

The UN Resolution on Zionism—and The Ideological Obfuscation Also on The Left

January 24, 1976

Dear Friends:

Three of the fantastic occurrences in three widely separated parts of the world this month prompt this letter. They exude such abysmal lower depths of ideological obfuscation that they could lay ground only for counter-revolutionary, not for revolutionary, developments. It is imperative, therefore, to look at these events, not merely as passing "immediates", but in a historic-philosophic context.

First, let's look at what followed the passing of that UN Resolution which equated Zionism with racism. At the moment the PLO is trying to carry out what it sees as its implications for the Security Council session, but this cannot be viewed in isolation from two other events: 1) the break-up of the OAU meeting in Ethiopia over the question of recognizing the legitimacy of the MPLA government in Angola; and 2) the war in Lebanon which is calling into question the philosophic underpinnings not only of that UN Resolution, but of that whole "thieves' kitchen." This expression of Lenin's for the League of Nations that followed World War I, just as succinctly characterizes the UN that followed World War II and also called itself a "peace" establishment. It will help us get to the root of the matter since history, far from being limited to the past, helps illuminate on-going history, i.e. what is new in the present.

It may seem foolhardy to try to single out the new in a situation that is so fraught with contradictions which, overnight, transform things into their opposite. It would indeed be an impossible task were it not for the fact that in the Arab Middle East, the unifying force—anti-Israel—cuts across the myriad contradictions. Thus, as if Lebanon wasn't disintegrating in a fratricidal war between Christian and Moslem, Arafat feels no compunction about shouting, over machinegun fire, the thousands of dead bodies, and the rubble, that this all is an Israeli "conspiracy", a war initiated by "international Zionism."

By thus blaming Israel and extending Zionism into an international arena, he has set the line for the PLO representative, Farouk Kaddoumi at the UN Security Council: Disregard the actual on-going war in Lebanon. Speak not of Moslem in general but of the Palestinians' right for self-determination. And speak of it as if none of that involved the dissolution of any other state.

All this is said with a straight face regarding the Arab Middle East, where all states are theocratic, and where Lebanon, an artificial state which does have Christians and Moslems, can't escape the class divi-

sions, and is at this very moment steeped in civil war. Those Lebanese Moslem Left, who are fighting a genuine revolutionary class struggle against its rulers, Christians mainly but Moslem, too, are being kept in check. The overriding order is never to forget that Israel is the enemy. Lebanon, 1975-76, is in danger of replaying the slaughter in Jordan, 1970-71. Will Syria enter, or the PLA under its control? The PLO allows its adherents anything except a revolutionary class struggle within "the Arab nation." Whether that will be made "law" by the PLO under Arafat's leadership, or by the PLA under Syria's sponsorship, or by the other Palestinian groups in the umbrella organization, PLO, the governing idea will remain twofold: 1) Israel is Enemy No. 1 and 2) no genuine revolutionary force will be allowed to achieve its goal. In any case, insofar as the PLO delegation at the UN is concerned, it had but one aim: disregard what is happening in Lebanon; deny the Israeli translation of the PLO Covenant which defines its goal as the dissolution of Israel and "in its place" the establishment of a "secular state." Farouk Kaddoumi promptly branded the translation "a Zionist falsification."

Rather than concerning ourselves with the UN vote on the Resolution equating Zionism with racism—72 for, 35 against, 32 abstaining—we can get more illumination on whether that Resolution is but the latest form of anti-Semitism or a genuine struggle against racism by turning to the second event that followed the vote—the break-up of the OAU meeting in Ethiopia, January 8. This will take us far beyond the question of the Middle East and even beyond the concrete question of the legitimacy of the MPLA to govern Angola which was the immediate cause of the break-up, and on to the more fundamental question of a continuing African revolution.

Heretofore, the one thing that always united all independent African nations and those fighting for independence was the total, the unequivocal opposition to apartheid South Africa. No matter how wide the division between the African countries, and no matter how deep the division within any one country, including even the outright civil war in Nigeria, no African entertained the slightest doubt that, as a continent, Africa will never be fully independent so long as racist South Africa exists. Because that was the unifying force, the African nation would not countenance Kenneth Kaunda's attempt at détente with South Africa on the excuse that that could be a step towards freedom for Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). "The racist regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa", read the OAU Resolution

of August 1, 1975, "have a common imperialist origin, forming a whole, and have the same racist structure and are organically linked in their policy..."

Suddenly, the world was confronted with this spectacle at the OAU meeting in January 1976. As against its own Resolution of August, 1975 which the Arab-sponsored Resolution of Nov. 15 quoted in its successful attempt to get the African nations to vote with its Resolution defining Zionism as racism(1); as against the very eve of the new January meeting, when even Amin felt an urgency to warn his "African brothers" (referring to Zaire(2)) against having anything to do with racist South Africa, i.e., UNITA and FNLA supported by it; and as against the fact that no less than 20 African nations had already recognized the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola, here is what the world became witness to:

1.) The U.S.-Zaire-South African(3) supported FNLA and UNITA leaders were seated on the platform.

2.) Not one word was spoken against the African's new rich "friend", Saudi Arabia, that was funnelling money to these puppets.

3.) The 20 African nations who had already recognized the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola could muster only two others to be with them. With Amin abstaining without explanation, and Ethiopia abstaining on the excuse that hosts shouldn't "take sides,"(4) the OAU adjourned with no decision being taken. The tragedy isn't so much whether or not a decision on Angola was arrived at but why the shadow of South Africa hanging over the contending forces didn't act as the unifying force it had always been. Clearly, the global struggle for world domination had entered that cockpit, as it had in Portugal. The counter-revolution intrudes everywhere any revolutionary force emerges to truly shake the existing state powers.

Before the revolution in Portugal, U.S. imperialists showed little interest in its colonies; indeed, so long as the overthrow of the Caetano fascist regime was in the hands of a neo-fascist, it had nothing to say against Portugal's announcement of de-colonization. It was only as the revolution in Portugal was developing along proletarian lines, and Portugal declared it would be no port of call either for NATO or U.S. ships bound for war in the Mideast, that the U.S. began clandestinely to support the "pro-Western" factions, i.e., those supported by apartheid South Africa (feeding also Zaire's ambitions for oil at Cabinda), and discovered that Russia was out to make a "satellite" of Angola. Suddenly, nothing short of détente or no détente depended upon what happened in Angola. In fact, détente or no détente lies elsewhere, as Kissinger's latest trip to Russia on the SALT agreement proves once again.

Which doesn't, however, mean that the U.S.'s impe-

rial hand will not be present in Angola. Or that it has forgotten the Arab Mideast oil, or Israel. In this, the overriding goal of U.S. imperialism, whether it acts "for" Israel and threatens Mideast oil kingdoms with invasion, or the opposite, "capitulates" to them and pressures Israel into concessions, is but one thing. It has no intention whatever of letting the world's main energy source run out of total control of American oil companies.

Once the U.S. and Russia's struggle for single world domination enters the cockpit, be it the Middle East or Africa, the whip of the counter-revolution takes over. Just as the UN's "peace-keeping mission" in the Congo used everything including individual assassinations, such as Patrice Lumumba's and the stifling of the whole on-going revolution, we are presently confronted with an attempted repetition, not only in South Africa's "peace-making"(!) entry, first, into Rhodesia and now into Angola, but also in U.S. imperialism's behind-the-scenes maneuverings. Whether or not U.S. imperialism's more indirect intervention gives South Africa the cover needed for "exit"; whether or not China, likewise, re-enters via aid to Zaire's Mobutu (who is practiced both in work with the CIA and as "Maoist" when it comes to the Sino-Soviet conflict); and whether or not the Middle East succeeds in diverting Third World revolutions to its power ambitions, the point is that the world economic recession and with it, the bi-polar division of this nuclear world—with China playing the same type of state-capitalist politics in place of the "uninterrupted" revolution it is ideologically supposed to favor—lay bare the total disarray in thought as well as in the crisis-ridden economy.

No doubt the Africans were pleased at the Arab nations thumbing their noses at the U.S., but that was hardly the point of dispute on the UN Resolution on "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination", any more than the vote for it by China along with its "Enemy No. 1," Russia, whom China designates as "the new Tsars", was of the same nature as the Africa vote. Nevertheless, the African countries' disregard of, say, the Black intellectuals' fear that the anti-Zionism amendment was diversionary from the original resolution on racism, which the African nations had sponsored and which projected a Decade for the Elimination of Racism, had come home to roost. The break-up of the OAU meeting over the question of Angola brought out the near-fatal divisiveness in a field that is nothing short of the global struggle of the big powers for a re-division of the world.

It is impossible to see what one does not want to see. The oil-rich kingdoms can hardly be considered an integral part of the poor Third World, the world that has suffered most from the quadrupling of oil prices, which followed the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. If there is any possible affinity of ideas between the oil kingdoms and

the independent African nations, that affinity surely lies elsewhere. The ideological disarray is, rather, like the one that's pervading much of the Left who, knowing well the feudal class structure of the Arab theocracies, hungering for a socialist alternative to the capitalistic structure of Israel rather than any relapse to feudalism, much less mistaking Israel and apartheid South Africa as one and the same, nevertheless parrot the UN Resolution on Zionism.

Take, for instance, I.F. Stone. On the one hand, he says that to equate Zionism with racism, when racism in our times means Nazism, "is the overstatement of the century":

"Neither in Israel nor in the occupied territories is the lot of the Arabs under the Star of David the lot of the Jews under the swastika. The Arabs still have more freedom of expression than Ukrainians in the Soviet Union, better treatment than Asians and whites in parts of liberated Africa, and they are not terrorized like the Jews in Iraq or Syria." (5)

One obvious consequence of the UN Resolution that I. F. Stone does recognize is that it was a victory not just for its sponsors, but "also a victory for the Zionist hard-liners." What greater boon could right-wing Zionism have wished for than the fact that revulsion against anti-Semitism that independents saw in the UN Resolution led thousands of non-Zionists (and, indeed, many were non-Jews) throughout the world to wear buttons proclaiming "I am a Zionist." What more could they have wished for than that the Israeli opponents of their own rulers—the Israeli Left engaged in class struggles and in fights against their country's foreign policy, especially to Israel's non-recognition of the Palestinians as a national entity entitled to self-determination—should suddenly pause in their struggles, with worry over whether at the other end of the spectrum lurks that perennial manifestation of degeneracy, anti-Semitism?

Despite all this, Stone, using the ground of the UN Resolution for argument, states that 1), since the Palestinians in Israel are treated as second-class citizens, the UN Resolution has "an element of truth"; 2) talks of it as if it were no more than an "answer to the Sinai disengagement." He acts as if there were only one way to be for a "viable Arab state," and there were no rich history from Marx through Lenin to Trotsky on the question of self-determination, and as if Marx's humanism wasn't precisely what had been taken out of the "archives" and made into an on-going historic revolutionary movement in our day, precisely in East Europe, fighting for freedom from Russian totalitarianism and racism i.e. anti-Semitism, as witness Czechoslovakia in 1968. (6)

Not that racism is only anti-Semitism, or only against Blacks, be that in South Africa or the USA, or just a Middle East phenomenon. Racism, after all, arose

in the heart of West Europe. Because racism is integral to all class exploitative societies and reaches its most vitriolic expression during hard times, it is imperative to look at it comprehensively, focusing on why at any time it takes this or that specific form. Why is it that, where in the turbulent near-revolutions of the 1960's, even so reactionary a Council as the Vatican felt compelled to issue its landmark "Declaration on Jews," proclaiming "a new era of interfaith dialogue" and condemning some root causes of anti-Semitism, whereas, in the 1970's, the "New Left" aligns in a veritable "jihad" against "Zionism."

For whatever reasons the UN's eyes presently are turned only to Israel, racism is in fact reaching a most virulent phase in France where one million French workers and 100,000 immigrant workers have been thrown into the unemployed army. In the case of the immigrant workers, whom the French government had lured there and confined to the dirtiest work at the lowest pay, as well as herding them into the most barbaric living quarters (7), there racism has reared its ugly head as France tries to herd them out of the country, whether they came from the Middle East or Portugal, from Algeria or Black Africa.

Clearly, above everything else hangs the world economic recession at a time when decadent capitalism brings out the worst, be it apartheid South Africa mercenaries fighting in Angola—and bringing disarray into the OAU—or France expelling immigrant labor and bringing racism on the face of it to a very different point and yet connecting with it. When Albert Levy, Secretary of the Movement Against Racism anti-Semitism and For Peace, declared, "France has become the most murderously racist of countries," it did indeed direct attention to the depth of degeneracy of Western "civilization," the type signalled by the outbreak of World War II and the fact of the collapse of France without a fight. The problem cannot be narrowed to what one sees in UN corridors.

It is high time not to take either Arab or Israel's ground for argumentation, or, for that matter, what can best be called "the middle of the road" (which has always been the best place to get run over). It is high time to strike out for totally new ground, the total philosophy of human liberation Marx called "a new Humanism."

It isn't for purposes of so-called "true beginnings", as the crucifixion of Jesus by Roman authorities which had nevertheless been converted into an accusation of deicide against the Jews, not to mention that it took the Vatican nearly 2000 years to "right" that "root of anti-Semitism." Rather, this new ground—the dialectics of liberation in Marx's unearthing a new continent of thought, would not be confined to "the Jewish Question." When Marx broke with bourgeois society and Left Hegelians, who were arguing "On the Jewish

Question" in 1843, he commented on the equating of Judaism not only with religion, but with "bargaining", with "money", that money does, indeed, "degrade all the gods of mankind... and converts them into commodities." But if they looked they would, in that case, have to admit that "Judaism has perpetuated itself in Christian society... achieved perfection in the Christian world", "in the prevailing world", i.e. capitalism. Therefore, what needs uprooting is the commodity structure of society, without which there can be no "universal human emancipation." (8) Because that principle underlined all Marxist revolutionaries struggling for a classless society, without which there can be no "universal human emancipation" the "Jewish Question" was not dealt with as a separate issue.

During Tsarism, however, when the persecution of the Jews reached the pogrom stage after the assassination of Alexander II by the Populists, and whether in barbaric Russia, or cultured France, where anti-Semitism reared its ugly head in the Dreyfus case many Jews began to reject "Western civilization." The pogrom on top of the ghettoization, economic, political and social persecution of the Jews, gave rise to Zionism at the end of the 19th century. As a national movement, revolutionary internationalists rejected it. On the whole, Marxists considered the Jewish Question to be a "cultural" one, felt sure that socialism would solve all questions of racial or religious persecution, and therefore urged total assimilation. What changed the attitude on the whole "National Question" was the outbreak of World War I, which revealed how national rebellions can aid the undermining of imperialism. With the Irish Revolution against British imperialism right in the midst of war, when workers were slaughtering each other across national boundaries, the "National Question" assumed an urgency and impetus to proletarian revolution which brought a schism within Bolshevism. Lenin alone made the most profound as well as concrete analysis of the revolutionary aspects of the "National Question" (9). Moreover, these continued beyond the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia with the accession to power of the Bolsheviks. By the time of the defeat of the 1919 German Revolution, upon which both the extension of the Russian Revolution to a world scale and the very life of the Russian Revolution depended (no one then thought of any such mirage as "socialism in one country"), Lenin raised a totally new aspect to the relationship of the National Question and world revolution: "If not through Berlin perhaps through Peking."

Whatever changes had in the meantime occurred in Zionism's projection of a "Jewish homeland" (10) seemed to be of no concern to revolutionary Marxists since they were still confident the world revolution would win.

Everything totally changed with the Great

Depression, and the rise of Nazism, accompanied by such manifestation of anti-Semitism also in the "degenerated workers' state" that Trotsky changed his position on the Jewish Question. The density of today's Trotskyists in not grasping either theoretically or practically what happened shows itself clearest in their positions today which have nothing whatever to do with Trotsky's principled statement, be that on the question of permanent revolution or the Jewish Question. Not having the slightest conception of what is the dialectical relationship of the objective to the subjective situation—what is the dialectics of liberation when more than one national movement arises, they simply hide both the fact of the change and why Trotsky, as the great revolutionary he was, changed his position. It is imperative that we study the principal points Trotsky made in the last three years of his life on this question, if we wish to understand the new vantage points necessitated by the rise of Nazism, and that he alone of the leaders of the Russian Revolution lived to confront. Stalin had killed off the "General Staff" of that revolution in the greatest Frame-Up Trials in history, reeking of anti-Semitism as well as of total counter-revolution. Indeed, they were followed by the Hitler-Stalin pact. Here, then are Trotsky's writings on the Jewish Question for the years 1937-1940 (11).

First, Trotsky contrasts the historical developments of the 1930s with those of his youth when he believed that "the Jewish Question would disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion... decaying capitalism has everywhere swung over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-Semitism."

Secondly, since the Jews have created their own press, have a distinct language, "One must reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch." It isn't that he didn't perceive the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine, not that he thought that Zionism was any answer. But, this fundamental conflict could not be judged outside the objective context:

1) The reappearance of anti-Semitism in Russia, "the Thermidorean reaction has stirred up all that is low, dark and backward—and in this agglomeration of 170 million people."

2) At the same time the rise of fascism occurred in the very heart of Western Europe. Therefore, "the next development of world reaction signifies with certainty the physical extermination of the Jews."

This, let us remember, was said before the outbreak of World War II, before the ovens of Auschwitz and Dachau were fully exposed, before the actual extermination of six million Jews.

Trotsky's conclusion was that the "Jewish Question as such is still acute and demands adequate measures from a world federation of workers' states." Naturally,

he called upon the Jews to join the Fourth International, which had been the first to warn about fascism.

World War II had totally changed the objective situation. The creation of the state of Israel changed it still further for the Middle East. Two realities, thereupon, were new: the existence of Israel, and with that success, the creation of another national consciousness—the Palestinian people. Their right to self-determination can no more be decided from above, be it via the many Arab kingdoms and emirates, or the PLO claiming sole spokespersonship—much less through a UN command. Let the Palestinian people speak for themselves. Naturally, Zionism in power, like the ideology of all ruling classes, be they Jewish or Moslem or Christian—or the big powers themselves, West and East, is exploitative. Which is why, precisely why, the main enemy is always in one's own country. The Israeli masses will fight that battle. Far from encouraging such action—the UN Resolution equating Zionism with racism—while the PLO representative shouts: Zionism differs "in no way from apartheid in South Africa" (12), cannot but remind one of the Big Lie.

Unfortunately, even that is not the worst of it. The worst of it is that it does, indeed, reflect the actual state of the disarray of the world, not only in the economy and politics, but also in the void in its thought.

Clearly, the Arab-Israeli question is not just Arab-Israeli; the Middle East is not just the Middle East—Saudi Arabia is not just oil-rich kingdom underwriting PLO actions against Israel, but also South African white mercenaries and its Black puppets in Angola. Nor is it just Africa that is being torn apart—the Portuguese revolution is also being put under the whip of counter-revolution. Once again, the global struggle for single world domination, between the U.S. and Russia, with China considering Russia Enemy No. 1 contaminates everything. And through it all, racism and anti-Semitism is at its height also at the heart of "Western civilization"—France. In a word, the euphemism of "Zionism" for anti-Semitism cannot but recall the degeneracy Western civilization reached in 1940 with the collapse of France without a fight: "Paris is not for burning." For the Left to countenance, nay, to aid in such ideological obfuscation cannot but smooth the way for the counter-revolution. A necessary first step to turn matters around is to clear up our heads so that the history of revolutions, the dialectics of liberation becomes the path for their actualization.

Yours,
Raya

NOTES

1. There was a great deal of opposition to that Resolution outside of the UN halls by no means limited to Jews. Indeed, one of the most interesting came from Black intellectuals, which stated: "The prospect of a concerted United Nations drive against African apartheid has been effec-

tively thwarted by an amendment which introduces an extraneous issue to a worthy United Nations undertaking." The appeal was signed by 28, including Dr. Charles H. Wesley, author of the first and most original works on Black labor and director of the Afro-American Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Dr. Luther Foster, president of Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama; and C. Clyde Ferguson Jr. of Harvard Law School.

2. Mobutu of Zaire has been an especially welcome guest in Mao's China, whose Russophobia still has them traffic with the Angolan factions apartheid South Africa supports, though that type of open collaborationism has forced China to announce it would withdraw its support.
3. No one need have any illusions about South Africa's "withdrawal" of its mercenaries in Angola. Not only does it operate from its apartheid regime, but it can now hide behind U.S. imperialism since its open support boomeranged.
4. Ethiopia has since recognized the MPLA. What it worried about most is what it said least about, and that was "Saudi Arabia's intervention" since it is Saudi Arabia that is financing a good part of Eritrea's rebels. Where Eritrea's fight for self-determination started as a revolutionary opposition to the Emperor's Ethiopia, the Arab kingdoms choosing Muslim factions to support is corrupting freedom movements.
5. I.F. Stone's piece on "Zionism and Peace" was published in *The New York Times*, 23 November 1975.
6. At the time of Russia's imperialist invasion of Czechoslovakia, August 1968, the still defiant Czechoslovak radio beamed this broadcast on August 26: "We have learned at long last who is responsible for the non-existent Czechoslovak counterrevolution. 'International Zionism' (euphemism for 'the Jews'). Apparently our East German friends have been experts on this subject ever since World War II... Allegedly two million people are involved... Why cannot these two million Zionists be found if the Soviet army command, or perhaps Neues Deutschland wishes to find them? Anyhow, the Germans today are the only real experts able to distinguish with absolute accuracy between Aryans and inferior races." This broadcast is reproduced in *Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 254. See especially Chapter 8, "State-Capitalism and the East European Revolts" where many of the East European revolutionaries speak for themselves.
7. The Paris correspondent (Walter Schwarz) of the *Guardian* (December 28, 1975) in his article, "France to send home workless immigrants" describes those horrible living quarters, including the illegal but operative "3 x 8 equals 24 principle" (three people using a bed in shifts of eight hours each). The quotation from Albert Levy of the Movement Against Racism and anti-Semitism and for Peace is likewise from that article.
8. Marx's "On the Jewish Question" is included in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* edited by Easton and Guddat.
9. Up to March 1917, Lenin's articles on the National Question are included in his *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX; the 1920 Theses on the National and Colonial Question in *Selected Works*, Vol. X.
10. The question of a bi-national state was not only the aim of

the Marxists, but originally was also the concept of Left Zionists. Noam Chomsky (whose *Peace in the Middle East? Reflections on Justice and Nationhood* should be consulted) quotes a 1907 view of Zionism which held that it was necessary "to avoid a narrow, limited nationalism which would see no further than itself" (Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*).

11. These extraordinary Trotsky statements from 1937-40 were reprinted in the Fourth International's *Workers' International News*, June-July 1946, London.
12. For gloating over that UN Resolution and its PLO explication, see especially the East German Communist publication, *Neues Deutschland*, Nov. 13, 1975. We are sure also soon to hear about the developing schism between Assad's PLA and Arafat's PLO.