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Palestine solidarity

Concerning the long-term solution

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I will begin my intervention on the subject of the long-term solution with some rapid remarks about the last savage war in Gaza. It is a coincidence, tragic, certainly, but at the same time useful, considering that this war took place only a few weeks before the holding of this seminar which brings us together today.

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This, in one way or another, facilitates our task, especially since it will perhaps constitute a real turning point in the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of the liberation of the Palestinian people. This war is rich in results and lessons of great importance, which I will summarize as follows:

A. It re-emphasizes, in a clearer way, the suffocating dead end of the Zionist entity, as an artificial state that is so fragile that it can only survive by perpetually aggressive behaviour. This tendency has become for it an Achilles' heel, as it represents a permanent, bloody headlong rush forward, which will inevitably lead to its total bankruptcy and perhaps to its destruction.

B. It has exposed, more and more sharply, the criminal nature of this entity, which has gone so far as to perpetrate the worst carnages, using internationally prohibited weapons, against children, women, old men, and other defenceless civilians.

C. It has demonstrated, even more clearly, the de facto alliance that exists between this entity and the so-called moderate Arab regimes, and among them, in particular, the Palestinian Authority of Mahmoud Abbas. It has also highlighted the fact that the survival of the one of the two parties to this alliance depends on the survival of the other.

D. It has shown that broader and broader layers of the Arab masses are ready to express in an effective way their solidarity with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian resistance, both against the regimes of their own countries and against Israel and the American administration. It has shown, moreover, that many people in the world are ready to express their active solidarity with the Palestinian people, in particular in the face of the monstrous crimes perpetrated by Israel.

E. It has furthermore demonstrated the danger that this regime, as it exists at present, constitutes for world peace, especially since it possesses weapons of mass destruction. And the leader of an influential party ("Israel Our Home") did not hesitate to ask for them to be used and for Gaza to be burned with nuclear weapons!

I hope that the gravity of what recently happened in Gaza is sufficient to push us, as an international revolutionary movement, to rise to the level of the tasks that are necessary and to express our attitude by defining a firm position in relation to the Zionist state and to the long-term solution, a position which is obligatory for all the sections of the International. So this seminar should reach an agreement on at least a preliminary draft of the elements of this position, so that the International Committee which will meet in a few days' time puts it on its agenda and recommends making it one of the fundamental questions that the next congress will discuss, and on which it will take decisions that will hopefully be those that are appropriate.

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Before exploring the elements of this solution, I believe that we need to highlight a certain number of ideas and basic principles whose expression will help us to develop a conception that attains maximum clarity and universality. These elements are:

Firstly: The need to accelerate everything that is likely to bring closer the moment when the Palestinian people will be able to freely exert its right to self-determination, over all its historic territory, before the repercussions of the present status quo lead to great catastrophes which could take on a universal character in the not too distant future.

We all know how Israel which, in the past, destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor of Tammuz in 1981, has tried, in recent years, to get the American administration to bombard the reactors that are scattered over vast distances in Iran, in order to prevent that country from developing its capacities for uranium enrichment, on the pretext that it is seeking to have the atomic bomb, whereas Israel has already hundreds of nuclear warheads. Israel is trying to obtain, if the US administration does not act itself, permission for the Zionist state to unleash itself such a fatal and insane adventure, which would have catastrophic consequences which would probably not be limited to the Middle-East, but would also extend to the whole world.

Secondly: Any solution will have to take into account the nature of Israel, not only in its capacity as an entity built, at its origin, on the uprooting of a people from its land and its thousand-year-old homeland, and on this people being dispossessed of its property, wrongfully, by violence and aggression, and by committing crimes against humanity seldom seen in history. Israel also has to be seen as an instrument armed to the teeth, in the service of the plans of world imperialism, and in particular American imperialism, to subjugate the peoples of our region, to plunder their wealth, to prevent them from uniting, moving forward and attaining modernity; and also with the intention of preventing them from securing conditions of prosperity, a dignified life, real sovereignty and independence. Let us add to that the involvement of this entity in American attempts to divide even further our countries and to create dissensions and wars – civil, religious, national, even tribal and other sorts of wars.

Thirdly: As a result the Palestinian question does not exclusively concern the original people of that country, but all the Arab peoples which are suffering so many wrongs because of the creation of Israel, because of its execrable racist reality, and because of the role which is assigned to it, against the paramount interests of the Arab nation as a whole; Israel, which is a mini-imperialism in the service of world imperialist hegemony.

This is why it is impossible to imagine a solution to this question without taking into account the tasks of the Arab revolution, in general, which involve the elimination of all the ways in which this hegemony affects our countries and its consequences, and also bringing closer its end on a world level.

Fourthly: Even though the tendency towards capitulation on the part of more Arab regimes, even of all the Arab regimes - the nature of whose ruling classes facilitates them taking this road - in the direction of the recognition of Israel and the establishment of all kinds of relations with it, the Arab peoples would probably continue to be opposed to that, and would be hostile to any serious normalisation of relations with Israel, as is the case with regard to the masses in Egypt, Jordan and Mauritania. This will have as a consequence, in future circumstances, the collapse of these relations and the reactivation of the struggle, even military, against the Zionist entity.

Fifthly: The Palestinian question would have to become again, as it seemed to be in the years following the creation of the Zionist state, the principal motor of the process of change in the Arab region. It is this element which has been diluted, denatured, even eliminated, temporarily at least, because of the treasons, the concessions and the transactions of the majority of the Arab and Palestinian political forces which had carried the banner of liberation, progress and change, from the creation of Israel until now.

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Moreover, insofar as this question remains alive, through in particular the consolidation and the radicalisation of resistance, not only on the level of the Palestinian people, but also among the Arab peoples in general, it could evolve in such a way as to become a principal motor, this time, for revolutionary change, throughout the Arab world, and possibly beyond.

Sixthly and lastly: At a time which has practically seen the end of the old colonialism and the liberation of dozens of countries which lived under occupation, the Palestinian people has remained the only one deprived of its right to freedom, independence and self-determination, and this in spite of dozens of resolutions which have been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations since 1948, resolutions which recognize its rights and which call for them to be respected and put into effect.

At the end of the programme established for this seminar, its authors consider, on the question of the long-term solution, three possibilities: the first is the two-state solution; the second is that of a single state, and the third is that of a bi-national state.

In reality, and in spite of the fact that the two-state solution is posed, apparently, as a transitional solution, I believe that it needs to be rejected in advance, especially if we take into consideration what Israel has done up to now, in the West Bank, as a whole, including Jerusalem, through the creation of a large number of colonies where today hundreds of thousands of Jewish occupiers live, without forgetting the wall of separation which Israel continues to build within the territories occupied in 1967, and which is in practice chipping away an important part of these territories; without forgetting, also, the circular motorways which are doing the same and which Palestinians are forbidden to use. Moreover, Israel insists on occupying a broad band of territory between the West Bank and the River Jordan, that is to say, all along the frontier with Jordan. To that, it is necessary to add the ban on the inhabitants of the West Bank using the subterranean water that Israel draws and uses for the needs for its inhabitants; as well as the policy that it wants to impose on (Arab) East Jerusalem so that this city remains completely under its control.

To this should be added ban on the so-called Palestinian "state", if it comes into existence, arming itself, except for the purpose of domestic repression.

Furthermore, the Israelis refuse absolutely to implement any international resolution concerning the return of refugees to their country. They have even begun to unveil their plans to expel the Arabs of 1948, who live within the boundaries of the Green Line, towards the territories of the "state" in question.

The refusal of this solution thus becomes something particularly urgent, both for the reasons indicated above and because of the fact that no Palestinian entity on the West Bank of the Jordan could have any chance of survival, especially since it will be caught in a vice, between the Zionist state to the west and the Hashemite Kingdom to the east, the Palestinian population of which suffered for 19 years, during the period that was called the unity of the two banks, the brutal oppression and coercion exercised by the Hashemite monarchy and its security services. Moreover, this state would absolutely not constitute a solution for millions of Palestinians of the Diaspora who would remain deprived of their right to return to their homeland and their property, a right that is recognized by the resolutions of the United Nations. These resolutions contain elements that are fundamental, even if they are not sufficient, for an advanced solution of the Palestinian question.

In any case, our refusal of the two-state solution does not mean that we have a nihilistic attitude towards a possible evolution of the ongoing and developing struggle, if ever this struggle leads to forcing Israel to withdraw from territories in the West Bank, as it has already done from Gaza ~~Ã~~ Gaza (and as it did under the pressure of the resistance, in Lebanon), without conditions and negotiations with Israel.

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These resolutions, starting with Resolution 194, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, about the return of the Palestinian refugees to their country and their property – a resolution which was readopted every year up to the end of the 1960s - and, in particular, the resolutions adopted between 1969 and 1975, can constitute a fairly serious starting point towards outlining an adequate solution, insofar as these resolutions highlight the following points:

- The need to allow the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination “without interference from outside”, in addition to its “right to independence and national sovereignty” (Resolution 3236 of November 22, 1974).
- The need to allow the Palestinian people to exercise its right to return to its country and its property in historic Palestine.
- To consider Zionism as one of the forms of racism and as a threat to international peace and security, even though the General Assembly annulled its resolution at the beginning of the 1990s, at the time of the sole hegemony of the United States; knowing that this purely circumstantial annulment had no impact on the moral value of this resolution, which must remain a guide for all the people of the world, whom it had called on to oppose this racist and imperialist ideology (resolution 3379, adopted by the General Assembly, 10/11/1975).
- To declare the legality of the struggle of peoples subjected to imperialist and foreign domination, - including the Palestinian people -, to free themselves from this domination “by all the means in their power, including armed struggle” (Point 1 of Resolution 3382 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted 10/11/1975).
- To consider the rights of the Palestinian people referred to above as inalienable rights, and to firmly condemn the governments which refuse the right of self-determination of the peoples to which this right has been recognized, in particular the Palestinian people, considering that “complete respect for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine is an essential element for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle-East ” (Point C of Resolution 2672 adopted by the General Assembly, 8 December 1970).

Of course, complete respect for the rights of the Palestinian people and its right to exercise these rights effectively, including its right to self-determination, its right to independence and national sovereignty , the right to return, both for those who were uprooted and driven out in 1948 and for those who suffered the same fate during the 1967 war and afterwards (see, on this subject, United Nations Resolution 2672 of 18/12/1970, which calls on “the taking of effective and immediate measures to ensure their return without delay”); **this respect cannot be genuinely guaranteed without the dismantlement of the present Zionist state**, which should be a fundamental element of any final just, durable and viable solution; even though this is in contradiction with the consciousness that has up to now dominated among the ranks of the broad Jewish masses in Israel.

We argue this while knowing that such a perspective cannot be implemented without being shared by these masses and by the Palestinian people. In particular, this applies a radical change of this consciousness, such as to free, first of all the Jewish workers, and then the broadest sectors of the population of the State of Israel, from Zionist ideology.

However, this profound transformation in the consciousness of the Jews of Israel is a very complex question and requires a no less profound change in the conditions of the present struggle and in its circumstances and, in particular, the coming together of three factors:

A Palestinian and Arab programmatic vision concerning the future of the entire region and the Jewish presence in this region, especially in Palestine. A vision which takes into consideration the interests of many generations among the Jews who were born and grew up there, who have no other homeland and who have legitimate aspirations to continue to live in this country in peace, far from any discrimination and any injustice towards them; at the same time

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we ask them not to practise discrimination and injustice against the others who have a right to this same land and this same country. This should happen simultaneously, with the confirmation of the right of those Jews who are of Arab origin to return, if they so desire, to their countries of origin and enjoy full rights of citizenship there.

To throw every effort into breaking the present military balance of forces, which is completely in favour of Israel; this is something which would not be limited to the Arab region alone, but would include countries in this anxious and troubled East, among them Iran, in particular, and possibly Turkey and Pakistan, if these two countries experience in the future a change in their regimes in a progressive and anti-imperialist direction.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to continue the armed struggle against the Zionist state, wherever that is possible (in Gaza, in the West Bank, in South Lebanon, even in Golan, on the subject of which it will be necessary to bring together the conditions and create suitable circumstances to launch a resistance there that the Syrian regime has always prevented from developing, a regime which is now seeking to obtain the total recovery of the territory through a "new Camp David").

Rehabilitate the programme of the Arab Revolution which includes, among other things, a sustained effort to eliminate the current partition, but also to eliminate imperialist hegemony over the wealth of our region, on the one hand, and the power of those who govern it, on the other. We should not forget that in this context we have to act in such a way that the giant of the people gets out from under the yoke of the various Arab regimes, and that serious efforts are undertaken to achieve a real democracy that allows the broadest mobilization of the masses and their greater participation in the implementation of the above-mentioned programme. This programme must combine the tasks of national liberation and political democracy with the tasks of social democracy, and thus open the way for the contribution of our peoples to the progressive construction of a liberating socialism, in correlation with the contributions of other peoples, everywhere in the world, to the same effort.

What can play a fundamental role in such a process is the renunciation by the Palestinian people of illusions in the Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, built on the Oslo agreements; the stopping of all forms of negotiations with the Zionist entity; the rehabilitation of the option of popular resistance in all its forms, including, and especially, armed resistance, with, simultaneously the rebuilding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on this basis, in order to integrate into it, democratically and through elections, all the resistance forces and, in particular, the re-launching of the experience of the popular committees which were responsible during the first Intifada for organizing the daily life of the resisting people.

This is a choice which, in spite of its extreme difficulty, is probably the only one which promises to launch a popular Arab and world solidarity movement, enormously more effective, with the Palestinian people and its cause, a solidarity whose first signs appeared during the recent war against Gaza. This movement could be reinforced insofar as the resistance movement of this people would be able of freeing itself from its relations with the various Arab regimes and of developing completely different relations with the broad masses who are the victims of exploitation, injustice and oppression at the hands of these regimes.

No less important would be the fact that these masses could produce, in the context of their struggles against this reality, leaderships capable of organizing and leading their struggle and directing it towards the simultaneous achievement of the tasks of national liberation and those of social liberation.

This could in time represent a prelude to the modification of the circumstances which have kept the movement of these masses, during the last few bloody weeks, within definite limits, so that they were unable to force the existing Arab governments take measures and positions on the level of the gravity of the crimes committed before the eyes of the whole world against the population of Gaza, besieged, not only by the Israeli war machine, but also by the hell of official Arab official complicity.

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It is truly regrettable to see that the growing, though slow, radicalisation taking place in the mass movement in many Arab countries, including occupied Palestine, is initially impelled by the radicalisation of religious political movements which are at present bearing the brunt of the confrontation with American imperialism and Israel, in the context of the very long absence of left forces ready to carry out this task.

This shows the absolute necessity of seeing this Left again taking on a role which it has lost, and carrying once again a banner which it could not keep, the banner of national liberation. Only the Left is capable, if ever it succeeds in winning back its leading role in this domain, of successfully carrying out this task at the same time as conducting the social battle on the basis of a revolutionary programme of national and social liberation; a programme which would include, among its central tasks, the unification of the dispersed and disunited Arab world, in addition to being seriously committed to the path of socialist construction.

Such is the great challenge! A challenge not only for the Palestinian and Arab masses, but also for revolutionary Marxists everywhere in the world, who should give essential and growing support to these masses in their fight against Israel and world imperialism, the same support as they formerly gave to the Vietnamese people, and even much more. Support which would finally be of very great importance for the growth, which is possible and necessary, of a Palestinian and Arab revolutionary Left, ready to replace, in the not distant future, the present forces of resistance. A revolutionary Left would be the only one which could pose an equitable solution to the Palestinian question and seek to concretise it; a solution whose basic elements would be summarized, as is explained above, by the fact of making it possible for the Palestinian people to exercise its right to return its homeland and its property, as well as the right of self-determination in all its historic homeland and, consequently, the dismantling of the Zionist state, which is a racist entity, based, as it was stated in Resolution 3379 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, "on a racist imperialist ideology"; and especially to encourage the Israeli Jews to be integrated into a unified state belonging to all its citizens and which would be part of an Arab Socialist Federation, while allowing them, in all the parts of Palestine where they would remain a clear majority, after the Palestinians had exercised their right of return and self-determination, to also exercise their own right to self-determination, in the way which was clearly formulated in the programmatic document of the Arab revolutionary Marxists in 1973-1974 under the title, "The Arab Revolution", stipulating as follows:

"It is in this precise context that is posed, therefore, the question of the present Jewish inhabitants of Israel, who would become a minority after the disappearance of the Zionist state. The programme of workers' democracy towards them, as towards any national group, is contrary to any chauvinism and was formerly clearly defined by Lenin: "No to any hegemony of any nation or any language, no to any persecution, any injustice against a national minority". This means guaranteeing all civil and cultural rights to the Jewish inhabitants and total equality between Jews and Arabs. In the same way, workers' democracy implies recognising the right of the the Jewish workers to self-management in their areas, within the framework of the necessary political and economic centralism of the workers' state. This is the working-class programme for the solution of the Israeli problem".

The demand for the "right of the Israeli nation to self-determination", in the present circumstances, those of the survival of the Zionist state, could not be other than reactionary; but after the removal of the Zionist state and after the reconquest by the Palestinians of their rights, and only then, it would be possible to recognize the right to self-determination of the Jewish national minority in Palestine, but on the very strict condition that the exercise of this right does not undermine the rights of any people; this means, above all, that the exercise of this right must be in harmony with the right of the Palestinian Arab people to self-determination. Moreover, the Arab revolution would not permit the creation of a state having expansionist ambitions, or of a state armed by imperialism. In any case, revolutionary Marxists in Israel should educate the Jewish proletariat in the perspective of a unified state, the only perspective which is compatible with the real interests of the proletariat, just as it is the duty of Arab revolutionaries to fight chauvinistic tendencies among the Arab workers.

Many people might think that such a solution is utopian. But I am not the only one who considers that the task of

revolutionaries is to help make Utopia become reality.