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PALESTINE

THE
COMMUNIST
POSITION

THE
COLONIAL
QUESTION

FIVE CENTS

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Palestine: The Communist Position; the Colonial Question

By PAUL NOVICK

"The policy of suppressing nationalities is the policy of *dividing* nationalities. It is at the same time a policy of a systematic demoralization of the consciousness of the people." (Lenin.)

I.

WHAT is the role of the Communists in Palestine?

The role of the Communists in Palestine is the role of the Communists in the struggle for national liberation of *all* nations. It is the role of Leninism, which has liberated—and only Leninism has liberated—the 150 nationalities in the Soviet Union, and has for the first time in history brought about fraternal relations between nation and nation. It is the role of Leninism in the struggle of the colonial peoples for their liberation.

While marveling at the achievements of the Soviet government in solving the national question one must not for one moment forget that this was no accident, no "miracle," but a result of the program and tactics of *Leninism*, a program which was hammered out in the course of years, through a struggle which was begun long before the October revolution, against the chauvinists and nationalists, as well as against those who ignored or negated the national question.

Stalin, who was Lenin's closest collaborator in the struggle for a Bolshevik line on the national question, states in his lucid style:

"Formerly, the national question was usually confined to a small group of nations, chiefly affecting "cultured" nationalities.

The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs and several other nationalities in Europe made up the list of disfranchised nations, in whose destinies the heroes of the Second International were interested. The countless millions of Asiatic and African peoples who were suffering under the yoke of national oppression in its crudest and most horrible form usually remained outside of their field of vision. They could not make up their minds to put whites and blacks, "cultured" and "uncultured" on the same plane. Two or three meaningless noncommittal resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of colonial emancipation, were all the leaders of the Second International could boast of. Such duplicity and half-measures with respect to the national question must now be considered a thing of the past. Leninism laid bare this shocking incongruity, tore down the wall between whites and blacks, between Europeans and Asiatics, between the "cultured" and "uncultured" slaves of imperialism *and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies*. By this the national question was transformed from a specific question, affecting the internal policies of a particular state, into a general and international question, into a world question of the emancipation of the oppressed people in the dependencies and colonies from the yoke of imperialism." (Stalin: *Leninism, I*, International Publishers, pp. 135-136.)

"... Leninism brought the national question down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground and declared that pronouncements about the "equality of nations" *which are not reinforced by the direct support of the proletarian parties to the liberation struggle of the oppressed nations are meaningless and false*. In this way the question of the oppressed nations became a question of rendering *support and assistance, real and continuous*, to the oppressed nations in their struggle against imperialism, their struggle for real equality of nations and for their independent existence as states.

"... Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia has confirmed it, that the national question can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that *the road to victory in the West leads through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism*. The national question is *part and parcel of the general question of the proletarian revolution* and of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (*Ibid.*, pp. 136-137. My emphasis.)

These are *foundations* of Leninism. Upon these foundations the marvelous edifice of brotherly relations between the peoples of the Soviet Union and the healthy reconstruction and the resurgence of their national life—national in form, socialistic in content—has been built. It is surprising, however, to find how little these *foundations* are taken into consideration even by people usually generous in their praise of the solution of the national question in the Soviet Union.

Surprising—because Lenin *for years* conducted a struggle against the Mensheviks, against Trotsky, against the Bund (Jewish Socialist organization in Russia), against Zionism, and—on the other hand—against Rosa Luxemburg, on this very question of national and colonial liberation. Between 1903 and 1920 Lenin wrote numerous articles, theses, pamphlets on this question. One might have expected the “theoreticians,” the dealers in “Communist documents,” who are fighting the Communist position on Palestine to at least *know* that the struggle for colonial liberation occupies an enormous and organic part in the Leninist program for the solution of the national question.

The Communists are asked to occupy themselves with the struggle for national liberation in the “civilized” countries alone, leaving out the colonies. The Jewish Communists are asked to assist in the struggle for national liberation, in the struggle against discriminations against national minorities in the United States and other “civilized” countries, *but*—not in Palestine, not in the interests of the “uncivilized.” Some even pose as 100 per cent revolutionists, trying to prove that the Communists deviate from the revolutionary line, or even betray the revolution, by leading the struggle of colonial peoples, by mobilizing the masses of the peasantry, as well as the middle class, the intelligentsia and parts of the bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism.

Is *such* “revolutionary” talk anything new? Did not Lenin, in his “Summary of the Discussion for Self-Determination,” written in October, 1916, deal with this question? Didn’t he, in

