

Continuing Discussion On Palestine Issue

Says Jewish State Must Come First

Henry Judd's article, appearing February 9, positing WP's position on Palestine, concluded with: "But is not the first step toward the implementing of such a program the arming of a few socialist Arabs and a few socialist Jews in a correct ideological, political and social understanding of what is needed? This has been and will remain the modest aim of LABOR ACTION, predicated upon its rejection of both blind Zionist chauvinism, and the equally blind denunciation of progressive nationalism by the orthodox Trotskyist parties."

From a purely socialistic point of view perhaps, this may be the correct procedure. But is it an answer, as of this moment, to solving anything which goes on in Palestine at the present time? Given that there were enough influential socialist-minded Arabs and Jews, and that they in turn commanded the respect of enough of their followers, this no doubt would be an answer and an adequate one at that, to all the problems besetting Palestine. But there are not enough, and does anyone pay attention to those who make these appeals? Evidently not. The problems of agitation for socialism are not to be rejected out of hand, but at the same time it would appear that until the people comprising Palestine's population have reached the point of intellectual alertness to the underlying causes of the fratricidal warfare, other means must be taken in order to preserve whatever there may be left worth saving. And of the two camps: allowing of course that both are inspired and deluded by imperialism, which should the socialists back? Plainly, the Jews. Be their cause inspired erringly by chauvinistic Zionism or not, they, not out of pity or condescension, should have the backing of freedom-loving people, with the socialists in the vanguard of that support.

ANALOGY OF SPAIN

The case of Spain comes to mind here. The situation is of course not completely analogous, but the underlying principle is the same. Merely by raising slogans the cause of the Loyalists was not aided. The conflicting ideologies of the forces on the side of the Loyalists caused internal dissension and strife, atomizing what should have been a concerted will toward defeating the enemy, fascism. The foe was fascism, and all those opposed to fascism could have well buried their differences and attained freedom; once that was assured, the people could then consider which faction to their lights would serve them best. This is as far as socialist agitation should be allowed to go. The foe here is imperialism, BUT—to what extent are the Arabs capable of assimilating such propaganda? Let's grant that they want peace and freedom from their oppressors. Doesn't the fact remain that they have not the slightest vestige of democratic thought from which to draw in order to reach a point of selection? They have no means of telling whether socialistic slogans will be an answer to their needs or not.

It is a known fact that the Arabs are being supplied with arms, and aided by a hands-off policy of England and the U. S. as pertains to the Jews. The situation here is parallel with that of Spain. Wasn't the socialist perspective as it pertained to Spain, to arm and otherwise aid the Loyalists, discounting their own internecine conflicts? The primary objective was to defeat the common enemy. Just what is our business in Palestine, if not the material and spiritual aid given in time of crisis to the Jews? Which camp offers or

holds the greatest hope for becoming acquainted with and digesting socialist perspectives, the Arabs or the Jews?

During the past war, the Arab countries were perfectly content to have Hitler Germany invade and rule over them, in fact they passively worked toward these ends. In their very passivity they aided Rommel in his North African campaign and had he not been stopped, Egypt would have welcomed him as its savior. The Arab world has invited imperialism, whether they actually like it or not, to maintain itself at their expense. Bleeding the British and French treasuries is a familiar and lucrative occupation with them. The masses in their stupidity are incapable of recognizing imperialist designs upon them, unless, perhaps when they are fomented to do so by arch-traitors among their leaders purely for reasons of milking the oppressors of more pounds sterling, or the franc. How then expect them to grasp the fundamentals of socialism? The only faction capable of understanding socialism still remains the Jews. Under what conditions then can socialism be better advanced and understood? In a Free Palestine, under Jewish sovereignty, or in the Arab world, with its dark, backward, superstitious background?

MUST CREATE OWN STATE

The idea of educating all factions to socialism within Palestine at this late date when their crisis is upon them seems rather a moot hypothesis, and strangely reeks of philosophy rather than concretized action. Under Jewish rule, the time no doubt will come when the Jews of themselves will be forced to accept socialism as their only solution to their problems. Simply creating a homeland will not solve their basic problems. Foreign immigrants to our shores cherished notions of grandeur as to how they would be treated by employers of native origins. That the system continues to operate irrespective of borders or special colonies is a lesson which will have to be lived and learned by all working people the world over. Only through this process will the masses come to accept socialism as their remaining hope.

At this period then I think it safe to state that socialism, a mere abstraction as it must be in this case, can do nothing to halt the rapidly nearing crisis inherent in Palestine. The Jews must create their own state at whatever odds, solidify their position and after that will inevitably flow thoughts of solving their internal problems. It is then at that time that socialism will be an issue of vital, consuming importance. To repeat, socialist agitation—yes. Both Arab and Jew should be made aware of their roles as puppets in the hands of imperialism. But there definitely should be action with agitation—in that order. The Jews are the means of bringing socialist thought into the Middle East. From them perhaps the Arabs may some day assimilate the rudiments. At all costs, however, it should not be neglected—concrete action by the Jews. If nothing else was learned from the last debacle, no one will forget Manchukuo, Ethiopia, Spain, Munich and the vacillation and pusillanimity of the "Popular Front" governments in taking forthright action against the aggressors. This time may be too late.

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Contributions to the discussion, received from Ed Findley, Leon Shields and a Newark friend, will soon appear in LABOR ACTION.