persons; land which can become capital or can pass into the possession of the nation as a whole." Thus, they contend, as far as this consciousness is concerned, the Israeli-Jews appear merely as a "religious community—possessing privileges." And so, "the central aspect of the sweeping democratization it aims at (the abolition of all privileges and all violent interference with free interaction) is a sweeping secularization. . . ." (page 15)

We see the same method employed as in the section analyzing "feudal consciousness." To discover the present-day political outlook of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie, they attempt to find a parallel with the outlook of a capitalist class in the abstract, for which bourgeois political democracy is a means of promoting free commodity exchange. They then equate the perspective of a democratic secular Palestine with the abstract interests of this abstracted Palestinian national bourgeoisie. We are then left with the impression that the driving force behind the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine is a conflict of interest that the Palestinian national bourgeoisie has with Israel, imperialism, and the landowning aristocracy over disposability of the land and resources of the country.

This point is developed further: "For this [bourgeois democratic] consciousness, the appropriate state power for a liberated Palestine is one that will establish and guarantee absolute equality and access to free interaction among the individuals who will be citizens of the new Palestinian nation." (page 16) This passage attempts to make an analogy with the era of the rising capitalist class in Europe where, as they had explained earlier, ". . . the process of the formation of the new, capitalist national economy tended to appear to the individuals

involved not as what it primarily was—the establishment of a new system of exploitation and privilege in which individuals are related to one another through the classes to which they belong—but as the establishment of the conditions of free interaction between citizens endowed with equal rights." (page 12)

Skeptical comrades may wonder if there haven't been any changes to note over the past two centuries which might make this analogy invalid. And, indeed, there have been. But let us continue. There is yet more to come.

The demand for a democratic, secular Palestine, they maintain, reflects false consciousness. "By hiding the reality of antagonistic classes within the Palestinian people, it leaves the Palestinian workers and peasants unprepared with the alliances with imperialism into which the national bourgeoisie will inevitably enter in the course of the national liberation struggle, and it *prepares the way for the seizure and consolidation of power by the national bourgeoisie in Palestine once the Zionist state has been crushed. . . .* This perspective on the national question reflects the real interests of the Palestinian and other Arab national bourgeoisies, and not at all those of the Palestinian workers and peasants. . . . Nonrecognition that the Israeli-Jews constitute a modern [class-divided] capitalist nation . . . and nonrecognition of the existence of antagonistic classes within the Palestinian people are aspects of a single bourgeois consciousness. Theoretical denial of both these realities, or their relegation to the sphere of 'secondary contradictions,' and the programmatic, practical expression of that denial in the perspective of a secular, democratic state—the illusory perspective of a 'classless' and internally 'nationless' state—*constitute in reality a program for a capitalist Palestine. . . .*" (page 16, emphasis added)

Let us take the Langston, Langston, Rothschild argument to its logical conclusion. We are really being asked to believe that the Palestinian national bourgeoisie, fearful of mobilizing the masses of Palestinian workers and peasants, opposed to an active anti-Zionist struggle by the Israeli Jews, entering inevitably into alliance with imperialism, is nevertheless putting forward a program by which it intends to crush the Israeli state in order to set up a unitary capitalist Palestine in its place.

The obvious question is posed. Under these circumstances, how could the Palestinian national bourgeoisie hope to defeat the Israeli state?

The truth of the matter is that it does not intend to do so. When we leave behind the realm of the abstract and take a look at the presently existing, real-life Palestinian national bourgeoisie, we will find that it is quite ready to come to an accommodation with Israel as it exists. It is from among this class, for example, as well as from among the large landowners, that the Israeli forces in the newly occupied territory find their main collaborators. This basic line of accommodation with Israel is by-in-large true of the national bourgeoisie, not only in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but also in unoccupied Jordan and in other parts of the Arab world where there is a small layer of Palestinian capitalists. The central demand of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie is for a return to the pre-1967 borders, in which it can try to institute policies somewhat similar to those of Nasser-Sadat in Egypt or the Syrian or Iraqi Baathists. It is within those borders that they still hope seriously to extend their freedom of action as a capitalist class. It is

within these limits that they are conscious of the potential "land which can become capital." Other important sectors of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie are among the serious proponents of a West Bank state, and still others support the existing status quo under the Hussein regime.

Not unlike the "feudalists," the Palestinian national bourgeoisie may yearn on occasion for a re-extension of its position throughout all of Palestine. It does have a conflict of interest with the Israeli state, and would certainly look with favor on the establishment of a capitalist state throughout all of Palestine. But there is an unbridgeable gap between these abstract desires and the real program of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie.

The national bourgeoisie will on occasion lend limited support to the Palestinian liberation movement, as a means both of pressuring the Hussein regime on domestic policy, and of pressuring Israel for a return to the pre-1967 borders. But its basic line is to impose strict limits on the power, independence and mass support of the Palestinian liberation movement. It will always back away from and oppose a revolutionary struggle to win a democratic, secular Palestine.

Yet Langston, Langston and Rothschild would have us believe that the goal of a democratic, secular Palestine is the serious perspective of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie.

The basis of their argument is the abstract desire of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie to create a nation-state in which it could be pre-eminent—just as other national bourgeoisies did during the rise of the capitalist system, when democratic demands were championed by the bourgeoisie.

This position goes against the theory of the permanent revolution, with which the counter-resolution claims to agree. Our appreciation of bourgeois democratic demands and the real interests of the national bourgeoisie is quite different.

Just what are bourgeois democratic demands? They are democratic demands which first arose as part of the great bourgeois democratic revolutions in Europe a few centuries ago. They include demands for national sovereignty, secularization of the state apparatus, land reform, and civil liberties, among others. In the period of its rise, when it was a revolutionary class, the bourgeoisie supported struggles around these demands as a means of creating conditions under which capitalism could grow and flourish. But these demands were not in the interests of the capitalist class alone; they were in the pressing interests of the working masses—and they still are.

These democratic demands as a whole have never been fully realized under capitalism. Many of the demands which were won during the rise of European capitalism (and only partially won at that) still remain to be realized in the colonial world. This is the case in Palestine. The struggles around democracy, secularization of the state apparatus, and national sovereignty are central needs of the Palestinian people.

But today, a serious fight for bourgeois democratic demands like these is not in the real interests of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie. It cannot pursue a truly independent policy without regard for the power and needs of imperialism and its agents like the Israeli state; and it is much too weak *vis a vis* the Palestinian masses to think of maintaining control of the situation in the type of revolutionary struggle that is necessary to carry out the unfulfilled democratic tasks. The fundamental line of

the Palestinian national bourgeoisie flows primarily from these considerations which far outweigh its abstract desire for a unitary capitalist Palestine, its conflicts of interest with imperialism, with the Palestinian landowning aristocracy, and with the Israeli state. When the chips are down, the Palestinian national bourgeoisie, like the national bourgeoisie everywhere else in the colonial world, will end up opposing a resolute and necessarily revolutionary struggle around democratic demands.

Today, the fight for bourgeois democratic demands does not mesh with the real interests of the national bourgeoisie. In Palestine, the task of winning these bourgeois democratic demands and carrying out the unfulfilled bourgeois democratic tasks to completion rests with the Palestinian masses headed by the working class, in a revolution that will necessarily be directed against all the enemies of this struggle—imperialism, the Israeli state, the Arab feudal remnants, and the Arab national bourgeoisie. It is this dynamic of class forces which gives the Palestinian revolution its permanent, or uninterrupted character. In the age of imperialism, the struggle to fully win these democratic demands and to guarantee their realization merges with the struggle for socialism, not capitalism.

Taking this into account, the National Committee draft resolution states that "the program of this revolution will combine democratic and transitional demands directed towards the creation of a workers state. This proletarian strategy implies unconditional support for carrying out the democratic tasks." (page 6) Bourgeois democratic demands, like that for a democratic, secular Palestine, are a part, in fact a central part, of the revolutionary socialist program.

Langston, Langston and Rothschild are wrong when they contend that the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine is the practical expression of "non-recognition of the existence of antagonistic classes within the Palestinian people." They are wrong when they contend that it is the practical expression of "non-recognition that the Israeli-Jews constitute a modern capitalist nation." They are wrong when they contend that it is the practical expression of the theory of primary and secondary contradictions or the theory of revolution by stages. These false notions, which have been raised in various degrees within the Palestinian liberation movement, are in *contradiction* with a program to establish a democratic, secular Palestine.

The contradiction should not surprise us. The Palestinian liberation organizations are not Leninist parties. None has a consistently revolutionary program. Their programs still reflect influences from diverse sources: the influence of Maoism, Moscow Stalinism, or ultraleft adventurism; the influence of the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents in the Arab world; and they also reflect the influence of revolutionary socialism and the objectively revolutionary thrust of the struggle of the Palestinian masses for self-determination.

The demand for a democratic, secular Palestine, as the current practical expression of the demand for Palestinian self-determination, reflects the revolutionary influences on the Palestinian liberation movement.

By itself, this demand is insufficient. But we do not reject it on that account. To win this self-determination demand, it will be necessary to carry out a revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state, which will be democratic, secular, and more. It will necessitate the creation of a Leninist party to lead the struggle, a party

with a consistently revolutionary program, incorporating the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine along with an entire series of democratic and transitional demands.

Langston, Langston and Rothschild, however, gratuitously hand over the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine to the national bourgeoisie. They maintain that supporting this demand will leave the revolutionary party unable to differentiate itself from the national bourgeoisie, that it will leave the Palestinian masses unprepared for the betrayals of the national bourgeoisie. This is totally false. The revolutionary party mobilizes the masses in struggle independently of the national bourgeoisie, not only by raising working class demands, but in large part by its consistent struggle around bourgeois democratic demands. Our opposition to the national bourgeoisie stems not from the fact that it lends occasional support to bourgeois democratic demands, but from the fact that it betrays the struggle for these demands. To make this clear, it is the revolutionary socialist party that must emerge as the champion of the struggle for these democratic demands.

In short, Langston, Langston and Rothschild *counterpose* the creation of a workers state to the creation of a democratic, secular Palestine. The revolutionary socialist approach is to present the creation of a workers state *as the means of achieving and guaranteeing* the goal of a democratic, secular Palestine.

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We come finally to the argument about self-determination for the Israeli Jews. The basic arguments put forward by Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild have already been answered in part II of the National Committee resolution. But this can bear some amplification, and some additional points can be made.

The counter resolution employs the same method in its discussion of the revolutionary socialist perspective as in the preceding sections. "For this [revolutionary socialist] consciousness," state Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild, "the national territory does not consist of capitalizable land and things; the human beings living on it do not consist of exploitable labor power. Rather, the national territory is a work place for the production of use-values, and the population is a cooperating group of producers and consumers. Thus, while the workers and peasants have every interest in the broadest possible *voluntary* economic and social assimilation of nations, they have no class interest in forcibly retaining the Israeli-Jews within their state." On this basis, they contend that the "Leninist perspective on the solution to the national question can be formulated as follows: A workers state in Palestine governed by the norms of proletarian democracy, including the right of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat to *secede and form a politically independent workers state.*" (page 17)

The right of nations to self-determination is thus presented as if it were a universally applicable Marxist principle, flowing from a consideration of conditions within a future workers state, where there will be no objective basis for national oppression. It is presented without regard for the existing relations between nations.

This abstract approach to the national question has nothing in common with long-established Leninist policy. It is true in the abstract that within a healthy workers state there will be a basic harmony of interests between

the workers of the former oppressor nationality and the workers of the former oppressed nationality. The interests of the working class throughout the world lie in the greatest possible assimilation of all the world's nationalities and in the abolition of all nation-state boundaries. But, if that were the only factor to take into account, we would not call for universal self-determination, but would reject the demand for self-determination entirely—for oppressed nationalities as well as oppressor nationalities. What possible advantage can there be in having scores of separate states throughout the world?

The revolutionary party cannot treat the national question in this abstract manner. Our program on the national question must be designed to offer a solution to the concrete problem that presently exists: there are two nationalities that live in Palestine, but at present these nationalities stand in relation to each other as oppressed and oppressor. As far as the future relations between these two nationalities are concerned, the task of the revolutionary party is obvious. It is of overriding importance to convince the oppressed nationality that the socialist revolution offers the means of ending its oppression.

We cannot simply say to the oppressed that the objective relations between the two nationalities will be different after a socialist revolution, that the workers of the present oppressor nationality will not need to oppress them. If the revolutionary program is to be meaningful to the present oppressed nationality, if it is to be considered concrete and real, the oppressed nationality must know that it will be able to rely, not only on the future objective relations (which seem abstract at present) and not primarily on the future good intentions of the working class of the present oppressor nationality, but also on its own power. It must be guaranteed the means it feels are needed to end its oppression.

This is the meaning of our demand for self-determination for oppressed nationalities. It guarantees to the oppressed nationalities the *unconditional* right to decide the state forms that it thinks will be necessary to end its oppression, the state forms in which it will live *vis a vis* the present oppressor nationality. Whether this be through the form of a unitary state or through separate states, it is the oppressed who make this decision, and the oppressor nationality has no say in this particular matter.

Let us consider the situation in the United States. We support the unconditional right of the oppressed Black nationality to self-determination. This means that the Black people in the United States have the unconditional right to decide upon the state forms in which they will live *vis a vis* the whites. It means, on the one hand, that if the Black nationality should decide that the best guarantee of winning its liberation is to secede from the United States and form a separate state, it has the *unilateral* right to do so. On the other hand, the Black nationality may decide that remaining within a unitary United States will provide the best means of insuring its liberation; it has the right to make this decision unilaterally also. The whites will not have the right to decide the state relations *vis a vis* the Black nationality; they will not have the right to decide whether or not to maintain a unitary state or set up separate white and Black states. If the whites had the right to make this decision, it would contradict *self-determination* for Black people.

So, in saying that we support the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination, we are simply saying that we support the fight to end their oppression by any means necessary.

In Palestine, this fight is directed squarely against imperialism and the Israeli state, and as such it is in the interests, not only of the Palestinian masses, but also of the Israeli Jewish working class. Fighting in unconditional support of this right draws the masses of Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews into a common struggle against their common enemy and leads in the direction of a socialist revolution. The Leninist position on self-determination is designed precisely to speed the process of bringing the now-divided nationalities closer together.

The oppressed Palestinian people are demanding a unitary state rather than a separate state. This may seem unusual, at first glance, but there is a good reason why. To see why they are demanding a unitary state, let us look at what is similar and what is different in Palestine as compared with situations of national oppression in most other parts of the world.

National oppression is usually maintained through the *forcible retention* of the oppressed nationality within a unitary state alongside the oppressor nationality (as in northern Ireland) or in a colony (as in Angola). The right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination has therefore usually been posed as the right to end this forced "unity" and secede. Actually, however, it involves a choice between seceding to form a separate state, or continuing to live within a unitary state alongside the former oppressor nationality.

In the case of Palestine, however, national oppression has been carried out through the *forcible eviction* of the Palestinians, and the forcible partition of the country. The right of the Palestinians to self-determination includes not only their right to continue living in a separate state if they so desire, but also their right to end the forcible division of Palestine, and form a unitary state. Given the concrete conditions of their oppression, is it any wonder that they are demanding a unitary state?

The abstract approach of comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild leads to denying this choice to the presently oppressed Palestinian nationality. It leads inescapably to the position that the Israeli Jews are entitled to a veto power over the state forms in which the Palestinians wish to realize their right of self-determination. By this method, support to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination is no longer unconditional; it is made subject to demands imposed on the oppressed nationality by the oppressor nationality. In fact, one of the unstated reasons why Langston, Langston and Rothschild reject the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine—that is, a unitary state—is that this demand is incompatible with what they consider to be the paramount principle of universal self-determination, including "the right of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat to secede and form a politically independent workers state."

Langston, Langston and Rothschild have no way to get around this problem. The demand for self-determination for both nationalities is not *self-determination* at all for the Palestinians.

Their position leads them to present a sort of politics of the absurd.

They maintain that they are for the general Israeli-Jewish right to self-determination, but they support the Palestinian struggle against Israel—"against the existing Israeli-Jewish right to national self-determination" (page 21)—because that means oppression of the Palestinian Arabs.

They maintain that they are for the general Palestinian



right to self-determination, but reject the current self-determination demand of Palestinians for a unitary state, because that "would constitute an element of national oppression of the Israeli Jews." (page 21)

So, we are being presented with a rather unusual argument: In general, each nationality is entitled to whatever state forms it wants; and in the concrete, neither is entitled to the state forms it wants now.

Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild maintain that after a socialist revolution, the Palestinians will not need a unitary state, and that consequently if the Israeli-Jews form a state of their own, this will not be to the detriment of the Palestinians. Aside from the fact that this argument denies the right of the Palestinians to decide, there are very good reasons why a unitary state is seen as preferable by the Palestinians.

Take the example of preferential treatment for the oppressed nationality. Given the existing situation of inequality, this is one of the key steps that will be necessary to prevent the perpetuation of the existing inequality and to move in the direction of establishing equality between the two nationalities. Steps will have to be taken to insure that there will be sufficient economic and human resources in the country to provide good jobs, housing, education, medical care and all the other necessities of life in which the Palestinian Arabs are unequal in relation to the Israeli Jews. Preferential treatment in areas like these will be one of the key factors leading to the self-advancement of the Palestinian Arabs and the overcoming of the effects of years of oppression and exploitation. During this process, all the skills and resources available in the country, including those of the Israeli-Jewish community, will have to be drawn upon. The Palestinian liberation movement evidently feels that the creation of a unitary state will be the best means by which they can guarantee that steps like these will be taken.

Langston, Langston and Rothschild answer that "the Arab workers and peasants will demand that the class-conscious Israeli-Jewish proletariat assume the primary responsibility for carrying out this policy [of preferential treatment]." (page 19) But the Palestinian Arabs, who have already had some experience with a separate Israeli-Jewish state, can hardly be expected to rely solely on the stated declarations of a class-conscious Israeli-Jewish proletariat. Their presently expressed demand for a unitary state reflects their intention of having a form of direct control over this process. Guaranteeing them that right is one of the key aspects of the demand for self-determination for the Palestinian people.

In these conditions, what are the political implications of saying that the Israeli Jews have the unilateral right to form a new separate state? To the Palestinian Arabs it will inevitably be seen as a step away from utilizing the full resources available in the country to overcome their oppression. To the Palestinian masses, it will be viewed as just a disguised and subtle means of perpetuating the existing conditions of inequality. If the revolutionary party should raise this demand it will seriously damage its credibility among the oppressed nationality. It will undermine the overriding purpose of presenting a program on the national question designed to mobilize the Palestinian masses in a struggle to end their oppression.

A similar problem develops in relation to the demand for the de-Zionization of Israel, which has been raised

by the Israeli Socialist Organization in connection with a series of demands against discriminatory Zionist practices. Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild state the importance of fighting for democratic demands within Israel, but maintain that "a general program of such democratic demands with a transitional character has been developed by the Israeli Socialist Organization under the call for the de-Zionization of Israel." (page 10)

The problem with the de-Zionization formula is that it is ambiguous. It can be taken to mean opposition to a series of discriminatory features of the present Israeli state—while supporting the state itself. Uri Avnery, for example, calls for an "Israel without Zionists." On the other hand, Langston, Langston and Rothschild say that "this de-Zionization can only be accomplished through the overthrow of the Zionist state." (page 10). Of course, this immediately raises the question: what type of state will replace the present Zionist state?

This question will be posed, at least implicitly, at every point of the revolutionary struggle within Israel. Whenever there is a strike, whenever there is a protest against religious or national discrimination, whenever there is a civil liberties fight, the Zionist politicians will raise the specter of the Arab revolution. They will ask the masses within Israel to subordinate all their demands to the needs of defending Israel against the Arab peoples. This makes it all the more important for the revolutionary party to show the masses of Israeli Jews how their immediate and future interests both are bound up with the success of the Palestinian revolution. The Israeli-Jewish working masses have a basic interest in supporting the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, not only out of elementary democratic obligations on their part, but also on the basis of their direct interests. One of their key goals must be to forge links with the Palestinian liberation movement. They cannot do this adequately unless they give wholehearted support to the current self-determination demand of the Palestinian liberation movement, the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine. This goal will be undermined by a formula which calls for the de-Zionization of Israel, but which fails to spell out a correct position on the state forms that will replace the Israeli state.

As far as the national question is concerned, the overriding political consideration for the revolutionary party is as follows: its program for ending the presently existing oppression must be expressed in clear and unambiguous demands which can win the confidence of the masses of the oppressed and mobilize them in an effective struggle to end their oppression. Neither the de-Zionization demand, nor the demand for self-determination for the Israeli Jews can fulfill this function.

To the contrary, Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild tend to present the central problem of the revolutionary party from a different point of view. They tend to see the main problem as one of giving assurances to the present oppressor nationality against the danger of its being oppressed in the future. It is necessary to give such assurances. But the program of the revolutionary party must be presented in its proper proportions. The central thrust must be directed, not toward schemas to prevent unlikely future dangers, but toward solutions to the reality of the present oppression.

The National Committee resolution is quite clear in its principled approach to the Israeli Jews: "An integral part

of our program for the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole is support of full civil, cultural and religious rights for all nationalities in the Mideast, including the Israeli Jews." (page 5) This conforms to the norms of revolutionary socialism and is part of the program that the revolutionary socialist party will fight for.

Langston, Langston and Rothschild maintain, however, that this is not in accordance with democratic norms under socialism: ". . . violent retention of the Israeli-Jewish nation within an Arab state, under conditions in which political independence of the Israeli-Jewish nation would be consistent with the elimination of Israeli-Jewish privilege, would constitute an element of national oppression of the Israeli-Jews." (page 21)

This absurd statement follows logically from the abstract methodology of Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild who reason as follows: the right of statehood is a universal, absolute national need; therefore, denial of that right equals national oppression.

In a socialist United States, the whites will not have the right to secede and form a separate white state. Does this in any way mean that the whites will suffer an element of national oppression? Of course not. Oppression is not an abstract phenomenon. Denial to a nationality of the right to secede can be a form of national oppression only if that nationality is oppressed in other ways as well. In such a case, the denial of self-determination is a key means of perpetuating a real oppression; it becomes another part of that oppression. This is the case in northern Ireland, for example.

In a unitary Palestinian workers state, the Israeli Jews will not be oppressed. They will not lack a state to guarantee that their legitimate rights are upheld. They will have such a state. It just won't be a preponderantly Jewish state.

If the Israeli Jews will not be oppressed within a unitary Palestinian state, why would they need a separate state? Why would they even feel that they would need a separate state? In the Soviet Union sentiment for a separate state exists among several of the oppressed nationalities. But do the Great Russians, the privileged nationality, feel that they need a separate state? Is there any serious sentiment for a separate state among the English-speaking Canadians? Among whites in the United States? Among the English in Great Britain? No, because these nationalities are not oppressed.

To nationalities that are not oppressed, our demand is not for their right to self-determination, but for their assimilation with other nationalities. In Europe, for example, one of our major demands is for a United Socialist States of Europe, for a unitary state.

In raising their self-determination demand for the Israeli Jews, Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild are not actually speaking of a demand designed to meet a real problem of oppression within a unitary Palestine. Nor are they talking about a demand that might become appropriate in the future, in the unlikely event that the Israeli Jews were subjected to national oppression. They are actually trying to meet a problem that exists now: the widespread fear among the Israeli Jews of what the Palestinian revolution holds in store for them.

Although this fear is unjustified, it is a real problem today. One of the important revolutionary tasks in the

Mideast is to break down this fear and show the masses of Israeli Jews that their interests lie in support of the goals of the Palestinian revolution. This will greatly advance the revolutionary process in the Mideast. This fear will be broken down, not only through the clear presentation of the democratic goals of the Palestinian revolution, but also through the experience of increasingly oppressive measures undertaken within Israel, against Arabs and Jews alike, as the Zionist state apparatus attempts to meet the rising Arab revolution. Intolerable conditions within Israel itself, will eventually lead the Israeli Jewish working class to look for alternatives, and they will see the alternative of a democratic, secular Palestinian workers state in a new light.

It is in the interests of the Palestinian liberation movement to present its democratic goals clearly to the masses of Israeli Jews and facilitate the process of winning the Israeli-Jewish working class as an ally. It is attempting to do this today. But, in doing so, it is not incumbent on the Palestinian liberation movement to give up its own unilateral right to self-determination. We cannot ask the Palestinian liberation movement to give up its own central demand, and thereby cut across its ability to mobilize the Palestinian masses, in order to gain propaganda points among the Israeli Jews.

Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild, however, make this demand of the Palestinians. "To the extent that the Palestinian national movement recognizes the reality of Israeli-Jewish nationality and thus, consistently with its general democratic content, raises the perspective of the right of this nationality to self-determination within the framework of the future workers power in Palestine, to this extent it will contribute to undermining the hold of Zionist ideology over the Israeli-Jewish masses, and consequently their support of the Zionist state. For, to the masses of Israeli-Jews, under the domination of Zionist ideology, the Zionist state apparatus appears not as an instrument of sustaining the economic exploitation of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat, but as the material expression of their nationality and the protector of their democratic rights and material well-being." (pages 17-18)

Langston, Langston and Rothschild consider the two incompatible demands: 1) for a democratic, secular Palestine; and 2) self-determination for the Israeli Jews; and they attempt to evaluate these demands primarily from the point of view of their political effect in splitting the masses of Israeli Jews from Zionism. They fail to give adequate consideration to the negative effect of the latter demanding among the Arab masses, which has been discussed earlier in this article. Their approach is improperly balanced.

Their approach is wrong, moreover, even from the point of view of its effect in splitting the Israeli-Jewish working class away from Zionism.

It is quite true that the masses of Israeli Jews see the Israeli state as the "protector of their democratic rights and material well-being." At present they do feel that they need a state to protect themselves against the Arabs. These unjustified fears are played upon and reinforced every day by the Zionists.

To counter this fear, Langston, Langston and Rothschild say that the Palestinians must promise the Israeli Jews the right to form another state to protect themselves from the Arabs after the Zionist state is destroyed.

This tactical concept is ludicrous. So long as the Israeli Jews fear the Palestinian revolution, the state they will want is not some abstract future state, which the Palestinians (whom they at present fear and distrust) promise them, but the powerful state that they have right now. *The extent to which the masses of Israeli Jews feel they need a separate state is the extent to which they will support Israel against the Palestinians.* The demand raised by Langston, Langston and Rothschild will fail even in its avowed purpose. It cannot split the Israeli Jews from Zionism.

Is it likely, as the Zionists claim, that a victory for the Palestinian revolution will result in the future oppression of the Israeli Jews? Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild reject this contention, but on balance they see this possibility as far, far more likely than it really is. In their attempt to answer the Zionist argument on this question, they present a line which would tend to reinforce, rather than dispel these fears.

They grant that a successful revolutionary struggle, culminating in the creation of a healthy workers state, will not pose this danger. But they go on to speculate about a variety of other possible variants which will. These abstract constructions lead us nowhere since they do not reflect reality. It is fruitless to try to spell out a series of models of future development, to try to state categorically what will happen if . . . .

Furthermore, even in this speculation, they utilize the same incorrect method of analyzing class interests as they do in their earlier sections of the feudal, bourgeois democratic, and revolutionary socialist perspectives.

The first speculative danger that they foresee for the Israeli Jews will occur "in the unlikely event of a massive defeat of the Arab revolution [!], a defeat that would leave the Arab masses exhausted and demoralized for a whole epoch [!!] . . . , in which case, "the Zionist state would lose its value to imperialism.[!!!]" "It is certain [!!!!], under these circumstances, that the U. S. ruling class would dump its client state, and be quite prepared to see it crushed." (pages 21-22) The Israeli Jews, according to Langston, Langston and Rothschild, would then be the object of plunder resulting from pogromist demagoguery.

It is hard to imagine what type of defeat they have in mind. If U. S. imperialism would so easily dump Israel, then why did it play a key role in creating it in the first place? And if the Arab revolution were overwhelmingly defeated, how would Israel be destroyed? The Arab revolution suffered major defeats in 1948, 1956 and 1967 — yet all of these strengthened Israel and U. S. imperialism's support for it. Wouldn't an even more massive defeat strengthen Israel even more? Wouldn't U. S. imperialism still need to maintain Israel to guard against the next upsurge in the Arab revolution? Or do Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild foresee the serious possibility, even the unlikely, but serious possibility, of a defeat to the Arab revolution lasting over an entire historical epoch? If so, they had better be prepared to scrap quite a bit of our entire program.

The next, and "far more likely" possible danger to the Israeli Jews, according to Langston, Langston and Rothschild, will occur if the Palestinian revolution succeeds in overthrowing Israel, but stops short of a workers state.

With the national bourgeoisie in power, "it is likely that the Israeli-Jews would be subject to some degree of special national oppression." (page 22) Langston, Langston and

Rothschild even maintain that this is more than likely—the national bourgeoisie "would inevitably introduce an element of national privilege and hence national oppression into its own partial struggle against Israeli-Jewish capitalism." (page 22) In fact, they imply that the present program of the Palestinian liberation struggle would lead in this direction. In that section of their resolution where they say that the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine expresses "in reality a program for a capitalist Palestine," they also say that this would "tend to institute a system of national oppression of the Israeli-Jews." (pages 16-17)

Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild are wrong here too. In the event that the Arab revolution is temporarily halted, short of a workers state, it is theoretically possible that the Israeli Jews could be oppressed. But even under these conditions we cannot say that this will be a likely, much less inevitable, development.

Their mistake flows from the same methodological and political errors that they make in discussing the role of the national bourgeoisie in the revolution. They continue to see the primary political approach of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie as one of sharp conflicts with the Israeli-Jewish bourgeoisie. They grant the Palestinian national bourgeoisie far too much independent strength and freedom of action.

The fundamental political content of a situation in which the revolution temporarily stops short of a workers state will not be a tremendous rise in the independent strength and freedom of action of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie. To the contrary, it will mean its subordination to foreign imperialism and its opposition to the mobilization of the working class and peasantry. Experience in cases like these has been that the indigenous national bourgeoisie tends to adapt and accommodate itself to the already privileged layers, in whom it will find an ally against its own working class and peasantry. Although there are exceptions, the experience throughout the colonial world has generally been that the former oppressor nationality, including the European settlers, continues to retain a specially privileged position in situations like these. This is the case in Algeria, for example.

In the event that the Palestinian revolution stops short of a workers state, this will mean that the road to the self-advancement of the Palestinian people will be temporarily blocked. In this case, who will continue to be the skilled workers, the technicians, the professionals, the administrators—with all the special privileges that are implied? Can we not say, and with better justification than Langston, Langston and Rothschild have, that the presently privileged Israeli Jews, and not the Palestinian Arabs, are more likely to remain in a privileged position? At the very least, we must say that there is absolutely no basis for the contention that the Israeli Jews are *likely* to be oppressed, *vis-a-vis* the Palestinian Arabs, in this turn of events.

Langston, Langston and Rothschild make the very same type of error in their speculation about the third possible danger to the Israeli Jews—in the event of the degeneration of a workers state in a liberated Palestine. "Experience has shown," they maintain, "that the ruling bureaucracies of degenerated workers states utilize chauvinist agitation to keep the working class divided along national lines in order to deflect potentially antibureaucratic struggles, and allow some privileges to the dominant-nation working class in an effort to win its support. Thus it is likely that

in a degenerated workers state that could emerge following the crushing by the Arab revolution of the Zionist state, Israeli-Jews would be subject to some degree of special national oppression in addition to the general oppression of all workers and peasants by the privileged bureaucracy." (page 23)

Again, there is a possibility that this may occur. But here, too, it is not at all likely, as Langston, Langston and Rothschild contend. Nor does experience back up their argument. The degeneration of a workers state takes place under pressure from the privileged strata of the working class and from alien class forces, including foreign imperialism. It is based upon, and in turn tends to reinforce inequality. It is therefore likely that the degeneration of a workers state would mean the maintenance of inequality between nationalities. But the dominant nation is not defined numerically. It is defined by its materially privileged status *vis-a-vis* the oppressed nationality. The question to ask again is: which nationality is still likely to be privileged *vis-a-vis* the other immediately after a revolution? From which will there be greater tendencies towards bureaucracy? From which will there tend to be a disproportionate number of the higher-paid skilled workers, technicians, and professionals on which a bureaucracy is largely based? From which will there tend to be more skilled administrators drawn into the governing apparatus? These questions are all speculative, and so we cannot answer them. But there is certainly no basis to conclude that the Israeli Jews will likely be the oppressed nationality in a degenerated workers state.

Let us look at the best concrete experience that we have, the experience of the Russian Revolution. The degeneration of the Soviet workers state tended to reinforce all the *old* special privileges and backwardness in national relations, rather than create entirely new ones. These were enforced politically through a totalitarian dictatorship headed by Stalin. Stalin came from the oppressed Georgian nation-

ality, but his policy was to perpetuate the dominance of the Great Russians to the detriment of Georgians and other oppressed nationalities in the USSR.

Throughout the history of the colonial revolution, where the national question is posed so sharply, the ruling class of the dominant oppressor nationality has always raised the specter of a bloodbath in the event of a successful revolution by the oppressed. They have always tried to portray the oppressed nationality as a horde of backward barbarians out for revenge. This has always been false propaganda designed to cover up their own backward, barbaric and bloody rule. They propagate stories about "Mau Mau savagery," "Viet Cong bloodbaths," "rampaging Chinese hordes," and "Arab jihads." In reality, the rulers of the technologically advanced oppressor nations have been the worst barbarians in history in their relations with other nations.

A victory for the Arab revolution, even if it was only a partial victory that temporarily ended short of a workers state, or a victory that temporarily ended in the creation of a workers state that was deformed or degenerated, would still be a major victory for all peoples concerned. In its overall balance, it would be a major blow to all forms of oppression and barbarism in human relations.

We can give no credence, not the slightest credence at all, to the argument that the Arab revolution poses a likely threat of extending oppression.

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The points that have been discussed in this article comprise the essence of the counter line that has been presented to the party by Comrades Langston, Langston and Rothschild. These are the points that are presented as an alternative to the National Committee draft resolution.

This counter line is wrong. It is wrong in its analysis of the class forces in the Mideast. It is wrong in its discussion of self-determination. It is wrong in its methodology. It should be rejected by the party.

July 1, 1971

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THE MAJOR DISPUTED ISSUES ON  
ISRAEL AND THE ARAB REVOLUTION:  
Report Adopted by the SWP Convention,  
August 1971, by Gus Horowitz

[The following is the text of the report given to the 1971 convention of the Socialist Workers Party presenting the National Committee draft resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution. It was adopted by the convention. A few paragraphs discussing the party's tactical approach to the Palestine resistance organizations have been slightly edited and expanded. Some points made in the summary have been incorporated into the text of the report. — G. H. October, 1973.]

Under this point in the agenda, the party will be discussing one of the most important questions in international politics. The revolution in the Arab world involves the destiny of some 125 million people—both Arabs and other nationalities living in the area—and has major repercussions in other areas of the world revolution. The

Mideast is also one of the sharp points of strategic confrontation between world imperialism and the Soviet workers state, with the real danger that a nuclear war could grow out of a conflict there.

The 1967 war, and the events that have transpired since then, have made it abundantly clear that the confrontation between the Israeli settler-colonial state and the Arab revolution is a pivotal axis of the entire Arab revolution. It is this particular component of politics in the Arab world that is the focus of the National Committee draft resolution on Israel and the Arab revolution.

The central role of U. S. imperialism in the Mideast gives the Socialist Workers Party a special obligation to come to the defense of the Arab revolution, and we have been carrying out that obligation consistently.

The purpose of the National Committee draft resolution that is being presented here is to arm the party with a clear political line on this issue. If adopted, this line will form the basis for all our work.

Because of the nature of the internal party discussion that has taken place on this question, it is not appropriate in this report to go into an analysis of the current situation in the Middle East or the practical tasks before the party. For a discussion of these questions, I refer comrades to the National Committee resolution and the report on it that was given to the National Committee plenum on March 13, which are printed in SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 3 in 1971. There have also been numerous articles in the Militant and IP analyzing the developments that have occurred more recently. In addition, there will be a panel discussion on Mideast work that will take place tomorrow evening, where we can have a thorough discussion of our practical tasks.

In the written pre-convention discussion, no serious disagreements were expressed over either our basic analysis of the current situation in the Mideast, or over our practical tasks. However, there have been disagreements over the basic political line which the party should adopt.

Comrades Berta Langston, Bob Langston, and Jon Rothschild have submitted a counter-resolution to the National Committee draft resolution. And in the pre-convention discussion, the Communist Tendency and two leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency have expressed line disagreements with the National Committee draft resolution.

This report, therefore, will have to center on an explanation of the central points that are at issue, and defend the line that has been submitted to the convention in the National Committee draft resolution. These line questions must be settled first, before there can be any meaningful discussion of tactics and practical tasks.

The basic line of the National Committee draft resolution is contained in Part I of the resolution. This is a very short section—and deliberately so. The NC's purpose was to present this line clearly and unambiguously in concise thesis form.

In their discussion article, which appears in SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 27 in 1971, Comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon say that the NC draft resolution deals inadequately with the question of Zionism. They say that the NC draft resolution does not explain where Zionism came from and how it could form the basis of a mass political movement. They say that the NC draft does not explain adequately how the Israeli state came into being. The counter-resolution, by contrast, deals with these questions at great length. (And, I might add, is in error on a couple of minor points.)

It was not the intention of the NC to offer an exhaustive historical sketch of the development of Zionism and the Israeli state. This is best handled in press articles devoted to that question. Such an analysis can be useful in propaganda and in determining particular tactics, but it is not necessary for the presentation of our basic line. In fact, the inclusion of such a long historical sketch might tend to obscure the basic line by overbalancing the resolution in one direction. This is a deficiency in the counter-resolution. The NC's theses explaining Zionism and the Israeli state are perfectly adequate to establish our line on these points.

The National Committee draft resolution is not primarily a conjunctural resolution, although in Part III, it does include a very brief outline of the present political situation and an outline of our practical tasks. These points, also, can be developed at greater length in our press, once the central line is clear.

Nor is the resolution intended to be a recipe book for the tactics to be followed by revolutionary socialists in the Mideast. These are best developed by those who are on the spot.

The National Committee draft resolution does not outline a series of contingency plans, presuming to take care of all possible variants in future developments that will occur. It deals only with the basic principles of revolutionary socialist politics as applied to the situation that exists in the Mideast today. On the basis of this line, the party will be adequately armed politically to deal with new developments as they occur.

Part II of the National Committee draft resolution deals in more detail with several points that are included in the theses of Part I. This section is isolated from the main body of the theses, in order to keep the discussion in proper balance, while taking up these points which are the subject of much debate in the radical movement.

The line of the National Committee draft resolution flows from our long established analysis of the colonial revolution, as applied to the concrete situation in the Mideast. This line is not dependent on the political line followed by any of the Palestinian liberation organizations or the Israeli Socialist Organization (ISO), and differs from all of them—while at the same time, we support the struggles against Israel and imperialism that are being waged by these organizations. We give unconditional support to the Palestinian struggle for national liberation, but we do not give unconditional or uncritical support to the political programs or leaderships of any of the particular organizations.

We should be clear, in this convention discussion, that the question before us is the line that our party should follow, not the correctness or incorrectness of the positions adopted by any of the Palestinian organizations or the ISO. Saying this, however, we must naturally take into account in our analysis what these groups have to say, and the demands that are currently being raised in the Palestinian liberation struggle.

As I have indicated in a discussion article which appeared in SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 16 in 1971, there are four main differences between the NC draft resolution and the counter-resolution:

- 1) The NC draft resolution supports the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine, while the counter-resolution rejects it on the grounds that it reflects the interests of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie, rather than the masses.

- 2) The NC draft resolution rejects the demand for the right of self-determination for the Israeli Jews, while the counter-resolution calls for this right "within the framework of the future workers power in Palestine."

- 3) Although both resolutions attempt to stand on the theory of the permanent revolution, the counter-resolution's evaluation of the relationship between bourgeois-democratic demands and the role of the national bourgeoisie tends to call important aspects of this theory into

question.

4) These errors in the counter-resolution flow from a methodological approach which is abstract, schematic, and formal.

The authors of the counter-resolution have also submitted a lengthy article in defense of the counter-resolution, and in reply to the NC draft, the plenum report, and my discussion article. Their article, which appears in SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 27 in 1971, was submitted at the very end of the written pre-convention discussion, so it was not possible to reply to it in written form. And, because of the time limitation in this report, it will only be possible to reply to a few of the arguments in this article.

In their discussion article, comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon ask, "What does the NC draft mean by the democratic, secular Palestine?" (p. 19) I will try to explain. Let me emphasize that I am discussing what the party means by this particular demand, not the entire programmatic positions of all the Palestinian groups.

There are three distinct parts to this demand:

- 1) for secularism
- 2) for political democracy
- 3) for a unitary Palestine

The demand for secularism—that is, for the separation of church and state—is a key component of the revolution in the Mideast—both in the Arab countries and in Israel.

To my knowledge, all of the main Palestinian liberation organizations support the fight for secularism, in the sense that the NC draft uses the term.

Now, within the Palestinian movement, there are many who reject the concept that the Israeli Jews are a nationality (and this includes representatives not only of Fateh, but also of the Democratic Popular Front, and the Popular Front). There are also some who incorrectly tend to pose the conflict against Israel as a conflict against what is designated as primarily a religious community. It is only to distinguish themselves from this second concept that the Democratic Popular Front often avoids using the term secular in its demands. But the Democratic Popular Front is for secularism in the sense that the NC draft uses the term.

The important point of difference in the internal party discussion is over the second component of the democratic, secular Palestine demand—the demand for political democracy. All of the major Palestinian groups call for political democracy. They do not, however, express this in a theoretically exact fashion. They use interchangeably the terms, "democratic Palestine" and "democratic state in Palestine." The National Committee draft resolution, however, calls only for a democratic Palestine. It *does not* call for a democratic state in Palestine.

The term "democratic state" leaves open the class character of the state. But as Marxists, we define the state as the armed force and system of laws and institutions used to enforce the domination of one class over another. Thus, in talking about the state, we must specify its class character. We call for a democratic Palestine, which will be a *workers state*. The NC draft resolution specifically says that the democratic goals of the Palestinian liberation struggle can only be accomplished through a revolution culminating in the creation of a *workers state*. It *nowhere* calls for an abstract, classless demo-

cratic state.

In their polemics against the NC draft resolution, comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon often slip over into polemicizing against the concept of a classless democratic state. They then proceed to knock over this straw man. But such arguments are irrelevant to the present discussion in the party. And I hope we can avoid them during the discussion today.

The term "democratic state" has come to be widely used by the Stalinists to denote a capitalist state or some intermediary state between a capitalist state and a workers state, as part of their two-stage concept of the colonial revolution. It is in relation to this that two leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency and an official statement of the Communist Tendency have made much more serious charges against the National Committee draft resolution.

Comrade Ralph Levitt, who was the reporter for the *For A Proletarian Orientation* document before the Oakland-Berkeley branch, said that the party accepts the call for a democratic secular state in Palestine, which he said is a call for a bourgeois revolution, and which epitomizes the Stalinist-Menshevik theory of class collaboration and betrayal. His remarks are quoted by Nelson Blackstock in SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 18 in 1971. (p. 21)

Comrade Bill Massey, one of the authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation*, wrote a discussion article that appears in SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 25 in 1971, where he says that "the concept of the 'democratic, secular state' is nothing more than the Menshevik-Stalin-Mao concept of the 'two stage' theory of revolution." He implies that the party leadership has adopted this position and says that "the leaderships position negates the theory of the permanent revolution." (p. 22)

And, in the same bulletin, the Communist Tendency has submitted an article on the international situation in which they label Fateh as "the Palestinian Kuomintang" and say that we have propogated its slogan for a democratic secular state, which they describe as a bourgeois state. (p. 13)

These charges are among the most serious that have been raised in the entire internal discussion. Comrades Massey and Levitt, and the Communist Tendency charge that we have *abandoned* the theory of permanent revolution and have adopted a Menshevik-Stalinist line on the Mideast—and this line, comrades, is the line of counter-revolution. Comrade Levitt called it the line of betrayal. These charges are totally false. We do not call for a two-stage theory of revolution, and it is a dishonest slander to say so. Comrades Massey and Levitt are delegates here and comrade Dave Fender is a delegate from the Communist Tendency. I challenge these comrades to come up here before this convention and produce evidence that we have adopted the Stalinist two-stage theory of revolution.

Aside from that, the comrades are mistaken about the full meaning of the two-stage theory of revolution, as it was propounded first by the Mensheviks and later by the Stalinists. You know, the two-stage theory involves a lot more than just the use of the term, "democratic state."

There are two central points to this theory.

First is the concept that the course of the revolution in colonial countries is divided into two distinct stages—

a bourgeois stage and a socialist stage—with a historical separation between them. But that is only one part of the theory. The key part involves the practical conclusions that are drawn.

The Mensheviks, and later the Stalinists, proclaimed that since the present stage was a bourgeois stage, the working class parties had to subordinate themselves to the political leadership of the national bourgeoisie. *That* was the key thing. It was that policy which led to the defeats of revolutions throughout the colonial world. It is that which makes the two-stage theory counterrevolutionary in practice.

The Bolsheviks, before 1917, also thought that the coming Russian revolution would be a bourgeois revolution, and that a long stage capitalist development would take place before a socialist revolution could occur. But they differed from the Mensheviks on a crucial point: the Bolsheviks maintained that the national bourgeoisie would betray the revolution, and that the democratic revolution would have to be carried out through the independent mobilization of the working class and peasantry *against* the national bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks gave their concept theoretical expression in the call for a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

As we know, the Bolsheviks were mistaken. The Russian Revolution combined the struggle around bourgeois-democratic tasks with the socialist revolution, through an uninterrupted and telescoped process, as Trotsky had foreseen.

But Trotsky did not equate the Bolshevik position with the Menshevik. In his essay devoted to this question, which is entitled, "Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution," he gives his estimate of the Menshevik and Bolshevik positions as contrasted to his own: Trotsky said, "The perspective of Menshevism was false to the core: it pointed out the wrong road to the proletariat. The perspective of Bolshevism was not complete: it correctly pointed out the general direction of the struggle, but characterized its stages incorrectly." (Appendix to Trotsky's book *Stalin* p. 433; also published in a different translation in *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1938-39)*.)

Trotsky saw the Bolshevik position tending in the same fundamental direction as his own, but he also saw it as inconsistent and self-contradictory. In any case, the Bolsheviks' mistaken concept of stages was not as crucial as their opposition to the political leadership of the national bourgeoisie. Otherwise how can you explain that the Bolshevik party, trained for years in this mistaken concept of stages, was able in April, 1917, to correct these errors and lead the Russian Revolution to victory?

One of the key lessons to learn from this is that in judging an organization, we must look not only at what they say on the theoretical side, but also at what they do in practice.

With this in mind, we can better work out our tactical approach toward the main Palestinian organizations when they raise the call for a democratic Palestine, and interchange it with the call for a democratic state in Palestine. Should we center our propaganda on attacking them broadside? Should we treat their slogan as a danger, as if it helped spread a fully-developed, hardened two-stage theory of revolution? Should we equate this slogan with the line of the Mensheviks and the Stalinists. Should

we label Fateh as "the Palestinian Kuomintang?" (And if we did, then to be consistent shouldn't we have blasted Castro's July 26 Movement of the 1950's for being a Cuban Kuomintang? After all, its stated political line at the time was not too different from those of the Palestinian resistance organizations.)

The National Committee does not think so. We consider the Palestine resistance organizations to be petty bourgeois national liberation organizations, similar in many respects to others throughout the world. One of the key things for us to note is that the Palestinian organizations are those of a mass movement that is *engaged in a struggle around a self-determination line that runs counter to the bourgeois line of accommodation with Israel*. It is a movement in which there is great political ferment. We should assume that the possibility exists to win support for Trotskyism from militants in all the main organizations engaged in struggle. In the absence of Trotskyist organizations in the area, which would be the only ones capable of working out an effective tactical approach toward one or another Palestinian group, we should steer clear of singling out any of the groups for special commendation or special criticism. All of the groups have petty bourgeois programs, and their written documents that reach us are not sufficient for us to make accurate judgements about the real nature of these groups.

Our task, as the revolutionary party with the most advanced political concepts, must be to solidarize ourselves with the struggles of all the organizations, while simultaneously explaining our own political position. We do support the goals of secularism, political democracy, and self-determination, and we point out how in order to win these objectives, it will be necessary to create a Leninist party based around a program which can lead a socialist revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state.

To turn our backs on the Palestinian liberation organizations, simply because they do not have a revolutionary socialist program, is the height of sectarianism.

Now, to return to the arguments raised by comrades Berta and Bob Langston and Jon Rothschild.

These comrades maintain that they do not reject the struggle around democratic demands. However, they do reject the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine. The counter-resolution contains a long section devoted to an analysis of bourgeois-democratic consciousness, which is intended to prove that the demands for secularism and political democracy tend to mesh with the interests of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie, rather than the masses of workers, peasants, and refugees.

Their analysis of this question tends to introduce an alteration in our concept of the theory of permanent revolution. By abstracting from present conditions, it fails to take into account the changed role of the national bourgeoisie in the age of imperialism.

A couple of centuries ago, the struggle around democratic demands did tend to mesh with the historical rise of the capitalist class. These demands became a part of the bourgeois revolutions—that's why they are called bourgeois-democratic demands. Today, however, the national bourgeoisie is incapable of accomplishing these tasks, and moreover, its basic aims and interests are in opposition to the struggle around these demands. This is easily seen by examining the role of the Palestinian na-

tional bourgeoisie today. It is opposed to an intransigent struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine.

As a result, these democratic goals in Palestine can only be won under the leadership of the working class, in alliance with the masses of peasants and refugees, in a revolution that must culminate in the creation of a workers state. Under conditions of today, the struggle around democratic demands, including the demands for political democracy and secularism, tends to mesh with the socialist revolution, not the bourgeois revolution. That is one of the main reasons why these democratic demands are a key part of the revolutionary socialist program in the Mideast. But the counter-resolution does not see the key role of the demand for political democracy in Palestine.

When the National Committee draft resolution calls for political democracy, we are not introducing an innovation in the program of revolutionary socialism. There is a long tradition in the revolutionary movement of giving a prominent place to this demand.

One example is afforded by Lenin's Bolshevik party. In the period prior to 1917, there were three main demands that the Bolsheviks propagated among the masses. These demands were repeated so often, and hammered home so much that they became known in the Russian radical movement as the "three whales of Bolshevism."

What were they?

One demand was for the eight-hour day, a key demand in the interests of the Russian workers.

A second demand was for confiscation of the landed estates, a key need of the Russian peasants.

And the third demand was for a *democratic republic*, a demand which spoke to the needs of the masses as a whole.

Were the Bolsheviks wrong in this? Did raising this demand for a democratic republic serve the objective interests of the Russian national bourgeoisie? I do not think so. Nor did Trotsky. In fact, he incorporated this type of demand into the Transitional Program. "The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India." (*Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, page 97) The demand for political democracy is very relevant to Palestine. What possible basis can there be for shying away from it?

Comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon maintain that this demand is too abstract. They feel that if it is given a prominent place in our program, this will cut across the development of revolutionary socialist consciousness, that it will fail to break the masses away from the ideology of the capitalist class, and will thus open the door to the consolidation of power by the national bourgeoisie. They say in their discussion article, "It is not enough to say that we are for democracy. In fact, we should steer quite clear of any formulations that refer to some abstract democracy." (SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 27 in 1971, page 19.)

No, comrades, we must utilize the demands of democracy. We must champion the demands for democracy.

It is true, that to the extent that the masses do not have a revolutionary socialist consciousness, their ideology will tend to reflect in varying degrees the pressure of alien class forces. The hold of religion or sexism over the masses, or the support that exists among the masses for the maintenance of capitalist economic relations or

the traditional reactionary social relations on the land are examples of this.

But democratic demands that are in the interests of the masses, demands like those for secularism and political democracy, do not by themselves reflect the interests of the national bourgeoisie today. Even in the age of the rising bourgeois revolutions, these democratic demands were in the interests of the masses. *They still are*. Under present conditions, mass consciousness around these bourgeois-democratic demands tends to impel the masses against the national bourgeoisie. Even though a workers state will go beyond a democratic republic in establishing Soviet forms, the demand for political democracy is part of the program for an anticapitalist revolution.

The counter-resolution fails to take this into account. It sees the demand for political democracy serving the objective interests of the capitalist class, simply because a struggle that is *limited* to this demand, will generally be inadequate to prevent the consolidation of power by the national bourgeoisie. The counter-resolution's solution to this problem is to steer clear of the demand entirely. It ends up by letting the program of the national bourgeoisie determine its program. This is a fatal mistake.

In their discussion article, comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon charge that the objective logic of the National Committee draft resolution is towards a "spontaneous development theory" of revolution. (ibid, p. 20) That is, the concept that the struggle around democratic demands is somehow sufficient, in and of itself, to lead automatically towards a socialist revolution. This is not the case at all.

Of course, it is true in the abstract that *any* democratic demand, and even any transitional demand, considered in isolation, apart from the totality of a revolutionary socialist program, is not enough. There are many examples which show that a democratic consciousness among the masses is not by itself sufficient to guarantee a successful revolution. This requires a revolutionary socialist consciousness as well. But revolutionary socialist consciousness will not develop all at once. The revolutionary party aids the development of this consciousness through its program of transitional and democratic demands. The counter-resolution misses a key point—that the consistent struggle around democratic demands tends to go against the interests of the national bourgeoisie, and therefore, tends to aid the process of winning the masses to a revolutionary socialist program.

It is worthwhile to recall what we say in the Transitional Program on this point. In the section entitled "Backward Countries and the Program of Transitional Demands," we say the following:

"It is impossible merely to reject the democratic program; it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic program, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the 'national' bourgeoisie. Then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise." (*Transitional Program For Socialist Revolution*, page 97)



The demand for a secular, democratic Palestine is not sufficient by itself. But we do not reject it on that account. We pose a socialist revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state as the means of achieving and guaranteeing a democratic, secular Palestine. We do not counterpose the two.

Notice how the Transitional Program says that "the workers must be armed with this democratic program." One of the ways that the revolutionary party distinguishes itself from the national bourgeoisie, and mobilizes the Palestinian masses independently of the national bourgeoisie, is not by steering clear of the demand for political democracy, but by becoming the *champions* of the struggle for it.

The program of the revolutionary party is different from that of the national bourgeoisie, not only because it raises working class demands, but also because it carries out the most consistent and intransigent struggle around democratic demands.

Comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon, however, would have us steer clear of the demand for political democracy. The demand for a democratic, secular Palestine, which is capable of mobilizing the Palestinian masses in struggle against imperialism and the Israeli state—they would just hand it over to the national bourgeoisie. It is their approach, and not that of the National Committee draft resolution, which would weaken the effectiveness of the revolutionary party as opposed to the national bourgeoisie.

We now come to the third aspect of the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine—the demand for a unitary state. The National Committee draft resolution supports the right of the Palestinian people to destroy the present Israeli state and establish a unitary state in which the present Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs will both live. We support this right unconditionally as an expression of Palestinian self-determination.

The counter-resolution rejects this. It maintains, instead, that the norms of the future workers state in Palestine must include the right of Israeli Jews to secede and form a politically independent workers state of their own.

There are two main types of arguments before us on this question: the arguments relating to revolutionary principle; and the tactical arguments. We should therefore take up the principled questions first.

From the standpoint of principle, the key argument advanced by the counter-resolution derives from an abstract consideration of conditions that should exist within a healthy workers state. On page 17, the counter-resolution states this as follows: ". . . while the workers and peasants have every interest in the broadest possible *voluntary* economic and social assimilation of nations, they have no class interest in forcibly retaining the Israeli Jews within their state." (SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 10 in 1971) From this concept, and from the premise that the Israeli Jews constitute a new and distinct nationality, the counter-resolution concludes that the right of the Israeli Jews to self-determination is consistent with Leninist norms. Tactical arguments are then advanced to show why raising this right is advantageous to the victory of the socialist revolution in Palestine.

This approach misses the entire point of our concept of the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination. To begin by postulating the norms of a healthy workers state is not our method on this question.

Comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon in their discussion article

say that the NC draft is wrong because it "operates under the assumption that the designation of which is the oppressed nationality, and which is the oppressor, is sufficient to decide all other questions." (SWP Discussion Bulletin no. 27 in 1971 page 29)

No, we do not assume that this is sufficient to decide all other questions. But what we do say is that this is the starting point for all further discussion of the national question. It is true that two nationalities will live in a Palestinian workers state. But the starting point of all wisdom is recognition that right now these two nationalities stand in relation to each other as oppressed and oppressor. It is precisely the present experience of the oppressed Palestinian nationality that makes the statement of democratic norms within a healthy workers state insufficient in approaching the national question. Promises of democratic norms in national relations, and explanations of how the objective conditions in a workers state will work against oppression, are *not sufficient* to convince the oppressed nationality that the socialist revolution offers the means of ending its oppression.

It is because of this that we raise the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination.

First of all, the struggle for self-determination mobilizes the oppressed nationality in struggle against the state which is oppressing them, and thus advances the socialist revolution.

In their discussion article, comrade Berta, Bob, and Jon say that "'for a democratic, secular Palestine' is not a demand on anybody." (*ibid*, p. 19) No, comrades, it is not a demand directed on somebody. It is a demand directed at imperialism and the Israeli state, and helps mobilize the Palestinian masses in struggle against these sources of their oppression. It is a demand, in the same way that the call for an independent Algeria was directed against French imperialism.

Secondly, it is only by fighting for the right of the oppressed Palestinians to self-determination that the revolutionary party can prove in life that its program offers them the means of achieving the state forms that will guarantee an end to their oppression. From the standpoint of the Leninist party, the demand is instrumental in this sense. [See excerpt from summary for a further discussion of this point—GH]

Thirdly, support to this demand mobilizes the Israeli working class in struggle against their own ruling class on this very critical question. Remember, the Israeli state is not only the instrument of national oppression against the Palestinian Arabs. It is also the instrument of the Israeli capitalist class against the Israeli workers.

These factors in combination lay the basis for a genuine internationalist alliance between the oppressed Palestinian people and the Israeli Jewish working class. That is the basis for our position on the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination.

But this combination is missing from the demand for self-determination for the Israeli Jews, who are at present the oppressor nationality vis a vis the Arabs.

Furthermore, the demand for self-determination for the Israeli Jews comes into contradiction with the right of the oppressed Palestinian Arabs to self-determination.

To see why, we should look a little more closely at this demand. We place no conditions on the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. This does not mean that we

give unconditional support to the programs of the various national liberation organizations, or that we refuse to criticize them, or that we do not pose norms for a workers state. All it means is that our support for their right of self-determination is unconditional.

Self-determination speaks to the key question of the nation-state relations between the two nationalities. Will they live in a unitary state, or will they live in separate states? We say that the oppressed nationality has the right to make this choice unilaterally.

Usually, the right of self-determination is posed as the right of an oppressed nationality to *secede* and form a *separate state*. But the Palestinians are not demanding a separate state. They are demanding a unitary state. This may be unusual, but it is easily understood, once you look at the specifics of their oppression.

National oppression is usually carried out through the forcible *retention* of an oppressed nationality within the boundaries of a unitary state alongside the oppressor nationality, or within a colony. The right of self-determination has therefore usually been posed as the right to end this forced, so-called "unity" and secede. But actually, it involves a choice. The oppressed nationality has the right to choose between seceding and forming a separate state, or continuing to live within a unitary state alongside the former oppressor nationality.

This choice is *unilateral*. The oppressor nationality has no voice in this particular decision. Think about the word — *self-determination*. This is very precise. The oppressed nationality decides this question *itself*.

This is exactly what we mean when we say we are for self-determination for Black people in the United States. We support the unilateral right of the Black nationality to make the choice between continuing to live in a unitary United States, or seceding to form a separate Black state. It is the Black nationality alone that makes this decision, because the key issue, as far as the party is concerned, is that of establishing the nation-state relations between the whites and the Black nationality that the Black people feel will best insure the means to end their oppression. The whites will have no say in the matter.

In Palestine, national oppression has been carried out, not through the forcible retention of the oppressed Palestinians, but through their *forcible eviction*, and through the forcible partition of the country. Just look at it historically. The Israeli state was set up in 1948, in direct opposition to the Palestinian goal of independence from Great Britain, in opposition to the establishment of an independent and unitary Palestine.

The Palestinian right of self-determination involves the very same unilateral choice as in the other cases. And the reason why they are demanding a unitary state, rather than a separate state derives from the concrete circumstances of their oppression.

When the counter-resolution calls for the right of the Israeli Jews to form a separate state, it denies this unilateral choice to the Palestinians. This amounts to a *veto* power by the present oppressor nationality over the right of the oppressed nationality to self-determination. Self-determination for both nationalities is not self-determination at all for the Palestinians.

This does not in any way mean that the Israeli Jews have no rights in a unitary Palestine. The National Com-

mittee draft resolution specifically states that "an integral part of our program for the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole is support of full civil, cultural and religious rights for all nationalities in the Middle East, including the Israeli Jews." This is part of the revolutionary program that the Leninist party will fight for. The thing we oppose is the right of the Israeli Jews to make the decision about whether or not there will be separate states or a unitary state.

Comrades will note that our position is based on the concrete situation that exists today. We are not proposing a series of contingency plans to take account of the situation in case the Palestinian revolution should go through a phase of deformation or degeneration, or in case the revolution temporarily stops short of a workers state. One possible course of development, and we consider it an unlikely possibility, is that the Israeli Jews could become the oppressed nationality. But this would present us with a different situation than we have now, and we would have no problem in raising the appropriate demands that would apply to that concrete situation.

However, we do not anticipate this type of development. We put forward an optimistic perspective for the Palestinian revolution.

Now, just a brief word on the tactical arguments.

The counter-resolution maintains that raising the perspective of an Israeli Jewish right to self-determination will facilitate the process of breaking the Israeli Jews away from support to Zionism.

This argument does not stand up from the tactical point of view. So long as the Israeli Jews feel they need a state of their own, then the state they will want is not some abstract future state, which the Palestinians promise they can have after Israel is destroyed, but the state that they have right now. So long as they feel they need their own separate state, they will support Israel against the Palestinian revolution. In order to break the Israeli Jews away from Zionism, we have to convince them that they do not need a separate state to protect their democratic rights and economic well-being, or to insure their rights to national expression are maintained.

Moreover, from the tactical point of view, it is necessary, above all, to consider the effect that the proposal for Israeli Jewish self-determination would have among the Palestinian masses. The overwhelming likelihood is that they would consider this as some sort of disguised form of Zionism, or as a rationale to perpetuate the existing conditions of inequality. If the party raised this perspective, it could call into question, in their minds, the genuineness of our support to their national liberation struggle.

To give just one example: The Democratic Popular Front, which some people have considered to be most open-minded towards Trotskyism, issued an attack on Trotskyists at their conference in August, 1970. This was made public in Arabic in March, 1971, and has just been published in English in the June, 1971 issue of *Palestine Resistance Bulletin*. It appears that they may have been referring to some of the positions taken by our European comrades. This attack charged Trotskyists with taking isolationist positions stemming from the "inability to comprehend the national nature of the Palestinian revolution at its present stage." They charge Trotskyists with taking an isolationist position towards the Democratic

Popular Front, by singling it out for special support as a "Marxist-Leninist organization." And the statement concludes by saying:

"Above all that, the Trotskyists have tried to present the DPFLP as concurring with their anti-Leninist position, which calls for 'the right of self-determination for the oppressor community,' the Jewish community in Palestine, and by putting forth their slogan of a bi-national state, instead of the correct Marxist-Leninist solution to the Palestine Question.

"The cessation of these Trotskyist attempts has for long become an important task in our internationalist relations, and the success of implementing this task will help to clear up the misunderstanding and reservations of many leftist movements toward establishing strong relations with the Front."

I think that this is a good example of the tactical weakness of the demand for Israeli-Jewish self-determination.

There is an analagous weakness in the slogan for the

de-Zionization of Israel. We support all specific struggles against the discriminatory Zionist laws and practices. But the call for "de-Zionization" is ambiguous. It can be interpreted to imply support for the maintenance of the Israeli state. Therefore, this slogan should not be used. The specific anti-Zionist demands in the party's program must be linked to the call for replacing Israel with a democratic, secular Palestine, along with all our other democratic and transtional demands.

The line of the counter-resolution is wrong on several key questions. It is wrong on the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine. It is wrong in its discussion on self-determination. It is wrong in its analysis of the class forces in the Mideast. It is wrong in its methodology. It should be rejected by the party.

The National Committee draft resolution presents a line that can politically arm the party with an effective policy on the important question of Israel and the Arab Revolution. We urge its adoption by this convention.

#### *Excerpt from Summary*

Comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon state in their discussion article that "The implication of the [National Committee] draft's formulation is that the members of the oppressed nationality consider various state forms in a purely *instrumental* manner, posing to themselves the question, Which state forms can best serve as the instrument for ending oppression?" (ibid, p. 23)

And they go on to say that this is not true—that to the masses of people, the state "does not appear primarily as an instrument at all, but as the very expression of their nationality; they tend to identify the nation with the nation state." (ibid p. 24) This, furthermore, is an aspect of bourgeois-democratic consciousness.

Because nationalities tend to identify the nation with the nation-state, rather than as an instrument, and because this identification is part of their general democratic consciousness, comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon conclude that the denial to any nationality of the right to form a national state "*itself constitutes national oppression.*" (ibid. p. 24)

The comrades miss an important aspect of our concept of self-determination here. Although the nationality in question looks upon self-determination from several different aspects (including the instrumental aspect), the *party's* concept of self-determination *does* flow primarily from this instrumental point of view. For the party, the key thing about self-determination is that it is an instrument to guarantee to the oppressed nationality the means that it feels are necessary to end its oppression.

Comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon say in their article that the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine "asks the Israeli Jews to renounce *not just Zionism, but their national identity.*" (ibid p. 28)

No, that is not true. This demand asks the Israeli Jews to renounce the false mystification that they need a separate nation-state to express their national identity. It asks them to see that they can still express their national identity in a unitary state, alongside the Palestinians, and that they can express this national identity in a way that does not conflict with the rights of the Palestinian Arabs. As I explained earlier, the degree to which they fail to renounce this mystification, is the degree to which they will support the present Israeli state.

Furthermore, in my opinion, I believe that comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon are in error in thinking that the over-riding factor binding the masses of Israeli Jews to Zionism is the identification of the national state with their nationality. In my opinion, the major factor is the unjustified fear that they have of what the Palestinian revolution holds in store for them. Given the breakdown of this fear, through a combination of factors, I think that we can be optimistic about the possibilities of winning the masses of Israeli Jews to an internationalist position.

Finally, there is an inconsistency in the way in which comrades Berta, Bob, and Jon pose the question of Israeli Jewish self-determination. They pose this as a national need of the Israeli Jews, who identify their nationality with a nation-state—but then they raise the right of Israeli-Jewish self-determination not in the national sense—as a right for the nationality—but as a right of the Israeli-Jewish *working class* to secede and form a politically independent workers state. This presupposes a class consciousness—that is an *internationalist* consciousness—to begin with. But in that case, the question would not arise in the way in which Berta, Bob, and Jon presuppose.

# APPENDIX: Counter Draft Resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution:

## Resolution Rejected by the SWP Convention

by Berta Langston, Bob Langston, and Jon Rothschild

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### 1. Preamble

Nowhere in the world do the various components of imperialist, and especially United States, interest converge more sharply than in the Arab East. More than half the petroleum -- the primary energy source of modern industry and military power -- consumed by the imperialist powers other than the United States is produced in this region, and the world's largest proven oil reserves are there. This current production and these reserves are today controlled by an international capitalist cartel in which a handful of giant U.S. corporations are dominant. These corporations have more than a billion dollars invested in oil production in the region, from which they draw more than half a billion dollars a year in profits. They have several billion dollars more invested in petroleum refining, transport and distribution facilities around the world, the profitability of which is largely dependent on continued control over crude-oil production in the Arab East. Moreover, the region is an important area for selective investment other than oil production. It is also an important center of international trade, linking southern Europe, North Africa, Black Africa and southern and western Asia.

Militarily, the Arab East is of great importance to imperialism. Turkey, one pillar of the "northern tier" of U.S. imperialism's military encirclement of the Soviet Union, is sandwiched between the workers state and Syria and Iraq. Iran, the other pillar of the "northern tier," has a long border in common with Iraq. Preventing the establishment of naval or air bases by any workers state anywhere along the eastern Mediterranean or Arab-Persian Gulf shores is a key aspect of imperialist military policy. Such bases would greatly enhance that workers state's defensive capability throughout the immense area that includes southern Europe, northern Africa, Black Africa, western and southern Asia. The military-strategic stakes are high, and they confer on any confrontation between imperialism and the Soviet Union in the region the potential of escalating into a nuclear war.

The Arab East also possesses a crucial political-strategic importance. Developments there have an immediate and powerful impact on the rest of the Arab world and influence political developments in Turkey, Iran and part

of Black Africa. A decisive defeat for imperialism in the Arab East would be a powerful stimulus to the revolutionary forces in these and all the other colonial and semi-colonial areas of the globe.

The deepening radicalization of important sections of the population in the imperialist countries themselves is partly both a consequence and a cause of increasing solidarity with the anticolonial revolution. The Palestinian movement is regarded by an ever increasing number of radicalizing youth as the most inspiring example, next to the Vietnamese revolution, of the worldwide upsurge of the colonial masses. A decisive revolutionary victory in the Arab East would contribute greatly to undermining capitalist ideological hegemony over the masses in the imperialist countries both because of its immediate political impact on the radicalizing population and because of the intensified class struggles attendant on the economic consequences to imperialism.

Victory for the revolution in the Arab East, in short, not only would make it possible for the masses of the region to begin to solve the immense economic, social, political and cultural problems imposed on them by a century of imperialist penetration and domination. It would also constitute a major advance of the worldwide socialist revolution that is liberating the exploited and oppressed masses everywhere from capitalist tyranny.

Because the Arab East possesses such great economic and political importance, the ruling classes of the imperialist powers, and especially of the United States, are trying and will continue to try, to mobilize all the military, political and financial resources at their disposal to defeat that revolution. In this effort, they have received and will continue to receive the aid of powerful indigenous social forces tied by class interest to the world imperialist system. Foremost among these is the ruling class of the Zionist state of Israel. Second, are the traditional feudal and comprador classes which still rule, through a variety of political forms, in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and the principalities of the Arab-Persian Gulf. Finally, there are the Arab national bourgeoisies -- shading off into the second group and consisting of some

commercial, industrial and financial capitalist elements and of sections of the various state bureaucracies, especially the military establishment -- which hold power in several states, including Syria, Egypt and Iraq. These Arab national bourgeoisies have proven themselves capable of producing ideologies of considerable depth and power, as well as able leaders. These classes have been able to wage significant partial struggles against imperialism and sections of domestic capitalism in defense of "national interest" as they define it, often mobilizing mass movements on their own initiative, as well as by manipulating and containing spontaneous ones. Their class interest, however, requires maintenance of capitalist property relations and the region's integration into the world imperialist system.

There are deep antagonisms between these three groups, and the feudal-comprador and national-bourgeois groups are often united against the Zionist ruling classes. Within each group, there are important conflicts of particular interests which, in the case of the two Arab groups, largely parallel the existing state divisions of the Arab East. They share, however, a fundamental class interest in crushing and/or deflecting the forces tending toward complete national liberation and socialist revolution.

The bourgeois regimes in several Arab states have turned to the USSR for economic and military aid to help their economic development and to counter-balance imperialist pressure. As a result, in recent years the Soviet Union has become more deeply involved diplomatically and militarily in the region. But the Soviet bureaucracy sees the Arab liberation struggle as a pawn that can be sacrificed in its dealings with imperialism. Moscow's goal is a settlement based on the maintenance of the capitalist status quo in the Arab East and a division of this region into stable spheres of political influence between it and imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties in the region oppose all independent revolutionary developments, like the Palestinian liberation struggle, which fundamentally threaten the status quo.

Neither can the revolutionary forces rely on support from the ruling bureaucracy of the People's Republic of China. From Indonesia to Bangla Desh, the Chinese bureaucracy has demonstrated that its interests lie not in solidarity with oppressed peoples struggling to throw off the imperialist yoke, but with national bourgeois regimes that help to impose that yoke.

Its international policy, like that of the Soviet bureaucracy, is predicated on its conservative and narrowly conceived identification of the bureaucracy's own interests with the interests of the workers state.

Despite the enmity of Washington, the might of the counterrevolutionary forces in the region, and the double dealing of Moscow, the Arab revolutionary struggle will continue and deepen despite temporary setbacks and defeats until complete national liberation and social emancipation are attained. The magnitude and character of the power arrayed against the revolutionary forces in the Arab East determine the urgent task of revolutionary socialists there -- the building of mass Leninist parties that can lead the struggle to a successful conclusion. At the same time, the central role played by U.S. imperialism in continually attempting to contain and crush the Arab revolution imposes a special obligation on the Socialist Workers party to educate the American people and mobilize opposition to Washington's aims and actions in the Arab East.

The perilous situation there highlights the mutual interrelation and interdependence of the three main sectors of the world revolution: the socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, the political revolution in the bureaucratically deformed or degenerated workers states, and the combined democratic and socialist revolution in the colonial countries.

At present, the revolutionary conflict in the Arab East is centered on Palestine. The Zionist state is the most immediate imperialist weapon against the Arab revolution. At the same time, the Palestinian national liberation movement is at present the vanguard of the revolution in the Arab East. Moreover, the Zionist state is deeply involved in the broader Jewish question, which remains of great political importance in the United States. Thus, this resolution considers the Arab revolution almost exclusively from the standpoint of Palestine.

## 2. Zionism

The Zionist state is the product and continuing instrument of the Zionist colonization of the Arab East. The character of the Israeli state therefore flows from the character and practice of the political movement which created it.

Zionism, as a national movement, originally had its mass base in the Yiddish-speaking Jewry of Eastern

Europe, especially of the Russian Empire. Towards the end of the 19th century, this group was rapidly losing its traditional social position in the decaying feudal society. Modern social classes -- a bourgeoisie and proletariat -- were beginning to develop out of it. A certain amount of territorial concentration was occurring through the mass migration of Jews from small villages to large towns and cities. An East European Jewish nationality, in short, was in the process of formation. At the same time, this incipient nation was subjected to the most bitter, systematic oppression, which greatly intensified the development of a national consciousness. But under the conditions of a generally weak development of capitalism in the Russian Empire, Jewish capitalism remained especially weak. Jewish capitalists, and the Jewish workers, were concentrated in the light consumer-goods industries. Capital accumulations were small; profits were marginal; the Jewish proletariat was scattered in a myriad of small establishments far from centers of economic power. Under these circumstances, no revolutionary Jewish nationalism -- one aimed at wresting state power from the national oppressor -- could develop.

One typical manifestation of Jewish nationalism was represented by the Bund, a basically reformist social-democratic party with a program of "cultural-national autonomy" within the existing Russian state. Zionism offered a different ideological resolution of the contradiction between the scope of national development and the social weakness of the incipient nation in the utopian vision of the establishment of a Jewish national state far from the overwhelming power, the misery, and the pogroms of Russia. By diverting its adherents from the real class struggles of the Jewish workers and encouraging "national solidarity" between Jewish workers and capitalists, Zionism from the outset played a thoroughly reactionary role.

Zionism would have remained a reactionary utopia, confined to tiny sects, if not for developments in Western Europe. There, many highly assimilated bourgeois and upper-middle-class Jews were becoming concerned about the danger of increasing anti-Semitism -- caused, they believed, by the mass influx of East European Jewish immigrants. Settlement of these East European immigrants in Palestine appeared to be a solution that was both humanitarian and in accord with their individual and group interests. Some, moreover, saw such settlement as a means of penetration of their imperialist countries into the territory

of the Ottoman Empire.

These elements could mobilize the capital necessary to make the Zionist colonization a reality. Above all, they could negotiate with the European states, stressing the advantages to their ruling classes of European colonial settlement in Palestine. An apparatus began to take shape -- an anticipation of the future state and the international Zionist apparatus of today: to raise funds, acquire land, organize immigration, and, especially after 1917, to unify the immigrants in a labor organization, political bodies and a military force.

Ideological leadership remained in the hands of East Europeans who, in response to the weakness of East European Jewry, formulated a second important tenet of Zionist ideology: "normalize" the nation, "productivize" the Jews; the Jewish national state must have a purely Jewish society as its base. This meant that the Jews must not become exploiters of Arab labor; rather, the Palestinian peasants had to be driven from their land and refused employment by Jewish capital, in order to make way for the creation of a Jewish peasantry and working class. Many of these leaders professed commitment to an ultimately socialist goal. But the primacy they accorded to "national" development over class struggle, the dependence of funds made available by Jewish capitalists and the encouragement of foreign investment, combined with the dependence of the whole enterprise on the political goodwill of imperialism assured that development would occur in an increasingly capitalist fashion, not only in the private sector but also in the state and cooperative sectors of the economy.

Loans and gifts from Jewish communities abroad to the "Jewish homeland" have in reality increasingly become capital to exploit Jewish workers. The "patrimony" of the "Land of Israel" has in reality increasingly become capital producing rent for Israeli banks. The "Ingathering of the Exiles" has in reality increasingly become the provision of labor-power for capitalist exploitation. The "sacred national trust" to reclaim the "Land of Israel" (from the Palestinians) has in reality increasingly become the need of capital to expand.

Like every movement of the nationally oppressed, Zionism originally possessed a deep democratic ideological content. In the reality of Palestine, however, every right won by the settler was a right lost by the Palestinian; every benefit gained by the colonist was a benefit lost by the Palestinian.

Since for the bourgeois-democratic consciousness, rights are "natural," the necessity to deny rights to another must also have a "natural," biological, basis -- namely race. The contradiction between the original democratic ideological content of Zionism and the reality of colonization was resolved by the virulent racism that today saturates Israeli-Jewish society.

At least until the 1930's, Zionism remained a minority trend within East European Jewry. It had even fewer adherents in the Jewish communities of Western Europe and the United States, and it was virtually unknown among the Jews of the Arab world. Probably the majority of Jews who immigrated to Palestine from Europe during and immediately after the years of the Nazi persecution were not ideological Zionists. They were simply fleeing persecution and had no place else to go. The same is true of Jews from the Arab countries who immigrated in the late 1940's, though they were also lured, in many cases, by the promise of a higher standard of living. These immigrants were quickly integrated into the Jewish economy; they were quickly assimilated into the new national culture. They considered the Zionist movement, the Zionist settlements, and later, the Zionist state as their salvation.

### 3. The Zionist State

In 1947-48 a series of factors converged to bring about the creation of the Israeli state and expulsion of the Arabs. From the outset the Zionist colonization had been characterized by the organized immigration of Jews, by the organized flow of capital under Zionist control into Palestine and by the organized, violent dispossession of the Palestinians. Unlike many other colonization movements, the Zionist colonization did not integrate the dispossessed indigenous population as exploited workers into the newly developing economy. Rather, nearly all functions in the developing economy were filled by colonists themselves.

By 1947 this process had created a significant-sized exclusively Jewish society in Palestine, with an economic, political and military structure. The organic development of this society pointed increasingly toward the creation of a nation-state.

The crushing of the revolt of 1936-38 had left the Palestinians leaderless, unarmed and politically atomized, unable to effectively resist either British domination or Zionist expansion.

Several hundred thousand displaced survivors of the Nazi holocaust had no place else to go besides Palestine. (The Zionist leadership opposed opening the borders of the United States to the d.p.'s on the probably correct assumption that, given the choice, most refugees would have preferred settling in North America to fighting to create a new nation-state in Palestine.)

The American imperialist ruling class, which was displacing British imperialism in the area, judged the existence of the Zionist state advantageous. The Soviet bureaucracy, looking for some power in the region it could influence, supported its formation. World public opinion, under the immediate impact of the revelation of the extent of the Nazi crime, was sympathetic.

The Zionist state fought a brief war -- which appeared to the Israeli-Jewish masses simply as a war of national independence -- against a feeble Great Britain acting through the armies of its Arab semi-colonies. But it was in reality also a war against the Arab people. When it was finished, nearly a million Palestinians had no home and no land.

The transformation was complete. What had begun as a movement of illusory national liberation had become a state of real national oppression. What had begun as a dream of national awakening in conditions of fraternal solidarity had become the reality of a rather ordinary bourgeois nation. What had begun as a utopia of Jewish independence had become the reality of Jewish dependence on imperialism, the very cause of Jewish oppression.

The Zionist state thus combines features of three types of capitalist states. As a capitalist national state, it is an instrument in the hands of the Israeli-Jewish ruling class for maintaining the direct economic exploitation of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat and the super-exploitation of that part of the Palestinian proletariat and peasantry under its dominion, as well as for carrying out the territorial and other forms of economic expansion determined, in the last analysis, by the requirements of capital accumulation. As a settler-colonial state it is an instrument for procuring and maintaining privileges for Israeli-Jews of all classes, as well as for Jews everywhere who choose to immigrate, at the direct expense of the Palestinian and, potentially, of the other Arab peoples. As a client state of imperialism, it is an imperialist beachhead in the Arab world that serves to spearhead imperialism's fight against the Arab

revolution.

Within Israel today, Zionism leads the Israeli-Jewish masses into the trap of opposing the national liberation struggle of the Arab people, a democratic struggle which will ultimately be victorious. The racism inevitably bred by the Zionist oppression of the Arabs is carried into the heart of Israeli-Jewish society itself, where it justifies and intensifies the oppression of Israeli-Jews of Oriental origin. Israeli capitalism exploits the Israeli-Jewish workers in addition to super-exploiting Arab workers in Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. Police and military repression of Arabs tends to extend increasingly to repression of Israeli-Jews who oppose Zionism or even only some Zionist policies. The prevailing chauvinism fosters the popular influence of reactionary religious leaders who are able to impose a variety of clerical restrictions on civil liberties.

The Zionist propaganda machine promulgates the lie that to be Jewish is to be a Zionist and therefore a supporter of Zionist and imperialist oppression of the Arab people. It thus makes it easier for racist and chauvinist demagogues in other countries to foster anti-Semitism among the masses. Zionism fosters the illusion among the Jewish masses outside Israel that the Zionist state can be a refuge for them in the event of a revival of violent persecution elsewhere, or that the existence of the Zionist state somehow decreases the likelihood of such persecutions occurring. It thus diverts them from the democratic and socialist struggles in the countries in which they live, struggles which alone can end the continuing danger of persecution. The Zionist movement and its imperialist allies, which were incapable or uninterested in fighting for the salvation of the masses of European Jews against Nazism, are today just as incapable or uninterested in defending the interests of the Jews wherever they are oppressed or persecuted.

From the moment of the establishment of the Zionist state, imperialist and Zionist propaganda has attempted to equate the Palestinian struggle for national liberation with the Nazi genocide. One of the factors enabling the imperialists and Zionists to make this false identity is the widespread racism against the Arab people that exists in Europe, North America and Israel. But the imperialists and the Zionists to the contrary, the basic interests of the Israeli-Jewish masses lie in alliance with the Palestinian liberation struggle for the most consistent democracy and for the workers state. Like-

wise, the real interests of the Jewish masses elsewhere in the world lie in a total break with Zionist illusions, in support to all the democratic struggles of oppressed groups and in revolutionary struggle to overthrow the capitalist ruling classes and bureaucratic ruling strata in the countries in which they live.

#### 4. Anti-Semitism

Revolutionary socialist opposition to Zionism has nothing in common with anti-Semitism. On the contrary, in the context of the real conditions of the world today struggle against Zionism, and therefore against the Israeli state, is a necessary aspect of the struggle against anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism justifies and reinforces the oppression and persecution of the Jews. It is anti-Jewish racism, the primary function of which is to obscure the non-Jewish masses' consciousness of the real causes of their oppression and exploitation and thus divert their struggles away from their real enemies -- the ruling classes or strata -- toward a mythical enemy -- the Jews. Marxists have been and remain the most militant and uncompromising fighters against anti-Semitism and all oppression and persecution of Jews.

The source of the oppression and persecution of the Jews in this era is the capitalist system, which, in its period of decay, produces the most virulent racist ideologies of all types and carries all kinds of ethnic and national oppression to the most barbarous extremes. The annihilation of 6,000,000 Jews by German imperialism under the Nazi regime is horrifying testimony to this truth. Today, anti-Semitism remains widespread in all of the Western imperialist countries. Until the capitalist system is abolished in these countries, there is the ever-present danger of a mass revival of virulent anti-Semitism and of a new systematic persecution or oppression of Jews.

In the Soviet Union and the workers states of Eastern Europe, the privileged Stalinist bureaucracies perpetuate and reinforce many forms of chauvinism and national oppression inherited from the previous capitalist era, including anti-Semitism and oppression of the Jews. The bureaucrats utilize anti-Semitism to contain and divert potentially antibureaucratic struggles of the non-Jewish masses. In these countries a political revolution is needed to sweep away the reactionary bureaucracies and institute the norms of proletarian democracy, equality and internationalism.



In the colonial and semicolonial countries, including those in the Arab world, bourgeois regimes perpetuate and foster national chauvinism and oppression of ethnic and national minorities, including indigenous Jews. The crimes perpetrated by the Zionist colonization and the Zionist success in falsely identifying "Jew" and "Zionist" have made the Jews in the Arab world especially vulnerable to this kind of oppression and persecution. Only when the colonial and semi-colonial countries win complete national liberation, through the process of permanent revolution culminating in socialist revolution, can the oppression and persecution of these national and ethnic minorities be ended.

The struggle against anti-Semitism, like the struggle against every form of racism and chauvinism, is part of the struggle for mass revolutionary consciousness. The struggle against oppression and persecution of the Jews is part of the democratic struggle to abolish all forms of national and ethnic oppression. This struggle can be fully and finally won only through the alliance of all the oppressed and exploited of the world.

## 5. The Palestinian People

The principal victims of the Zionist colonization have until now been the Palestinian workers and peasants. They were driven from the land and denied employment opportunities by the Zionist colonization. At the moment of the establishment of the Zionist state, nearly a million of them were driven beyond the borders of the new state, and those that remained have been subject to systematic national oppression. Since 1967, several hundred thousand more have been forced to live under a barbarous Israeli military occupation.

The majority of the totally dispossessed Palestinian workers and peasants today live in miserable refugee camps and survive from the wages they earn as marginally employed workers, from remittances of relatives living and working elsewhere, and from United Nations relief pittances. At the same time, a sizable Palestinian industrial proletariat, composed principally of oil workers in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, has developed in the exile.

The traditional feudal-comprador classes have likewise suffered as a consequence of the Zionist colonization. Although many elements of these classes cooperated with the Zionist colonization, principally by selling land to the Jewish National Fund, many of them also found themselves suddenly totally expropriated at the time of the establishment of the Israeli state. And while the fundamental

social position of these groups on the West Bank has been generally maintained both under Jordanian rule -- when they tended to be assimilated into the Jordanian ruling class -- and under Israeli occupation, they face the constant possibility of expropriation by the Zionist state in the course of its further colonization.

An important feature of the Palestinian exile has been the development of a relatively large, wealthy, highly educated, energetic and well-connected national bourgeoisie concentrated in finance, industry, commerce and state administration, particularly in Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Despite the important economic and administrative roles this class plays in these countries, and although it has close ties with their ruling classes, its degree of assimilation is slight. Rather, its Palestinian identity has tended to become more intense, especially since the June 1967 war.

Thus, while the Palestinians are a part of the Arab people, they also constitute a distinct national grouping shaped by the specific experiences of the Zionist colonization, their forced exile and by a specific history of struggle against imperialism. There were Palestinian uprisings in 1921, 1929, and throughout the 1930's directed in varying degrees against both the Zionist colonization and British colonial rule. At the climax of these struggles, in 1936, the Palestinians were able to conduct a six-month general strike despite a reactionary, pro-imperialist leadership that contributed to its eventual defeat.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel, the struggle of the Palestinian people against their national oppression and for self-determination has primarily assumed the form of a struggle to destroy the Zionist state. We give unconditional support to this struggle.

## 6. The Permanent Revolution and Arab Unity

In the epoch of imperialism neither the Palestinians in particular nor the Arab people in general can fully attain national liberation, national unification, national economic development and other democratic goals except through the process of permanent revolution culminating in the establishment of the workers state. These objectives can only be fully realized and guaranteed by the victory of the working class at the head of the toiling masses, chiefly the peasantry, in a revolution against imperialism and its primary regional social forms -- the Zionist ruling classes, the Arab feudal and comprador classes, and the Arab national bourgeoisie. The program of this

revolution will combine democratic and transitional demands and slogans directed toward the creation of the workers state with perspectives on the norms that will guide the practice of the workers state. This proletarian strategy implies unconditional support for carrying out the democratic tasks. The national bourgeoisie, whether "progressive" or "conservative," cannot lead the struggle for national liberation and thorough democratization to victory over the imperialists, but instead limits, diverts and suppresses it.

One of the tasks of this permanent revolution in the Arab East is the achievement of the national unity of the Arab people. Just as the revolution will develop unevenly throughout the region, leaping ahead in one area and suffering setbacks in another, so too will the forging of the Arab nation in the Arab East proceed unevenly. The Arab nation will not issue from a simultaneous and uniform revolution throughout the area.

Achievement of Arab unity will be the work of the revolutionary masses themselves. The history of projects for Arab federation since 1958, and their failure, reflects both the objective tendency toward unity and the inability of the Arab feudal or bourgeois ruling classes to achieve it because of their narrow special interests.

The history of Palestine demonstrates the fact that the political and social conditions in the neighboring Arab countries play a decisive role in the determination of the fate of the Palestinian people. In large part this has been a negative history, from the acquiescence of the Arab ruling classes to the Zionist colonization to the current attempts by the Egyptian bourgeoisie to reach an accommodation with Israel and the United States at the expense of the Palestinians.

Partly because of this record some tendencies in the Palestinian movement have relegated the struggle for Arab unity, and therefore the struggle against the Arab bourgeois and feudal ruling classes to a secondary position of priority.

This has a progressive aspect to it, in that it has had the effect of splitting the Palestinian masses from reliance on the non-Palestinian ruling classes. In that sense it is a precondition of the development of unity between the oppressed classes. But, at the same time, the interference of the non-Palestinian Arab ruling classes in the affairs of the Palestinian people does reflect, in a distorted form, the objective tendency toward integration of the region. The reactionary character

of the past and present interference can be effectively opposed only through struggle against the Arab ruling classes. This entails the forging of revolutionary alliances among the Arab masses, directed against not only Zionism and imperialism, but against the Arab bourgeoisie as well.

Under the specific conditions of the Palestinian national liberation struggle, indications have appeared of how the unity of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples will be accomplished. Some Palestine liberation organizations have actively begun to support some of the social struggles of the Lebanese and Palestinian masses. Slogans like "For popular Lebanese-Palestinian and Jordanian-Palestinian councils" have been raised. Although the September 1970 genocidal attack on the Palestinian people in Jordan has temporarily arrested the tendencies towards unity of the Palestinian and Jordanian masses, these tendencies will deepen in the future because of the interpenetration of the social struggles of the Jordanian masses against their ruling class exploiters and the national struggle of the Palestinian masses against the Zionist oppressor and its Jordanian ruling class allies.

One side of this dialectical relationship between the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole was illustrated during the 1970 civil war in Jordan. The Palestinian resistance was directly pitted against the Hussein regime and a situation approximating dual power emerged, in which the slogan "All power to the resistance" was raised. Initially, the resistance had considerable support from the Jordanian masses, although the ties between the Jordanian and Palestinian masses had not deepened sufficiently to withstand the resolution of the dual-power situation to the advantage of the Hussein regime.

## 7. The Revolution in Israel

The first line of military defense for imperialism in the Arab East has been the Zionist state of Israel. The Zionist state commands the greatest military power in the Arab East. It possesses, proportional to its population, the largest industrial proletariat in the region. Its economy is the most productive in the area. For these reasons, internal developments in Israel are of great importance to the future of the national liberation struggles and the socialist revolution in the Arab East. Active struggle by the masses of Israeli-Jews against their own exploiters would immeasurably shorten the road the Arab revolution would have to take if it were forced to destroy

the Zionist state exclusively "from without."

As in every advanced capitalist country, the revolutionary program addressed to the Israeli-Jews will emphasize transitional demands and slogans that tend to transform the spontaneous struggles by the Israeli-Jewish workers aimed at limiting exploitation into the conscious political struggle for state power to end that exploitation altogether. Because, however, of the settler-colonial and imperialist-client character of the Zionist state, democratic demands aimed at abolishing the financial and military dependence of the Israeli-Jewish nation on imperialism and the position of privilege held by Israeli and other Jews against the Palestinians, assume a transitional character. Such democratic demands will therefore play an exceptionally important role in the revolutionary program addressed to the Israeli-Jews.

A general program of such democratic demands with a transitional character has been developed by the Israeli Socialist Organization under the call for the de-Zionization of Israel. These demands include the end of all laws and practices conferring privilege on Jews, beginning with the law of return; repatriation of all Palestinians who desire it to the present territory of Israel and compensation for their losses of all who do not want repatriation; and the rupture of all military and financial ties to the imperialist powers and all financial and political ties to the Jewish communities of the world. Tied to the de-Zionization program is the demand of immediate withdrawal from the territories occupied since the June 1967 war. This de-Zionization can only be accomplished through the overthrow of the Zionist state.

The objective basis for the eventual mobilization of masses of Israeli-Jews around such demands includes the democratic ideological elements present in Israeli-Jewish culture, the tendency towards the erosion of the democratic rights of the Israeli-Jews as a consequence of the measures necessary to maintain the system of Israeli-Jewish privilege, and the special group oppression suffered by the Oriental Israeli-Jews. It rests above all in the inexorable, long-term rise of the Arab revolution itself, which will continue to make the maintenance of this system of privilege ever more costly to the Israeli-Jews, especially to the Israeli-Jewish proletariat, both in terms of casualties and in terms of the increasing rate of exploitation of labor required by the capitalist military economy.

All struggles by Israeli-Jews that

tend to bring them into conflict with the Zionist state and are in no way directed against the interests of the Arab people tend to undermine the hegemony of Zionist ideology over the Israeli-Jewish masses by exposing the illusion that the Zionist state is the guardian of their interests. They prepare the massive class struggles of the future which will ally the Israeli-Jewish proletariat with the Arab masses. Examples of such struggles are the recurring strikes of Israeli-Jewish workers in the face of official cries of "treason" and systematic strike-breaking by the state; the growing movement of Israeli-Jewish youth protesting the brutal Israeli occupation policies and demanding immediate withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967; and the struggles of growing numbers of Oriental Israeli-Jews for jobs, equal educational opportunities and better living conditions.

### 8. Towards the Leninist Party

To lead the struggle for national liberation and socialism to completion through the process of permanent revolution, the creation of mass revolutionary socialist parties is absolutely essential in both the Arab countries and Israel. These parties, based on clear programmatic principles and internally centralized so as to be able to act as fighting units, will be deeply rooted in the broader mass movements. They will conduct a persistent ideological struggle against bourgeois and feudal ideologies among the masses. They will propose transitional slogans and demands within these movements and will lead the mobilizations of the masses around these demands. They will develop the experience and tactical flexibility necessary to select and combine a variety of tactics in a complex, rapidly changing conjunctural situation -- united fronts, strikes, demonstrations, armed struggle, electoral action, boycott, and so forth.

Such parties do not yet exist either in the Arab countries or in Israel. At present, only a few Trotskyist cadres are active in those countries. In Israel, a small group of Trotskyists participate in the Israeli Socialist Organization, a heterogeneous grouping yet to be won to political support of the Fourth International and Leninist organizational concepts. In Europe and North America, a promising development has been the winning of a number of Arab and Israeli-Jewish cadres from different Mideast countries to Trotskyism.

None of the various Palestinian liberation organizations meets, or claims to meet, the criteria of such revolutionary socialist parties in theory,

program or organization. However, among these groupings numerous militants have appeared who can be recruited to the Trotskyist movement.

At present, we possess only limited information about the actual day-to-day practice of the various Palestinian organizations in translating their formal programs into action. We also lack detailed knowledge of the precise direction in which the various organizations are moving, of the social composition of their leading cadres, and of other ties connecting them to the various social classes in the Arab East. In the documents of the various organizations available to us, there is a frequent lack of clarity about the political issues behind their splits and organizational differences. Under these circumstances, it would be premature for us to give any one of them special support over the others. We should regard them as part of the objective unfolding of the Palestinian and Arab revolution and view their formal programs and the differences between these programs as reflections of objective tendencies within the revolution, while withholding judgment on the relative fitness of the various cadre formations to play the crucial subjective, leadership, role. We should maintain an attitude of general support to the Palestinian struggle, and in that sense to all the struggle organizations, while reserving full freedom to present our own views on program and other issues.

An important and hopeful sign in the development of the Palestinian revolution is that Stalinism has not succeeded in attracting, holding or shaping the major Palestinian groups. Nevertheless, some Stalinist doctrines, especially in Maoist form, have considerable influence among those Palestinian fighters who share a generally socialist perspective.

One of these false conceptions is the theory of "primary" and "secondary" contradictions. Instead of understanding the Arab revolution as a unitary but unevenly developing process in which no contradiction is finally resolved, no battle finally won, until all the contradictions have been resolved, all the battles won, and in which quickly shifting conjunctural alliances of antagonistic but fundamentally counterrevolutionary social forces require extreme tactical flexibility on the part of the revolutionary movement, those influenced by this conception tend to regard the revolution as composed of a series of discrete contradictions, one of which is dominant for a certain period and the resolution of which prepares the emergence of a subsequent dominant contradiction. To the extent that they regarded the contradiction between the Arab people and Israel as "primary" and the contradiction

between the Palestinian masses and the rulers of the Arab states, for example, as "secondary," masses and leaders influenced by this conception were unprepared for the acceptance by Egypt of the U.S. "peace plan" and the genocidal attack on the Palestinian people in Jordan launched by the Hashemite ruler.

Closely related to the conception of "primary" and "secondary" contradictions is the theory of the "two-stage" revolution, according to which a "national-democratic" stage, based on an alliance of ultimately antagonistic classes under slogans of national unity and class peace, must be completed before the "socialist" stage, characterized by class conflict, can begin. According to this doctrine, a revolutionary party that struggles for political hegemony in the national liberation movement on a clear class-struggle program is not only superfluous but inimical to the struggle for national liberation because it is "divisive." The history of both the successes and failures of the revolutionary movements in the colonial and semicolonial countries in the 20th century, however, testifies to the exact opposite. Only a relentless struggle for proletarian hegemony against all bourgeois and feudal elements within the national liberation movement, with the perspective of establishing a workers state, can assure accomplishment of the national-democratic tasks.

Both of these false conceptions serve the interests of imperialism because they reflect the bourgeois interest in submerging real class antagonisms in an illusory national unity. They thus leave leaders and masses unprepared for the sharp turns in the real national struggle caused by the presence of antagonistic class interests within the nation. They increase the possibility that the workers and peasants will be robbed of their class victory at the moment of the seizure of power; the danger that the bourgeoisie and not the proletariat will win and consolidate the new power.

## 9. Nationality and Democracy

The national question has proved to be one of the most thorny problems for the revolutionary worker's movement since the founding of the First International. In Palestine especially the problem of nationalities may well be the touchstone of revolutionary activity. The elements of a revolutionary program on the national question which we recommend to the revolutionary socialists in the Arab East and which guide our educational activity here are derived from the Marxist theory of democracy and nationality, particularly as developed by Lenin.

Democratic rights, ranging from elementary personal rights (like inviolability of persons without due process of law) through political rights of individuals and voluntary associations (like those of suffrage and assembly) to the rights of social groups (like the right of nations to self-determination), are not eternal principles inherent in some "human nature." Rather, they are general norms governing the exercise of socially organized violence which have been produced in, and which reflect, a long history of struggles by masses of human beings against privilege -- the violently maintained inequality of access to the means of satisfying human needs. The democratic character of these rights derives from the fact that they are products of such struggles.

In the course of these struggles, possession of these rights has itself become a human need. A general democratic consciousness has developed for which these rights appear natural and violation of them intolerable. This consciousness is deeply imbedded in the popular culture of all nations and other groups which have a history of struggle against national or ethnic oppression, or of internal struggle by submerged or exploited classes against the privilege of other classes. Where there is widespread enjoyment of these rights, the masses of people tend to regard them as among their most precious possessions; winning them tends to become a goal of mass struggle wherever they do not exist.

The basic component of national or ethnic oppression is usually the material privilege of the oppressor group, a higher material standard of living deriving either from superexploitation of the productive classes of the oppressed group or from violent exclusion of the oppressed group from access to the prerequisites of a level of productivity as high as that of the oppressor group. Severe restrictions of the democratic rights of the oppressed group compared to those enjoyed by the oppressor group is usually a major component of national or ethnic oppression.

During the epoch of the rise of capitalism, the struggle against privilege was above all the struggle against feudal privilege. It was, of necessity, also a struggle for the secure establishment of large economic regions integrated by free commodity exchange against the fragmented economy on which feudal privilege depended. The boundaries of such regions tended to coincide with linguistic boundaries -- since initially a common language is a prerequisite for extensive commodity exchange -- which in turn usually more or less coincided with more general ethnic boundaries. Since this struggle generally assumed a violent character, a social

organization of violence was required to conduct it. The rise of capitalism thus showed a general tendency for the struggle against feudal privilege to coincide with the formation of national economies -- counterposed both to particularistic feudal economy and to other national economies -- and national states as instruments of struggle both against feudal privilege and against other national states.

The protagonists of this anti-feudal national struggle were social classes and strata -- the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and plebeian elements out of which a proletariat was emerging in the cities, and the peasantry. The real and potentially divergent or antagonistic interests of these classes tended to be submerged in the national, anti-feudal struggle. Except for the moments when class conflicts broke through with exceptional sharpness, the process of the formation of the new, capitalist national economy tended to appear to the individuals involved not as what it primarily was -- the establishment of a new system of exploitation and privilege in which individuals are related to one another through the classes to which they belong -- but as the establishment of the conditions of free interaction between citizens endowed with equal rights. In particular, the national state appeared not as what it primarily was -- an instrument of coercion in the hands of the new, capitalist ruling class to create and maintain the new system of exploitation -- but as the guarantor of the rights of the citizens of the nation.

A national consciousness thus developed as an aspect of the general democratic consciousness, for which the existence of the individual was immediately and indissolubly bound up with the destiny of the nation. Parallel to and inextricably bound up with the democratic rights of individuals and voluntary associations, democratic rights of nations were also produced. Foremost among these was the right to form a national state itself. Refusal by one state to permit a nationality subject to it to secede and form an independent state became a central element of national oppression. The slogan of the right of national self-determination became one of the slogans of the general democratic struggle against privilege.

As a consequence of the history of the formation of national consciousness as an aspect of the general democratic consciousness, every oppressed ethnic group that is fighting its oppression and which is developing the objective prerequisites of the formation of a national economy -- at least a degree of territorial concentration and above all a social structure containing at least one eco-

nomically productive class, a proletariat or a peasantry -- tends to develop a distinctive national consciousness. Its struggle tends to assume the form of a struggle for the right to form a national state of its own. Denial of this right by the oppressing state is an added component of the oppression.

In the epoch of imperialism, the basic progressive character of the general democratic struggle -- including the national struggle of oppressed nationalities -- derives from the fact that it tends to become an attack on capital, the social relation which is the ultimate source of all privilege and, at the same time, the ultimate barrier to all further human progress. But the general democratic struggle may come into conflict with struggles to win or maintain specific democratic rights. The Leninist attitude in these cases is: Particular democratic rights and struggles are subordinate to the general democratic struggle against privilege and especially to the completely consistent form of that struggle, the proletarian struggle for socialism.

#### 10. The National Question in Palestine

No place in the world is the contradiction between the enjoyment of particular democratic rights by the oppressor nation and their denial to the oppressed nationality, along with all other aspects of national oppression, more sharply posed than in Palestine. The Palestinians in the refugee camps have the lowest material standard of living in the Arab East; even the most exploited layers of the Israeli-Jewish working class have a material standard of living higher than any other exploited group there. The Palestinians possess no national economy; the Israeli-Jews possess the most productive one in the region, and this high productivity depends in large part on an easy access to foreign capital granted in return for the Zionist state's function as an instrument of the imperialist oppression of the entire Arab people. The simple natural element itself -- the land -- on which this highly productive economy is built is land from which the Palestinians were driven -- with the result that they today have no national economy. Israel is, as yet, for the Israeli-Jews one of the more democratic countries in the world; as individuals, the Palestinians are denied even the elementary right to live in some particular place. The primary, immediate instrument of this total denial of democratic rights to the Palestinians is the present realization of the democratic right of the Israeli-Jews to national self-determination -- the Zionist state.

Taken together, the particular democratic rights of the Israeli-Jews constitute a massive privilege, an aspect of the national oppression of the Palestin-

ians. The democratic rights of the Israeli-Jews, and the struggles by the Israeli-Jewish masses to maintain or extend them, are thus subordinate to the general struggle of the Palestinians and other Arab people against privilege.

This is part of the meaning of our unconditional support to the Palestinian and other Arab struggles against the Zionist state. We support these struggles whatever the consequences, at one phase or another of the unfolding of these struggles, to the democratic rights of the Israeli-Jews. At the same time, we support the struggles of the Israeli-Jewish masses to maintain and extend their democratic rights so far, and only so far, as these struggles are directed in reality against the Zionist ruling classes and in no way against the Palestinian or other Arab workers and peasants. We also support all struggles by the Israeli-Jewish masses for the democratic rights of the Palestinian people, struggles objectively directed against Israeli-Jewish privilege.

From the moment of the formation of the Zionist state, the Palestine national liberation struggle has assumed, and has had to assume, the form of a struggle to destroy that state. Because the Zionist colonization for the most part expelled the oppressed people from the country (instead of integrating them into the national economy as superexploited workers) the Palestinian struggle could not have assumed the form either of a struggle for equality within the state or of a struggle for the right to form an independent state through secession.

Since the Israeli military occupation of eastern Palestine in 1967, there has appeared the possibility of an illusory Palestinian "self-determination" in an "independent" West Bank puppet state. Feudal-comprador elements in the West Bank have recently begun extensive agitation for such a "solution." In the event that the Israeli government should find such a proposal acceptable, it is possible that some sections of the Palestinian resistance might acquiesce to it. The retreat would only be temporary, however. It is safe to anticipate that the combination of the once attained level of mass consciousness and the predatory character of the Zionist state would soon bring to the fore once again the revolutionary effort to crush the Zionist state.

The immensity of the task is clear. It is an effort to smash the state that commands by far the most powerful military machine in the region, by far the most productive economy, and to the existence of which the mightiest imperialist power is at present committed. Nevertheless, the perspective is a realistic one. For the Palestinian movement is only the van-

guard of an inexorable movement of seventy million human beings towards national liberation, national unification and national economic development -- people who are physically in possession of most of the territory of the region, who are linked to each other through a myriad of social and economic relations, and who share a long and rich cultural tradition. Whatever temporary defeats await this objective movement, it will eventually prevail. This certainty determines the great self-confidence of the Palestinian people in its struggle to destroy the Zionist state.

But the Zionist state that must be destroyed is not some disembodied force. It is the national state of another people. When the Zionist state is destroyed, the Israeli-Jews will remain, a small national minority in the Arab East. The will and the power to destroy the Zionist state is at the same time the will and, within broad limits, the power to produce the new social relations and the norms governing the exercise of the new power that will exist in a liberated Palestine.

Thus, the Palestinian national liberation movement has had to confront in an especially sharp way the necessity of developing perspectives on these relations and norms. In their developments, these perspectives on the solution to the national question have shown a tendency to become increasingly concrete and consistent expressions of the general democratic character of the Palestinian struggle. At the same time, this development reflects qualitatively different types of consciousness both of what the Palestinian people is and of what the Israeli-Jewish people is. These differences in turn reflect the consciousness of different classes.

#### 11. The Feudal Perspective

The first of these perspectives anticipates the physical expulsion from Palestine of the Israeli-Jewish people as a whole. Underlying this perspective is a feudal consciousness to which the national territory appears as the sum of specific parcels of land, each of which is the material base for traditional social relations of privilege and exploitation between a specific landholding family and its peasantry. To this consciousness, the Israeli-Jews constitute simply an invading force occupying -- contrary to all traditional rights -- these parcels of land. Thus, any question of democratic rights, to say nothing of national rights, including even the most elementary right to residence, is automatically excluded for the Israeli-Jews. To this consciousness, the Palestinian people appears as the totality of these landholding families and their peasants, together with the array of religious communities, occupa-

tional associations and other social groupings, each of which possesses specific traditional privileges and obligations. As a consequence, this perspective does recognize the right of residence of those Jews who lived in Palestine prior to the Zionist colonization; that is, to the members of the old Palestinian Jewish community which had a clearly defined place in the traditional society. To this consciousness, the appropriate state power for a liberated Palestine appears as one that will restore and maintain that traditional society that, for most of the Palestinians, was so traumatically destroyed by the success of the Zionist colonization.

As long as the traditional social relations remained relatively intact -- during the 1920's and 1930's especially -- programs and leaders that articulated this consciousness could and did mobilize -- though they also led to defeat -- masses of Palestinians in objectively anti-imperialist struggle, struggles objectively directed against the foundation of all privilege, national and otherwise. Yet this consciousness subjectively aims at what in fact would be absolute national privilege -- denial even of the right of residence to the Israeli-Jews -- and at the restoration of social privileges that every democratic movement has fought since the beginning of class society. Thus, it constitutes a contradictory form of the general democratic content of the Palestinian national liberation movement.

The attempt by propagandists for the Zionist enterprise -- which has expelled a substantial part of the Palestinian people from the country -- and for the ruling classes of the imperialist democracies -- who lifted not a finger to save any Jews from Nazi German imperialism -- to identify this perspective on the national question in Palestine with the Nazi genocide is not only abysmal hypocrisy. It is also a basic distortion of reality. The Nazi genocide was a consistent form of the utterly anti-democratic struggle to sustain decaying imperialism. The call for the expulsion of the Israeli-Jews from Palestine is a totally contradictory and ineffective form of the democratic struggle to destroy that same decaying imperialism.

In 1948, when the majority of the Palestinian people were violently ripped out of the traditional feudal relationships, the real social basis for the hegemony of this consciousness over the Palestinian masses was largely destroyed. But it was able to retain its hold over them for years afterward. Powerfully encouraged by the demagogy emanating from the rulers of both the bourgeois and feudal Arab states, who had every interest in preserving the passivity and dependence of the Palestinian masses, feudal consciousness

fed on the exhaustion and demoralization of the refugee camps. The contradiction between dependence on traditional exploiters fostered by such consciousness and the initiative and independence of thought and action on the part of the masses that mass struggle both requires and produces, was attenuated.

## 12. The Bourgeois-Democratic Perspective

The June 1967 war decisively demonstrated to the Palestinian masses that the armies of the Arab states were incapable of liberating Palestine. Following the war, the liberation movement, which had begun to reassert itself in the middle 60's, began growing rapidly and developing increasing independence from these states. Under these conditions, the hegemony of feudal consciousness over the masses rapidly succumbed to the contradictions between the consciousness itself and the social base, between the passivity it inculcated and the new self-activity of masses represented by the revived resistance, and between the specific dependence on the Arab states and the failure of these states to perform.

A number of factors determined the way these contradictions were resolved and thus shaped a new consciousness and a new perspective on the solution of the national question. The Palestinian national bourgeoisie had been growing rapidly in size, wealth, influence in other Arab countries and self-confidence. An ever increasing number of Palestinians, including many living in the refugee camps, were economically active under generally bourgeois conditions, whether as industrial or agricultural workers, government administrators, independent professionals, or businessmen. Vigorous and frequently successful struggles against feudal relations were underway in a number of Arab countries. The experience of national awakening and independent struggle strengthened the spontaneous democratic and internationalist sentiments deeply imbedded in the culture of all oppressed or exploited people. The ignominious defeat of the Arab armies, the new independence of thought, and the increasingly rationalistic attitudes engendered by the disruption of the old, traditional social relations all impelled the Palestinians to look more closely at Israeli-Jewish society, to understand its strengths, to discover its weaknesses and, above all, to look for elements in it which could be neutralized, at least, and possibly won over to the liberation struggle.

This second perspective has been most clearly articulated in the call for the establishment of a secular, democratic state in Palestine. The consciousness underlying this perspective is a bourgeois democratic one, for which the national territory does not appear as constituted

by particular parcels of land bound up with particular persons, but rather of land as such, land which can be exchanged and is thus indifferent to particular persons; land which can thereby become capital or can pass into the possession of the nation as a whole. The Israeli-Jews no longer appear merely as an invading army illicitly occupying particular tracts of land, but rather as the extreme form of a traditional feudal group -- the religious community -- possessing privileges. To this consciousness, the Palestinian people is a nation-in-formation through struggle against feudal relations, through struggle to destroy all group privilege and establish conditions of complete equality, completely free interaction and completely voluntary association among individual citizens.

To this consciousness, imperialism -- understood as essentially a political phenomenon, as the political domination of strong nations over weak nations -- acting for its own purposes through the Zionist movement artificially swelled the numbers of this religious community, procured immense privileges for it, and, in the form of the Zionist state, imposed a reactionary communal leadership on it. Thus, in the struggle against the Zionist state, the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles converge as the focus of the national liberation struggle.

To this consciousness, then, the central aspect of the sweeping democratization it aims at (the abolition of all privilege and all violent interference with free interaction) is a sweeping secularization, the abolition of religious privilege and of the Zionist-enforced isolation of religious communities from each other. As individuals, the Israeli-Jews, like the individual members of any traditional feudal group, have a right to remain in the land and to enjoy fully all individual rights of the citizen as long as they are prepared to fulfill all the individual obligations of the citizen. For the Israeli-Jews, this will mean the end of their privileges, but it will also mean the end of their ghetto-like isolation from their Palestinian potential compatriots.

For this consciousness, the existence of a democratic, universalist Jewish tradition assures that some Israeli-Jews, as individuals, will be won to active support of the democratic revolution and that others will at least be neutralized. Moreover, because of the artificial swelling of the Jewish religious community by Zionist-inspired immigration, there are heterogeneities, especially national ones, that cut across the religious homogeneity. The Jews of some of these nationalities, especially Arab Jews, are themselves oppressed by their coreligionists of Western origin. These heterogeneities



seem to assure further defections of individual Jews. But the role of the Jews appears to be essentially passive. The revolutionary dynamic comes exclusively from the struggle of the oppressed nation-in-formation; there appears no comparable dynamic within the Jewish religious community that could lead groups into active struggle against the theocratic establishment. The Palestinian revolution will liberate the Jews of Palestine from Zionism.

For this consciousness, the appropriate state power for a liberated Palestine is one that will establish and guarantee absolute equality and access to free interaction among the individuals who will be the citizens of the new Palestinian nation.

This perspective on the national question in Palestine and the consciousness that underlies it appear at present to have a majority but by no means hegemonic position among politically aware Palestinians today. They have been articulated with one degree of clarity or another in most of the programmatic statements to emerge from most of the Palestinian liberation organizations since 1968. They represent a qualitative step forward from the earlier feudal consciousness and perspective. They cut across the dependence of the masses on traditional leaders and raise the concept of the self-liberation of the nation. They eliminate the Jew-baiting which flowed logically from the old consciousness and thus help make the masses less susceptible to demagogic manipulation. They reinforce the spontaneous tendencies towards mass struggle which establish the conditions for the future intervention of the revolutionary party as the bearer of revolutionary socialist consciousness.

### 13. The Revolutionary Socialist Perspective

Nevertheless, this consciousness is a false consciousness. Practically, it does not provide the necessary political weapons for the conduct of the national liberation struggle. By hiding the reality of antagonistic classes within the Palestinian people, it leaves the Palestinian workers and peasants unprepared for the alliances with imperialism into which the national bourgeoisie will inevitably enter in the course of the national liberation struggle, and it prepares the way for the seizure and consolidation of power by the national bourgeoisie in Palestine once the Zionist state has been crushed. Programmatic denial of the reality of Israeli-Jewish nationality and the consequent perspective on the national question rejecting any Israeli-Jewish right to national self-determination in a liberated Palestine makes the Arab revolution appear to the Israeli-Jewish masses as an attack on

their democratic rights themselves rather than on the system of social relations in which these rights are privileges maintained at the expense of the Palestinians. It thus reinforces the illusion that the Zionist state is the guarantor of Israeli-Jewish democratic rights and helps bind the Israeli-Jewish masses to that state.

This perspective on the national question reflects the real interests of the Palestinian and other Arab national bourgeoisies, and not at all those of the Palestinian workers and peasants. In the first place, the bourgeoisie has a class interest in bringing as much land, and as many other material objects, which can be capitalized, and as many human beings whose labor can be capitalistically exploited, as possible under its sovereignty. Secondly, the bourgeoisie has a class interest in having the liberation of Palestine occur under conditions of the greatest possible passivity of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat. For revolutionary struggle by the Israeli-Jewish proletariat against the Zionist state will inevitably possess not merely a democratic character -- it will not be solely a struggle against the privileges of the Israeli-Jews -- but also a revolutionary socialist character -- it will be a struggle against capital of whatever nationality. Vigorous class struggle by the Israeli-Jewish proletariat against the Zionist state, however much it will hasten the victory of the Palestinian revolution, will thus also tend to challenge directly the power of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie in a liberated Palestine.

Nonrecognition that the Israeli-Jews constitute a modern capitalist nation with an economically based integration far more profound than any feudal religious community, and at the same time with an economically based heterogeneity in the form of antagonistic social classes potentially far more disruptive than the heterogeneities of any such community, and nonrecognition of the existence of antagonistic classes within the Palestinian people are aspects of a single bourgeois consciousness. Theoretical denial of both these realities, or their relegation to the sphere of "secondary contradictions," and the programmatic, practical expression of that denial in the perspective of a secular, democratic state -- the illusory perspective of a "classless" and internally "nationless" state -- constitute in reality a program for a capitalist Palestine which can neither end the national oppression of the Palestinian people by imperialism nor the exploitation of the Palestinian workers and peasants by local capital, and which would, in contradiction to the general democratic content of the Palestinian national struggle, tend to institute a system of national oppression of the

Israeli-Jews.

A third perspective on the national question in Palestine and the consciousness underlying it are revolutionary socialist in character. They provide the basis of a program which the future Leninist party of the Palestinian revolution will present to the Palestinian masses. As yet, this perspective has been articulated only by a few individuals in the Arab East and in an inconsistent way -- one still bearing the marks of the bourgeois-democratic consciousness -- in those programmatic statements of the Palestinian resistance that recognize the Israeli-Jews as constituting a national group with a claim to national rights -- though not to the right of national self-determination -- and that proclaims the necessity of anticapitalist struggles in the Arab East.

This Leninist perspective on the solution to the national question in Palestine can be formulated as follows: A workers state in Palestine governed by the norms of proletarian democracy, including the right of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat to secede and form a politically independent workers state. This perspective is fully consistent with the general democratic content of the Palestinian national liberation movement, for it explicitly envisages not only the abolition of the existing system of national privilege and the struggle against capital, the foundation of all privilege in the epoch of imperialism, but also the struggle against the emergence of any new national privilege in a liberated Palestine.

Since the Israeli-Jews constitute a capitalist nation of social classes divided by the gulf of antagonistic class interests, despite the reality of Israeli-Jewish privilege, this consciousness anticipates an active revolutionary struggle by the Israeli-Jewish proletariat against the Zionist state.

This perspective on the solution of the national question reflects the real interests of the Palestinian workers and peasants. For this consciousness, the national territory does not consist of capitalizable land and things; the human beings living on it do not consist of exploitable labor power. Rather, the national territory is a work place for the production of use-values, and the population is a cooperating group of producers and consumers. Thus, while the workers and peasants have every interest in the broadest possible voluntary economic and social assimilation of nations, they have no class interest in forcibly retaining the Israeli-Jews within their state. Rather, they have a class interest in opposing any such forcible retention of the Israeli-Jews within the new state in Palestine, for such forcible retention would inevitably strengthen the hold of

reactionary, Zionist ideology on the Israeli-Jewish proletariat and thus weaken the international solidarity of the toiling classes against capitalist exploitation and oppression. At the same time, the Palestinian workers and peasants have a real interest in the development of the most intense possible class struggles of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat against the Zionist state, for in such struggles they not only find allies against their specific national oppression but also allies against capital of whatever nationality.

#### 14. The Revolutionary Socialist Perspective and the Revolutionary Movement

By including this perspective in its program, the revolutionary Leninist party fighting for leadership of the Palestinian national movement will be carrying out two of its most important tasks. First of all, by educating its cadres and conducting propaganda according to this perspective -- while agitating around appropriate transitional slogans and uniting with other national forces in the struggle against the Zionist state, whatever the perspectives of these other forces may be, and against other conjunctural enemies of the national cause -- it will be intensifying the revolutionary consciousness of the Palestinian workers and peasants. This class consciousness is consciousness of opposition to the national exploiting classes, and thus winning it is an important part of the fight to make the Palestinian national movement independent not only of the established state powers in the Arab world, but also independent of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie. This class consciousness is also consciousness of potential solidarity with the Israeli-Jewish proletariat, and thus an important element in immunizing the Palestinian masses against the chauvinist demagogy the counterrevolutionary forces have so often used in the past to cover their own retreat from or hostility to the national struggle.

Secondly, by educating and propagandizing on this perspective, the Leninist party, to the extent that it gains influence within the mass Palestinian national movement, will be demonstrating to the Israeli-Jewish proletariat that this movement aims at crushing not the Israeli-Jewish nationality, not the national and other democratic rights of the Israeli-Jews as such, but at crushing the system of relationships which today make these rights a privilege maintained against the Palestinians. To the extent that the Palestinian national movement recognizes the reality of Israeli-Jewish nationality and thus, consistently with its general democratic content, raises the perspective of the right of this nationality to self-determination within

the framework of the future workers power in Palestine, to this extent it will contribute to undermining the hold of Zionist ideology over the Israeli-Jewish masses, and consequently their support of the Zionist state. For, to the masses of Israeli-Jews, under the domination of Zionist ideology, the Zionist state appears not as an instrument of sustaining the economic exploitation of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat, but as the material expression of their nationality and the protector of their democratic rights and material well-being. Moreover, under the sway of Zionist ideology, these democratic rights and this material well-being are not recognized as what they are -- a massive privilege violently maintained against the Palestinians -- but purely as democratic rights and material well-being.

One of the main sources of the constant reproduction of Zionist ideology among the Israeli masses lies in certain facts of recent and contemporary history. The immediate prehistory of the development of the Israeli-Jewish nation was determined by the bitter national oppression of the East European Jewish nationality in the Russian and, to a lesser extent, in the Austro-Hungarian Empires. The emergence of the Israeli-Jewish nation was marked by the annihilation of six million European Jews. Since the 1940's, Jews living in most Arab countries have been subject to considerable ethnic persecution, persecution that has been aided and abetted by the fact of Zionist colonization, and in some cases directly inspired by Zionist provocation, but which is nonetheless a reality.

In many countries of the colonial and semi-colonial world -- including the Arab world -- where the struggle for national liberation has temporarily been arrested at the consolidation of political power by an indigenous bourgeoisie, non-European minorities -- that is, minorities not bound by ties of nationality to some imperialist power -- which enjoyed a relatively privileged position during the period of more direct imperialist domination, and which were frequently an important indigenous support to imperialism, have been subjected to systematic ethnic or national oppression.

Zionist ideology feeds on these facts and distorts their meaning into the myth of "eternal anti-Semitism." To the extent that the Palestine national liberation movement in its perspective for a liberated Palestine rejects on principle any single democratic right for the Israeli-Jews, and especially the right of national self-determination -- that is, the right to an instrument to defend all other democratic rights -- it reinforces the Zionist distortion and thus deepens the illusions of the Israeli-Jewish masses

that the Zionist state, and not international revolutionary class struggle, is their defense against oppression. To the extent, on the other hand, that the Palestinian liberation movement adopts the perspective of the right of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat to form its independent workers state, it contributes to the undermining of the hold of Zionist ideology over the Israeli-Jewish masses and thereby to the unfolding of mass, eventually revolutionary class, struggle within the Zionist state.

The development of mass influence of the Leninist party with this revolutionary socialist perspective on the solution of the national question among the Palestinian masses and the development of mass influence of the Leninist party among the Israeli-Jewish masses will be interrelated aspects of the same process. To the extent that the Palestinian masses can actually see Israeli-Jewish workers fighting the Zionist state, to that extent will the struggle for revolutionary-socialist hegemony in the Palestinian national movement be advanced. To the extent that the Israeli-Jewish masses actually see the Palestinian and other Arab workers and peasants mobilizing for national and social struggle on a program that raises the perspective of the workers state governed by the norms of proletarian democracy, including the broadest possible democracy in the national question, to that extent will the struggle for revolutionary-socialist hegemony over the Israeli-Jewish proletariat be advanced.

The general tasks of the future Leninist party in Israel flow from the same principled considerations. It must be in the forefront of all the struggles by the Israeli-Jewish masses that bring them into conflict with the Zionist state and are in no way objectively directed against the Palestinian or other Arab people. It must explain the class meaning of these struggles so as to undermine the illusion that the Zionist state is the protector of the democratic rights and material well-being of the Israeli-Jewish masses. It must hold up the perspective of the joint struggle of the Israeli-Jewish and Arab masses against imperialism in all its manifestations. It must appeal to the democratic sentiments and consciousness of the Israeli-Jewish masses, explaining that it is their elementary democratic obligation as members of the oppressor nation to take the initiative in establishing the conditions of this joint struggle by fighting against the Zionist state's oppression of the Palestinian people. It must constantly explain that, to a considerable extent, the future of the Israeli-Jewish nation in the Arab East will, as a matter of fact, be determined by the extent to which the Israeli-Jewish masses show them-

selves capable of breaking with Zionism and conducting a struggle for socialism in alliance with the Arab workers and peasants.

#### 15. The Revolutionary Socialist Perspective and the Workers State

Raising the revolutionary socialist perspective on the solution to the national question in Palestine will in no way involve any curtailment of the struggle against Zionism by the Arab people. In the event, for example, that the Israeli-Jewish proletariat should fail to be drawn into massive class struggle against the Zionist state prior to the crushing of that state by the Arab revolution, a temporary dictatorship over the Israeli-Jewish nation by an Arab workers state -- and all the infringements of the democratic rights of Israeli-Jews that would involve -- would be perfectly consistent with this perspective, according to the Leninist principle that every particular democratic right is subordinate to the general democratic struggle against privilege. This perspective would, however, dictate that a major goal of such a dictatorship would be to awaken and rally the Israeli-Jewish proletariat so that it would organize itself to assume the burden of the continuing struggle against Zionism and imperialism within the nation by any means necessary. It would imply that as soon as the class-conscious Israeli-Jewish proletariat had sufficiently consolidated its authority and power as to be able itself to lead the struggle against Zionism and imperialism, the dictatorship of the Arab workers state over the Israeli-Jews could end, and the Israeli-Jewish proletariat would freely decide whether to merge politically into the Arab workers state or to form its own politically independent workers state within mutually agreed boundaries.

Nor will raising this perspective in any way contradict the Leninist policy of preferential treatment to the formerly oppressed nationality. The purpose of this policy is to prevent the spontaneous reproduction of privileges inherited from the past. The Arab workers and peasants will, for example, demand of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat -- whether it is politically organized in an independent workers state or not -- a share of the higher productivity of the Israeli economy so that the difference in productivity and the higher material standard of living this entails for the Israeli-Jews will be overcome as rapidly as possible. This perspective does imply, however, that the Arab workers and peasants will demand that the class-conscious Israeli-Jewish proletariat assume the primary responsibility for carrying out this policy, that it conduct the struggle against the reactionary elements in its own nation on this question, that it apply

whatever coercion is necessary, and, above all, that it offer the necessary political leadership to the more backward elements of the Israeli-Jewish masses by constantly explaining to them not only that, from a purely democratic standpoint, this policy is an elementary obligation of the Israeli-Jews, but also and above all how the most rapid possible economic development of the region, the establishment of a new division of labor devoid of all privilege, and economic integration into this new Arab East will materially, culturally and in every other respect benefit the Israeli-Jewish workers themselves.

In short, to the extent that the Palestinian national liberation movement raises the perspective of the right of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat to form an independent workers state in a liberated Arab East, it will not only be undermining one of the main sources of the constant reproduction of Zionist ideology among the Israeli-Jewish masses and thus neutralize an important element of mass support to the Zionist state. It will also be challenging the Israeli-Jewish proletariat to assume its class obligation to become a partner in the struggle against every manifestation of imperialism in the Arab East and to become an active participant in shaping the new, non-oppressive and nonexploitative relations in a liberated Arab East.

#### 16. Two Zionist Arguments

Two arguments frequently used by "left" Zionists in defending the state of Israel are:

1) The Jewish people, an oppressed nationality throughout the world, have a right to self-determination. The existence of the state of Israel is the realization of that right. The Palestinian people likewise have a right to national self-determination. But the Palestinian leaders have heretofore refused to recognize the Jewish right to national self-determination. Until they are prepared to do so, the Palestinian struggle cannot be regarded as a legitimate national struggle, for it is aimed against another people's right to national self-determination;

2) However one may disagree with the present policies of the Israeli government, or the manner of the creation of the state, the state must be defended against the Arab people because a victory for the Arab revolution and the destruction of the state would result in genocide, mass expulsion or the oppression of the Jews presently living in Israel.

Both arguments are false to the core.

#### 17. "Jewish Nationality" and the Right of Self-Determination

The first argument begins from a wholly false premise -- that the Jews of the world constitute a single nationality. In reality, the various sectors of world Jewry are developing under drastically different conditions in divergent directions. Capitalism, both in its pre-imperialist and imperialist phases has undermined, not strengthened, the economic ties that connected the precapitalist Jewish communities of the world. The economic relations between Jews of different countries is practically as much mediated by the national economies of the countries in which they live as the economic relations of any other residents of these countries.

The majority of the Jews today live in the United States, the Soviet Union or Palestine. In the United States, the Jews live in an imperialist democracy. Since the end of the great wave of Jewish migration of the late 19th century and early 20th century from Eastern Europe that produced a substantial Jewish proletariat, concentrated in a few large cities, the general tendency in the United States has been towards geographical dispersion, deproletarianization, and assimilation of the American Jews. This assimilation and this general rise into the upper reaches of the working class and the middle classes is precarious. It has been accompanied by the persistence and in some cases intensification of anti-Semitic discrimination; it is always threatened by the possibility that decadent capitalism will institute a systematic persecution of the Jews. But it is, at present, the dominant tendency. In general, despite the precariousness of their position, American Jews participate in the privileges of the dominant white American nation at the expense of the oppressed national minorities here and the semi-colonial countries abroad.

The Jews of the Soviet Union live in a degenerated workers state. They constitute the most direct surviving historical descendant of the oppressed, East European, Yiddish-speaking nation-information that was developing in the old Russian Empire. The establishment of the workers state hastened enormously the process of the formation of a Jewish proletariat. Moreover, it opened the way towards a completely democratic solution of the Jewish question; Jews were offered the choice of living in complete equality everywhere in the workers state or of concentrating in a specific region with the right of national self-determination.

The bureaucratic degeneration of the workers state brought with it the reversal of this trend. Many aspects of the old, prerevolutionary oppression of the Jews have been revived. Under these circumstances, it is possible that the struggle against the general bureaucratic oppression

may assume a strongly national character among the Russian Jewish workers. The Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union, who will lead the struggle to overthrow the bureaucracy and institute proletarian democracy, may thus find it appropriate to raise the slogan of national self-determination for the Russian Jews, for this slogan may aid in mobilizing the real, oppressed Russian Jewish nationality in struggle against its real, specific oppressor -- the Soviet bureaucracy. Such a demand would have nothing to do with the Zionist mythical "Jewish nationality" in general nor with any purported right to national self-determination in Palestine. On the contrary, one reason for raising the demand would be precisely to undermine the influence of Zionist and every other sort of bourgeois Jewish nationalism.

In Palestine, the Jews have constituted a new, capitalist nation, deriving from a national movement of East European Jewry and incorporating into the new nation human material from other Jewish communities, especially West European -- in many cases highly assimilated -- Jews fleeing persecution, and the greater part of the Sephardic communities of the Arab world. This nation developed under the specific conditions of an unending battle to dispossess the Palestinians, the proletarianization of the majority of the immigrants, and alliance with imperialism.

The real foundation of the constant reproduction of the false idea of Jewish nationality has no connection with any objective tendency towards national development encompassing all the Jewish communities of the world. It lies rather in a past ethnic identity -- which had an economic foundation in precapitalist society -- in past and present persecution and oppression based on that identity, and in a possible similar future persecution and oppression. The Zionist Jewish nationality idea distorts the meaning of and at the same time explains these realities by misapplying the idea of nationality which has derived from and corresponds to the history of real national development.

Through the inverting lens of the Jewish nationality idea, the real absence of any tendency towards Jewish national development appears as a token of some deeper destiny, some ultimate nationality that transcends mere reality. The absence of each particular prerequisite of real national development -- the dispersion of the Jews, for example, or the concentration of Jews in economically non-productive classes -- appears as an instance of national oppression, of violence done to the transcendent nation. The dispersion of the Jews thus appears as evidence that the Jews are the universally

oppressed -- being everywhere, they are oppressed everywhere. And corresponding to the concept of the Jews as the universally oppressed is the concept of the non-Jew as the universal oppressor. To end the oppression of the Jews appears identical to the full realization of Jewish nationality in a Jewish state which can produce the missing prerequisites of real national development, which can, above all, bring the territorial concentration of the Jews. Whatever injury may be done to whatever non-Jews in the process appears justified from the standpoint of democracy since that injury is merely an aspect, if an unfortunate one, of the struggle against the universal, non-Jewish oppressor.

Because the idea of Jewish nationality is a false idea, no struggle can in reality be a struggle for the right of general Jewish national self-determination. But the illusion that it is possible to struggle for Jewish national self-determination can and does deflect from real struggles against persecution or oppression of Jews, including the real national struggles that specific Jewish nationalities may have to fight against real oppressors, by encouraging, for example, immigration to Israel rather than participation in struggles in the countries where Jews live. It can and does lead to alliances with the most dangerous enemies of the Jews -- the imperialist ruling classes -- and to alienation from the oppressed and exploited of the world whose real interests are identical to those of the Jewish masses.

Thus, the question of a Jewish right to national self-determination in Palestine can only really be posed as a question of the Israeli-Jewish right to national self-determination in Palestine. But that right, along with all the other democratic rights and material benefits enjoyed by the Israeli-Jews, is in reality today an aspect of an immense privilege over against the Palestinians who are violently excluded from the enjoyment of them, including the right of self-determination. And the principal, immediate means of this violent exclusion is the Zionist state -- the realization of the Israeli-Jewish right to national self-determination. Thus, the Palestinian and Arab struggle against the existing Israeli-Jewish right to national self-determination is simply a necessary aspect, if a central aspect, of the struggle against national oppression. But from a strictly democratic point of view, the legitimacy of a national movement can depend on nothing other than the fact that it is really fighting against the existing system of domination, privilege and oppression. From a democratic standpoint, to speak of "recognizing" a Palestinian right to national self-determination while opposing the real Palestinian struggle to realize that

right on the grounds that the fight is not being properly conducted, that the programs are unsatisfactory, and so forth, is simple hypocrisy.

It is true that the failure of the Palestine liberation organizations to include the right to Israeli-Jewish national self-determination in their perspectives on the new relations that will prevail in a liberated Palestine stands in contradiction to the general democratic character of the Palestinian and Arab national struggles. This contradiction, moreover, gives considerable ammunition to Zionist propagandists. It is also true that violent retention of the Israeli-Jewish nation within an Arab state, under conditions in which political independence of the Israeli-Jewish nation would be consistent with the elimination of Israeli-Jewish privilege, would constitute an element of national oppression of the Israeli-Jews. But from a strict democratic point of view, no contradictions in the political program of a real democratic movement and no merely possible future oppression can justify a real present oppression against which that movement is fighting.

#### 18. The Arab Revolution and the Future of the Israeli-Jews

The second argument is equally false.

There can be no question but that the Israeli-Jews are in great peril. The question is how the Israeli-Jews can end that peril.

The fundamental fact is that the Zionist state will be destroyed. In reality, it can offer no defense of the Israeli-Jews.

If the Arab people should have to conduct a mass, protracted armed struggle to bring their revolution to victory, and if the Israeli-Jewish masses should permit themselves to be used by imperialism as a counterrevolutionary army, then the loss of life could be immense. It is conceivable that, on the Israeli-Jewish side, it could be so great as to amount to a virtual annihilation of the nation. In this respect, alternatives before the Israeli-Jewish masses are stark: either die with a dying imperialism or live in the struggle against that imperialism. That is, either support the Zionist state and thereby become an instrument in the destruction of the Israeli-Jewish nation, or fight to overthrow the Zionist state in alliance with the Arab masses and preserve the Israeli-Jewish nation.

Other possible sources of danger to the Israeli-Jewish nation pertain to the vicissitudes of the Arab revolution itself. In the unlikely event of a massive defeat

of the Arab revolution, a defeat that would leave the Arab masses exhausted and demoralized for a whole epoch, the most reactionary forces in the Arab world would emerge as the dominant political force in the region. Under these circumstances, the Zionist state would lose its value to imperialism; indeed, its continued existence would be detrimental to imperialist interests because it would serve as a continual irritant tending to revive mass consciousness and mass activity among the Arab people. It is certain, under these circumstances, that the U.S. ruling class would dump its client state, and be quite prepared to see it crushed. At the same time, the demoralization and exhaustion of the Arab masses would make them vulnerable to the pogromist demagoguery of their imperialist-puppet rulers who would indulge in it freely in an effort to pervert every stirring of independent national or class consciousness into hostility to the Israeli-Jews. The accumulated national wealth of the Israeli-Jews would become an object of plunder by rulers acting, of course, in the name of the Arab or Palestinian nation. Under these circumstances, the Israeli-Jews would share the general misery of the Arab masses, a misery intensified in their case by special national oppression. In reality, it is the rise of the Arab revolution, not the utterly dependent Zionist state, that today stands between the Israeli-Jewish masses and oppression at the hands of the reactionary Arab forces acting in the interest of imperialism.

Another, far more likely potential source of danger to the Israeli-Jewish nation flows from a possible partial defeat of the Arab revolution in Palestine. At the moment of the revolutionary destruction of the Zionist state, it is possible that the consistently revolutionary forces, that is, the revolutionary socialist forces, will not be strong enough to lead the revolution to victory through the formation of the workers state. It is possible that the Arab national bourgeoisie will be able to seize and consolidate power. Under these circumstances, it is likely that the Israeli-Jews would be subject to some degree of special national oppression -- as is usual in such cases, with the cooperation, granted in return for privileges, of sections of the present Zionist ruling classes -- in addition to the general national oppression by imperialism to which the Palestinians would remain subject. For, as pointed out before, the national bourgeoisie has a class interest in retaining under its political dominion as much territory and as many human beings as possible, and thus, at the very least, in denying the Israeli-Jews the democratic right to national self-determination. Moreover, the national bourgeoisie will have a class interest in utilizing the measures that will, in any case, be neces-

sary to end Israeli-Jewish privilege, as means of converting the accumulated capital of the Israeli-Jewish nation into its capital; it will have a class interest in expropriating Israeli-Jewish capital while not only, of course, preserving its own capital under whatever form, but augmenting its capital through these expropriations. That is, it would inevitably introduce an element of national privilege and hence national oppression into its own partial struggle against Israeli-Jewish capitalism. Most important of all, an Arab national bourgeoisie ruling in Palestine would have a class interest in maintaining national antagonisms between the exploited Israeli-Jewish workers and the exploited Palestinian workers and peasants. It would have, that is, a class interest both in maintaining a chauvinist agitation among the Palestinian masses and in instituting a system of economic privilege for them, a system of superexploitation of the Israeli-Jewish workers.

But whether or not in a liberated Palestine the Arab national bourgeoisie wins and consolidates power depends to some extent on the activity of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat. To the extent that the Israeli-Jewish workers demonstrate their independence of the Zionist ruling classes and conduct a struggle against the Zionist state, to that extent will the proletarian, internationalist tendencies be intensified among the Palestinian workers and peasants. To the extent that the Arab masses see the Israeli-Jewish masses fighting the Zionist state while they are forced to fight the objective allies of that Zionist state in the Arab world -- the sell-out feudal-comprador elements and the compromising national-bourgeois elements -- to that extent will the conscious, revolutionary-socialist forces be strengthened in their struggle for hegemony in the Arab and Palestinian national movements, which alone can prevent the seizure and consolidation of power by the national bourgeoisie. To the extent, on the other hand, that the Israeli-Jewish proletariat remains bound to the Zionist ruling classes, incapable of conducting an independent struggle for its class interests, to that extent will the class antagonisms within the Arab and Palestinian people tend to remain submerged within the purely national struggle, to that extent will the difficulties of the revolutionary-socialist forces in winning hegemony within the Arab and Palestinian national movements be increased, to that extent will the danger that the Arab revolution in Palestine will be arrested through seizure and consolidation of power by the national bourgeoisie be increased. Furthermore, to the extent that the Israeli-Jewish proletariat is already awakened and fighting its Zionist ruling classes at the moment of the crushing of

the Zionist state, to that extent will the revolutionary socialist forces within the Arab and Palestinian national movements find real social forces, already in motion, prepared to join them in the struggle against capital of whatever nationality. To that extent will the Israeli-Jewish proletariat be not merely an object of the Arab revolution, but the subject as well, cooperating in shaping the new relationships in the common class interests of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat and the Arab workers and peasants, interests that exclude any kind of national privilege.

The third possible source of national oppression of the Israeli-Jews derives from a possible degeneration of a workers state in a liberated Palestine, a degeneration which would produce a privileged ruling stratum acting contrary to the class interests of the masses of the people and systematically infringing upon their democratic rights. Experience has shown that the ruling bureaucracies of degenerated workers states utilize chauvinist agitation to keep the working class divided along national lines in order to deflect potentially antibureaucratic struggles, and allow some privileges to the dominant-nation working class in an effort to win its support. Thus it is likely that in a degenerated workers state that could emerge following the crushing by the Arab revolution of the Zionist state, Israeli-Jews would be subject to some degree of special national oppression in addition to the general oppression of all workers and peasants by the privileged bureaucracy.

Whether or not such a partial defeat of the Arab revolution occurs will likewise depend to a considerable extent on the behavior of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat. To the extent that the workers state power in Palestine can base itself on an Israeli-Jewish proletariat that has become highly conscious of its class interests and steeled in class struggle against the Zionist state, as well as on the Arab workers and peasants, then all pressures tending toward bureaucratic deformation will be greatly weakened. The size of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat will help offset the numerical weakness of the Arab proletariat. An awakened Israeli-Jewish proletariat that, acting out of consciousness of its class interest, will assume primary responsibility for carrying out the democratic measures necessary to end Israeli-Jewish privilege and to defeat the inevitable Zionist-imperialist efforts to mobilize Israeli-Jews in various counterrevolutionary plots, will thereby weaken the tendencies towards bureaucratic degeneration and national oppression that would inevitably appear if these measures should have to be carried through by an Arab workers state in the form of a dictatorship over

the Israeli-Jewish nation. Voluntary, active cooperation of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat, acting out of consciousness of its class interest, in hastening the economic development and unification of the region and establishing a new division of labor devoid of all privilege, will greatly weaken the tendencies towards bureaucratic domination that will inevitably flow from the extreme economic underdevelopment of the area, an underdevelopment which is itself a consequence of imperialist and Zionist domination.

All the really possible dangers of a future Israeli-Jewish national oppression, in short, flow not from the victory of the Arab revolution but from the possibility of its partial or total defeat. It is not the Zionist state, which is, in any case doomed, that will stand between the Israeli-Jews and national disaster. It is the revolution itself. Revolutionary socialists have always insisted that only the complete victory of the socialist revolution can end the danger of the oppression and persecution of the Jews. This position retains its full validity in the current situation in which an Israeli-Jewish nation has developed -- as an oppressor nation of the Arab people.

Thus, every action by those, anywhere in the world, who are concerned with the fate of the Israeli-Jews, that strengthens the Zionist state -- the primary, immediate instrument of counterrevolution in the Arab East -- and that strengthens the hegemony of Zionist ideology over the Israeli-Jewish masses, is in reality increasing the danger of a future oppression of the Israeli-Jews. Every action, on the other hand, that weakens the Zionist state while combating the hold of Zionist ideology over the Israeli-Jewish masses correspondingly lessens the danger of such oppression.

#### 19. The Tasks of the SWP

The revolutionary struggle in the Arab East is one of the major focal points of the world revolution. Despite the serious defeat suffered by the Palestinian resistance in the September 1970 war in Jordan, the struggle organizations remain intact and they retain their strong ties to the Palestinian masses. New mass upsurges can be expected in the relatively near future.

Ultimately, because of the crucial importance of the region to U.S. imperialism, the American ruling class will attempt direct military intervention. Thus far, the policy of using the regional counterrevolutionary armed forces -- such as the Israeli and Jordanian -- has been able to contain the Arab revolution. But in the face of the inevitable upsurge of



the revolution, and as the contradictions within Israeli society sharpen, such a policy will begin to fail. At that point, the U.S. ruling class will send American combat troops into the region unless the masses of the American people can be mobilized to block that move.

This, combined with the fact that neither the Zionist state nor the feudal or bourgeois Arab regimes can successfully carry out their counterrevolutionary mission at present without U.S. aid and support, imposes a special obligation on the Socialist Workers party.

The SWP was the only major organization on the left that rallied to an unconditional, internationalist defense of the Arab revolution during the 1967 war. Since then, that defense has been an increasing part of the SWP's political activity.

The form of this activity has been thorough press coverage of developments in the area, expanded publication of literature on the Arab revolution and on the Jewish question, participation in debates and teach-ins, organization of speaking tours, and other methods of educating newly radicalizing forces about the question of the Arab revolution and Zionism.

Support to the Arab revolution in the U.S. is still limited to a small vanguard, but this support has steadily grown since 1967 as the reactionary features of the Zionist state have become more evident. The SWP's primary responsibility on the Arab-Israeli question is to intensify its propaganda work in defense of the Arab revolution, to prepare the political groundwork

for future mass mobilizations against U.S. intervention.

An important side of the SWP's work in defense of the Arab revolution is the opportunity it provides to gain a hearing for our ideas among Arab, Israeli, and other Middle Eastern students in the U.S. It is our obligation to try to convince as many Arab and Middle Eastern students in the U.S. as possible of the ideas of Trotskyism. Consistent work along this line can make a major contribution to building the Leninist parties that will be essential to the triumph of the socialist revolution in the area.

Another important side of the SWP's work in defense of the Arab revolution is the increased opportunities it provides to explain our position on the Jewish question. We must make it clear that revolutionary internationalists are the best and most consistent fighters for the rights of Jews wherever they suffer oppression and that the oppressed and exploited people everywhere are the only reliable allies of the Jews. This is important in countering the appeal of reactionary hooligan groups, like the Jewish Defense League, which pretend to be fighters for the rights of Jews, while trying to draw the Jewish masses into support for their enemies and opposition to their potential allies.

The Zionist establishment is disturbed because so many radical Jewish youth in the United States have turned away from Zionism and toward the Arab revolution. Many of them are in the Trotskyist movement, and a firm and clear policy on the Arab revolution, Israel, and the Jewish question will win over many more.

June 9, 1971