

# On the Present Situation in the Middle East

## Communist Party, U.S.A.

Increasingly the Middle East is becoming an arena of an uncontrolled arms race where the danger of war and possibly world war is ever-present. Contrary to those who would picture the source of the war danger as an "Arab-Israeli dispute," as a contention between states, the Middle East is a region where the international class struggle and national liberation struggle hold center stage. Fraught with war dangers, the Middle East demands the immediate attention of all peace forces.

The Arab liberation movement, an important component of the world national liberation movement, confronts imperialism—U.S. imperialism in the forefront—at a most critical point. The struggle for national independence, against colonialism and neo-colonialism and for democratic advance is ar-

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*This is the text of a resolution issued recently by the Central Committee, CPUSA.*

rayed in the Middle East against imperialism seeking to maintain control over the extraction of petroleum, a most important energy resource and fundamental element of the world economy. Over 40 percent of the return on U.S. investment abroad comes from oil. The giant oil monopolies play a decisive role in the formulation and execution of U.S. imperialist foreign policy.

Imperialism is actively opposing economic independence and seeking to thwart the forces of socialism and revolutionary democracy from North Africa to the Arab Gulf. Moreover, the Middle East has now become a launching base for imperialism and its local gendarmes to intervene in and conduct aggression against progressive forces from the Red Sea to the Cape in Southern Africa. In every country of the area, imperialism meets resistance under different conditions and utilizing a full range of

methods of struggle. In each of these countries and movements a vanguard role is played by groups and parties based on Marxism-Leninism and representing the interest of the working class and revolutionary forces. All receive many-sided support and solidarity from the socialist countries, the Soviet Union in the first place, and all of progressive humanity.

The most critical point of conflict today between the forces of national liberation and imperialism operating in the Middle East is in the area of Palestine and neighboring countries. The most important instrument of U.S. imperialism in the area is Zionism and the power it wields as the dominant ideology and holder of power in Israel.

Over the past 30 years, the armies of the State of Israel have crossed the borders established in the 1947 United Nations partition of Palestine four times and occupied sizable territories belonging to nations and peoples living in the adjacent areas. The aggression is today the major source of tension in the Middle East and could lead to war.

## Tactical Maneuvers

In the context of continued tension and arms build-up, the Carter Administration's pronouncements about "Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory" and the creation of a "Palestinian homeland" must be seen as tactical maneuvers to preserve the interests of U.S. oil imperialism. Washington is attempting to bolster the reactionary elements within the Arab national liberation movement, particularly within the Palestine Liberation Organization, and to lull the peace forces into believing its massive economic, political and military support to Tel Aviv and to reactionary Arab leaders, thus exposing the argument that the peace movement must wait because the Carter Administration is "pressuring Israel to make concessions."

Israeli aggression is supported and promoted by U.S. imperialism which benefits from perpetual tension and instability in the region and sows division between Arab countries and continually strives to subvert, weaken and overthrow progressive regimes. This aggression flows directly from the ideology of Zionism and its program.

But the designation "Zionist" must never be confused with Jewish people. In Israel and throughout the world, Jewish people (as nearly all peoples) are characterized by separation into all economic classes and adhere to the political ideologies of

those classes. Zionism is a nationalist movement of the Jewish bourgeoisie and an instrument of imperialism. It is capitalist, colonialist and anti-communist. Zionism is expansionist and proceeds on the premise of the denial of national rights of another people, and claims a divine blessing to seize the lands of others. Zionism is therefore racist and is recognized as such by the United Nations. Recent events in Israel underscore the Zionist danger.

Within Israel, the main, most principled and consistent force against Zionism is the Communist Party of Israel (CPI), heroic fighter for peace and national liberation, opponent of racism and discrimination, vanguard of the Israeli working class, Jewish and Arab, and upholder of the interests of the Jewish and Arab peoples. The CPI fights for and organizes international support for the Arab minority in Israel who suffer second-class citizenship and cruel confiscation of ancestral lands. It does likewise for the majority of Israel's citizens—the "Sephardic" Jews who suffer discrimination and super-exploitation. Our Party, the Communist Party of the United States of America, is proud of its firm, long-standing fraternal relations with the CPI, which strengthen still more with each passing year.

The recent elections in Israel, which showed a distinct and dangerous shift to the Right, underscore again the necessity and responsibility of peace-loving forces in the U.S. to step up their efforts to force a reordering of priorities by the Carter Administration. The victory of the ultra-Right Likud heightens the danger of another, possibly nuclear war in the Middle East. It is more apparent now than ever that the main obstacle to reconvening the Geneva Conference is Washington's political, economic and military support for the policies of the government of Israel—Labor or Likud.

In this light, the CPUSA, which greeted the CPI initiative to form a united electoral front, hails the success of the Jewish-Arab Democratic Front for Peace and Equality in the May 17 elections. The advance of this front strengthens the Israeli peace movement and the world movement for a Mideast peace. Likewise, the historic meeting of representatives of the CPI and the PLO in Prague earlier this year marked a new level of unity in struggle of the democratic and revolutionary forces in the Middle East.

As part of its overall support for the liberation movement of the Arab peoples, the CPUSA supports self-determination and the national rights, in-

cluding the right to a national state, of the Arab people of Palestine. We recognize without qualification the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The national rights and self-determination for the Palestinian people and recognition of the PLO are accepted by the vast majority of the nations of the world, and supported by the socialist community of nations, the non-aligned movement, the United Nations, the Organization of Arab States, the World Peace Council, many governments in Western Europe and the Communist and Workers Parties of the world. The CPUSA has established formal fraternal contact with the PLO. This has taken the form of exchanges of views and mutual expressions of solidarity between representatives of the CPUSA and the PLO leadership.

In addition, the CPUSA maintains special friendly relations with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a component part of the Palestinian resistance movement and the PLO. Its policies developing along internationalist, class-struggle lines, the Democratic Front plays an important progressive role within the liberation movement.

Our Party continues to build its fraternal relations with all of the other Communist and Workers Parties and other democratic movements of the area, among them the Lebanese Communist Party and the Unified National Front of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. We recognize as an increasingly important element in recent developments the sharpening class struggle throughout the area, not alone within Israel. The recent civil war in Lebanon and the demonstrations against the regime in Cairo represent only the most visible signs of this class struggle. The heightened class consciousness contributes greatly to the forward movement of the national liberation forces just as the national liberation movement sharpens the class consciousness. Using reactionary regimes in the area such as Saudi Arabia as its surrogates, U.S. imperialism seeks to divide the forces of national liberation in order to maintain its hegemony. It seeks to separate the peoples of the area from their natural allies, in the first place the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. The ties of the Zionist leadership in Israel and of other reactionary governments to U.S. imperialism constitute the greatest threat to both the independence of the peoples and to peace. The CPUSA considers it to be its internationalist

responsibility to support the national liberation and workers' movements against imperialism in all its forms and guises.

## **A Basis for Peace**

It is the position of the CPUSA (spelled out by the resolution of its 21st Convention, 1975, in Chicago) that the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East should proceed along the following general principles:

- 1) Withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab lands seized in the 1967 war of aggression;
- 2) Recognition of the right of all displaced Palestinian people to return to their homeland or to receive just compensation;
- 3) Recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to set up their own state on lands recovered from the occupiers;
- 4) Guarantee of the borders and territorial integrity of all the states in the area.

The CPUSA supports the call for the reconvening of the Geneva Conference on Middle East Peace with full and equal representation by the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. We recognize however that the Geneva Conference cannot be reconvened without taking into account United Nations resolutions containing the principle of Palestinian national rights. The CPUSA believes that future relations between the Arab people of Palestine and the peoples of Israel must be based on self-determination and any formal change in relationships must hinge on the voluntary will of both peoples.

Our Party recognizes the critical character of its role as a working-class party inside the USA confronting the forces of imperialism and campaigns to win our country to a policy of peace and non-interference in the affairs of the people of the Middle East. In our country a critical aspect of the work for peace and justice in the Middle East must be to win the mass of Jewish people—particularly workers—away from the influence of Zionism and for a program of peace and justice.

Another crucial aspect of our work in the present period must be to intensify the struggle against anti-Arab chauvinism and racist attacks on Arab peoples. This is a major factor even among some progressive circles and is a chief stumbling block toward expanding the movement for a just peace. The CPUSA acts in solidarity with Arab workers in the U.S., recognizing the special problems facing

them, and calls attention to the necessity of struggling against the discrimination, superexploitation, and repression faced by them.

The CPUSA is committed to building and supporting activities in solidarity with peace, liberation

and democratic movements in the Middle East, and especially, at this time, with the Palestinian resistance movement. This must be a signal task for our entire Party and for the trade union, peace and other democratic movements. ■