Soviet Betrayal of Palestinian People

THE Soviet revisionists have for years resorted to counter-revolutionary dual tactics in regard to the Palestine question, alternating abuses of the fighting Palestinian people at one time with ingratiating smiles at another, giving them the brush-off at one time and pledging "positive support" at another. Despite their constant change of face they have not departed from their real stand, which is to betray the fundamental interests of the Palestinian people and advance the Soviet social-imperialist interests of aggression and expansion in the Middle East and contention for hegemony with the U.S. imperialists.

Attitude Towards Armed Struggle

To support or oppose the Palestinian people's armed struggle is a touchstone by which to judge the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the Palestinian revolution.

The launching of the armed struggle against the Israeli aggressors by the Palestinian people in 1965 ushered in a new stage in their just struggle to restore their national rights. This gladdened the revolutionary people the world over who gave them their warm support. But the Soviet Union looked with indifference at this great development in the history of the Palestinian people's struggle as if the Palestinian revolution had never taken place at all.

After 1967, the Palestinian commandos advanced triumphantly along the road of armed struggle. This constituted a stern challenge to the attempt of the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, to keep the Middle East in a state of "no war, no peace." Infuriated by the humiliation it had suffered, the Soviet Union tried to suppress the Palestinian revolution and poured out a barrage of invective against it. A review of Soviet press comments then shows that the armed struggle of the Palestinian people was cursed with the greatest ferocity and in the most abusive language. They vilified the Palestinian fighters as "extremists" and their armed struggle "extremist action," "blunders," "unrealistic," "irresponsible adventurism," and calumniated the Fateh as adopting a "Trotskyite approach," etc. Indeed, they nursed an inveterate hatred for the armed struggle of the Palestinian people and wanted to crush it.

However, the Soviet invectives failed to frustrate the Palestinian people's struggle which went from one victory to another. The Palestinian people won a say for themselves with their guns and blood. At that time, the Soviet revisionists suffered a setback in their infiltration and expansion in Egypt and the true features

of the new tsars were increasingly exposed before the Arab people. Under such circumstances, the Soviet revisionists suddenly made a complete about-face in their attitude towards the Palestinian revolution. They boasted endlessly that the Soviet Union is "the most reliable natural ally" of the Palestinian and Arab people and with an ulterior motive sent arms to the Palestinian commandos.

One aim of this Soviet move was to deceive Arab and world public opinion. The other aim to which the Kremlin attached greater importance was to cash in on the excellent situation brought about by the heroic sons and daughters of the Palestinian people at the cost of their blood and lives. It was in Moscow's books to divert the struggle of the Palestinian people into its own orbit and use it as a pawn in its contest for hegemony in the Middle East with the United States. In an article published in July 1974, the editor-in-chief of the Soviet paper *Izvestia* Leo Tolkunov bluntly advocated that the Palestinian movement should have a "tactical aim." He said: "In the present phase, the Palestinian movement, apart from having a strategical aim, must also have a definitely formulated tactical aim; that is to say, to have a programme linking with the international efforts to seek a just solution for the Near Eastern conflict." In other words, the Soviet revisionists want the Palestinian revolution to be "linked with" their "political solution" of the Middle East issue. This is clearly asking the Palestinian people to give up the armed struggle and act according to the Soviet revisionist tactics of "no war, no peace" so as to meet the needs of Soviet contention for hegemony in the Middle East with U.S. imperialism.

Attitude Towards National Rights

The attitude towards the national rights of the Palestinian people is another touchstone by which to judge how the Soviet revisionists see the Palestinian revolution.

For years and especially since 1967, the Soviet authorities and press have clung to Resolution 242 adopted by the U.N. Security Council on November 22, 1967, and clamoured that the Middle East issue should be solved on the basis of the resolution which calls the Palestine question a "refugee" question.

It is known to all that Resolution 242 does not denounce the Israeli aggressors, nor does it refer to the Palestinian people's national rights. The resolution describes the Palestine question as a "refugee" question, which is very unjust to the Palestinian people and other Arab people. The Soviet revisionists' attitude towards the resolution has made it crystal clear that they have totally ignored the interests of the Palestinian and other Arab people. N.V. Podgorny said explicitly, "As regards the Middle East question, I would not like to argue which one is the aggressor, that is not the substance of the matter." Therefore, the Soviet proposal for solving the Middle East question on the basis of Resolution 242 is nothing but a trick to deceive the entire Arab people, because it sacrifices the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. Precisely, these rights are the crux of the Middle East question. Without a settlement of this matter, the Middle East question can never be solved.

Attitude Towards Palestine Liberation Organization

The attitude towards the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) — to recognize it or not as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people — is also a touchstone to test whether the Soviet Union gives genuine or sham support to the Palestinian revolution.

Various Arab countries have long recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Many other third world countries have also confirmed this position of the PLO, which has set up representative offices in the capitals of these countries. Since 1973 quite a number of second world countries have begun to develop their relations with the PLO. The United Nations also decided to let the PLO set up an observer's office, asked its representatives to take part in discussions on the Middle East question and honoured the PLO chairman as head of state or government at the U.N. Headquarters.

But the Soviet social-imperialists spared no effort to belittle the political position of the PLO and refused to recognize it as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization Yasser Arafat has paid several visits to the Soviet Union, but each time the invitation came from the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and Soviet top leaders steered clear of him. In the past, the Soviet Union all along refused to permit the PLO to set up a representative organ in Moscow. It was not until 1974 that it reluctantly allowed the PLO to establish an office within the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and the office was actually set up as late as last June. Since the Soviet revisionists have gone so far as to place obstacles and procrastinate on such a problem, how are they qualified to talk profusely about so-called "support" for the Palestinian revolution?

The variations of the Soviet revisionists' counter-revolutionary tactics in dealing with the Palestinian people's armed struggle completely serve their counter-revolutionary general aims. With the intensification of the Soviet-U.S. rivalry for hegemony and the development of the struggle of the Arab and Palestinian people and the raising of their consciousness, more and more people have come to see the Soviet revisionists for what they are. Nevertheless, they will never call a halt to their schemes but will surely harp on the same old tunes and put on a show as if they would support the Palestinian people in real earnest.

(A commentary by Hsinhua Correspondent)