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NATIONAL COMMITTEE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL AND

THE ARAB REVOLUTION

adopted March 13, 1971

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 compose a distinct national grouping, with its own history of struggle against imperialism. There were Palestinian uprisings in 1921, 1929, and during the 1930's, 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 the Israeli state.

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 semi-colonial countries, including those in the Arab world, the bourgeois regimes perpetuate and foster racism and oppression against national minorities, including the indigenous Jewish population. Only when the colonial and semi-colonial 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 which 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 which 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 semi-colonial countries. Israeli capitalism exploits the Jewish workers in addition to super-exploiting 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 meets 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 differences 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 which 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 counter-balance 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 in the Middle East 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 which 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 contains the dangerous possibility that it will force the Soviet Union into a military confrontation in the Middle East that can easily escalate into a world-wide nuclear war. This places special obligations upon the SWP to educate the American people 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

This 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 and speed at 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 nationality, 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 counter-revolutionary 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 spokesmen 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 the Israeli state. 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 the Israeli state 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 the Hussein regime 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 results of 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 a propaganda campaign to counter imperialist and Zionist propaganda against the Arab revolution. Continuing this propaganda 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 anti-colonialist 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.

March 13, 1971

by Gus Horowitz

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.

* * *

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.

* * *

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.

* * *

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 states. 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.

* * *

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.