

<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article1609>



# Draft Theses on the Jewish Question Today (1947)

- Fourth International resolutions - Theses and common resolutions -

Publication date: Sunday 8 February 2009

---

**Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved**

---

**The Fourth International must show that for the Jews as for all other peoples of the earth, the defense or the final winning of their own nationality cannot be achieved by building “closed” states and economies, but that a planned world socialist economy is the only realistic framework within which the free and normal development of a people is possible today.**

In presenting its draft theses on the Jewish question prepared one year ago, the International Secretariat of the Fourth International has issued the following statement:

“In view of the fact that this question is being raised in our ranks for the first time and that the discussion is likely to bring forth numerous contributions, the International Secretariat presents these theses as a general line of orientation, but is ready in the course of the discussion to offer clarifications, amendments or corrections if necessary.” – Ed.

\* \* \*

## **A. The Jewish Question in the Capitalist world**

1. Throughout the ages the lot of the Jews, a mercantile people whose survival among other peoples has its root causes in a special social function, has been determined by the general evolution of society, an evolution which brought about changes in their relationships with the various classes. The bourgeois revolution in Western Europe opened the doors of the ghettos and merged the Jewish masses within the environing society. The assimilation of the Jews seemed to be an accomplished fact. But the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, those vast reservoirs of Jews confined for centuries to the functions of middlemen, entered upon the road of capitalist development at a time when world capitalism had already embarked on its imperialist phase. Although the age-old relations of exchange and production experienced an abrupt upheaval which robbed the Jews of the material base for their existence, there was no widespread industrialization to allow these millions of now useless middlemen to become integrated in the proletariat. Social differentiation of the Jewish masses was thus blocked. A small part of the Jews became capitalist or proletarian; a larger part emigrated, thus contravening the tendency toward complete assimilation which was going on in the Western countries. The largest part of all remained in the wretched condition of small merchants, “crushed between feudalism and capitalism, each feeding the rottenness of the other” (A. Leon).

2. The anti-Semitic movements of the past always had a direct or indirect social base. They were movements of various social classes whose interests came into conflict at a certain time with the social function of the Jews. The anti-Semitism of the beginning of the Twentieth Century was nowise different.

1. In the backward countries of Eastern Europe, reactionary political forces were able to turn the discontent and despair of the masses into periodic pogroms – for the hatred of the little people toward the Jewish petty usurer and pawn-broker, the Jewish small merchant and shop-keeper, was an undeniable social reality.

2. In the countries of Central Europe, the anti-Semitic movements, such as that of the burgermaster Lueger in Vienna, had their social roots in the sharpening of competition within the professional and mercantile middle-classes who were being inundated by a tide of Jewish immigrants.

3. In France, the anti-Semitic movement which broke out at the time of the Dreyfus affair had its social origin in the hatred of the aristocracy for the Jewish bankers who had bought up their castles, and of the sons of aristocrats who saw the careers that formerly had been “reserved” exclusively for them now occupied by these dangerous

competitors. These social layers were successful for a certain time in turning against the Jews the inflamed nationalist sentiments of a large part of the petty bourgeoisie.

Rooted in specific social conflicts, these various anti-Semitic movements took on most diverse manifestations, all the way from phenomena of utter barbarism (the Russian pogroms) to the formulation of the "subtle" nationalist theories which were characteristic of the imperialist epoch (Charles Maurras).

3. In Western Europe the social opportunities for assimilation of the Jews had created a powerful ideological movement toward complete assimilation. In Eastern Europe the impossibility of widespread assimilation of the Jews resulted in a strong current in the direction of a national renaissance and preservation of national characteristics. It was within the large concentrations of Jewish masses in Poland, Lithuania, Western Russia, Hungary, Rumania and Slovakia that there developed a new literature in Yiddish, a new folklore, an intense autonomous cultural and even political life (the "Bund" in the workers' movement). Wherever the Jewish masses who had emigrated to the United States were again socially restricted to certain economic fields, and where they were geographically concentrated, this movement continued even in these countries. Lenin, who alone in the Second International understood how to apply Marxist strategy to the national question, rejected all pedantic formalism in his appraisal of this current. He started from the standpoint that the task of the revolutionary party was to integrate into the movement of proletarian emancipation every current of cultural and national autonomy which corresponded to a genuine aspiration of the working masses. That is why he recognized the legitimacy, from a socialist point of view, of the Jewish movement as much as of the Polish or Czech movements. The task of the Jewish workers consisted in struggling, at the side of the workers of the country where they lived, for the overthrow of capitalism, and after this they would be left completely free to carry out the organization of their national and cultural economy as they chose.

4. The epoch of decaying capitalism is also the epoch of the sharpened crisis of the Jewish problem. Inflation, the increased pressure of finance capital, and finally the profound economic crisis, ruined millions of small tradesmen and merchants and inflamed to the highest pitch their hatred of their Jewish competitors. In Central and Eastern Europe the appalling unemployment among the intellectual workers and the increasingly wretched situation of the professionals created a climate especially favorable for the appearance of vast petty-bourgeois mass movements, which found in anti-Semitism one of their ideological weapons. In the countries of Eastern Europe, these movements revealed a very deep popular current which manifested itself in many bloody outbursts. In Germany, it was the state power, fallen into the hands of the Nazi rulers, which organized from on top the persecution and later the extermination of the Jews. In this sense it is decaying capitalism, which deliberately placed power in the hands of a band of bloody criminals, that bears full responsibility for the horrible fate of the Jewish European masses during the war. The extermination of the European Jews by German imperialism is a warning to all other peoples and shows them the fate that awaits them so long as present-day society continues to decay.

5. Zionism arose among the Jewish petty bourgeoisie of Central Europe as a reaction against the rebirth of anti-Semitism at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. A typically petty-bourgeois movement, it remained for a long time without the support of the Jewish bourgeoisie and isolated from the popular masses. During the First World War, British imperialism, which wanted to use Zionism as an instrument for establishing itself in Palestine, seemed to offer Zionism the possibility of becoming a reality through the Balfour declaration. At this time there began a small flow of capital imports, and a slight movement of immigration. It was only after the coming of Hitler to power and the sudden fall of European Jewry into the abyss, that these two movements "speeded up," though obstructed both by the nationalist outbursts of the Arabs and by the policy of British imperialism which threw up more and more barriers against Jewish penetration into Palestine.

For the revolutionary proletariat, Zionism must be looked upon as a movement which is both utopian and reactionary:

# Utopian and Reactionary Character of Zionism

## Utopian:

(a) Because Zionism believes that a “harmonious” development of the productive forces is possible within a “closed economy” in Palestine, in the midst of a capitalist world undergoing ever greater economic convulsions. The immense development of Palestine economy that would be necessary if several million immigrants were to be absorbed, is not realizable within the framework of present-day world capitalist economy.

(b) Because Zionism considers the creation of a Jewish (or bi-national) state possible amid the open hostility of 50 million Arabs – in the face of the fact that the Arab population grows in the same proportion as the Jewish immigration and the gradual industrialization of the country.

(c) Because Zionism hopes to reach this goal by relying on the maneuverings among the great powers, all of which, in reality, want to utilize the Zionist movement simply as a pawn in their play for power in the Arab world.

(d) Because Zionism thinks it possible to neutralize anti-Semitism throughout the world by the simple grant of a nationality to the Jews – in the face of the fact that anti-Semitism has deep social, historical and ideological roots which will be all the more difficult to tear out as the death agony of capitalism is prolonged.

## Reactionary:

(a) Because Zionism serves as a support for British imperialist domination, by giving to imperialism the pretext of acting as “arbiter” between the Jews and Arabs, by demanding the maintenance of the British mandate, and by developing a “closed” miniature Jewish economy within which the working masses have a much higher standard of living and different immediate interests than those of the Arab working masses.

(b) Because it produces a nationalist reaction on the part of the Arab masses, causes a racial division of the working-class movement, strengthens the “sacred union” both of the Jews and of the Arabs, and thus makes it possible for imperialism to perpetuate the conflict by continuing to keep its troops in Palestine.

(c) Because it retards the movement for the agrarian revolution, by buying lands from the large Arab landholders and working them, thanks to foreign subsidies, as a “closed” Jewish agriculture within Arab Palestinian agriculture. In this way the position of the large landholders is to some extent reestablished, lands are taken from the Arab peasants, and most important of all, the Jewish masses in Palestine have no interest in fighting for partition of the lands of the effendis among the Arab masses, since this would mean the end of their land purchases.

(d) Because it acts as a brake on the participation of the Jewish working masses in the class struggle in the rest of the world, separates them from the world proletariat, gives them autonomous goals to strive for, and creates illusions as to the possibility of improving their lot within the framework of decaying world capitalism.

For all these reasons the revolutionary workers’ movement has always conducted a violent struggle against Zionist ideology and practice. The arguments advanced by the “socialist” representatives of Zionism in favor of their cause are either the classic reformist arguments (“the possibility of gradually improving the situation of the Jewish masses”); or the social-patriotic arguments (“it is first necessary to resolve the national question for all the Jews before approaching the solution of the social problems of the Jewish workers”); or the classic arguments of the defenders of

imperialism (“the penetration of Jews into Palestine has developed not only industry but also the workers’ movement, the general culture of the masses, their standard of living, etc.”) – the arguments advanced by the defenders of colonialism in every country.

## **B. The Present Aspect of the Jewish Question throughout the World**

6. After the Second World War, the especially tragic situation of the Jews appears as a symbol of the entire tragedy of humanity slipping back toward barbarism. After the fearful tragedy of European Judaism, the Jews in every part of the world are facing a revival of the hostility of large layers of the population against them.

1. In Europe, two years after the “liberation,” more than 100,000 Jews are still living under the infamous regime of the concentration camps. The imperialist masters who in the course of their military operations were able to shift millions of men in the period of a few days have been unable, after searching for twenty months, to find any refuge whatsoever for these miserable survivors of the Nazi camps. Throughout the continent there are hardly a million Jews remaining.

2. In Palestine, 700,000 Jews face an Arab world in full eruption. The development of Egyptian and Syrian capitalism adds the factor of economic competition to the many causes for the militant anti-Zionism. British imperialism and the Arab feudal lords and bourgeoisie will for their part do all they can to turn the hatred of the oppressed Arab masses against the Jew as a scapegoat. Thus the Jews in Palestine are in danger of being wiped out in the widespread explosion which is preparing in the Middle East.

3. In the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy in its struggle against the opposition has made use of the anti-Semitism latent within the peasant masses and the backward working-class layers. During the period of the First and Second Five-Year Plans, millions of Jewish merchants and artisans were brought into the lower and middle ranks of the bureaucracy as engineers, technicians, directors of cooperatives, and into the upper layers on the collective farms. In Western Russia they constitute that part of the bureaucracy most directly in contact with the oppressed masses, and thus it is in large part against them that the hatred of the masses for the parasites and profiteers of the regime is concentrated. The bloody pogroms launched by the native population at the time of the German invasion furnished very clear evidence of the intensification of this hatred (70,000 Jews killed in Kiev in twenty-four hours). A sharpening of the social crisis in Russia and the purges of a civil war would certainly see the extermination of the Jewish masses if the counter-revolution were victorious.

4. Finally, in the United States, the confining of Jews to certain sectors of small manufacture and trade and to commercial and professional occupations will cause, in the acute economic crisis ahead, a heightening of the competition which will give a strong material base to the anti-Semitism existing now in latent form. Exploitation of reactionary prejudices against “racial minorities” has been a long-time favorite weapon of the American fascist gangsters. Insofar as the sharpening of the social crisis, the politicization of the workers’ movement and the rapid decay of American “democracy” give birth to the development of a fascist mass party, anti-Semitism as well as anti-Negro agitation will assume gigantic proportions. The fate of the Jews in the United States is tied in the very closest way to the outcome of the tremendous struggle of the American working class against the Yankee bourgeoisie. A victory of the latter through the establishment of a dictatorship would signify within a short period a catastrophe for the Jews comparable only to the catastrophe which Hitler’s coming to power meant for the Jews in Europe.

7. The endless series of ordeals undergone by the Jewish masses in Europe has without question accelerated the growth of a national consciousness, both among the survivors and among the Jewish masses in America and Palestine who feel themselves closely tied to the fate of their brothers in Europe. This national consciousness is manifested in the following ways:

1. The Jewish masses in general now want to affirm their own nationality as against other peoples. Violent Jewish nationalism corresponds to the violence of the persecutions and anti-Semitism.
2. The eyes of the Jewish masses in Europe are turned toward emigration. With all frontiers hermetically sealed, and as a result of the general conditions of the postwar world and in harmony with the engulfing wave of nationalism, the desire of the Jews to leave a continent which for them is nothing but a vast graveyard finds its expression primarily in a Zionist desire to go to Palestine.
3. Within the Zionist movement, the struggle for the "Jewish state," hitherto conducted exclusively by the extreme right (the "revisionists"), has now been taken up by all parties (the "Biltmore program") except the centrist Hashomer Hatzair.

The rebirth of the national consciousness of the masses is the result of capitalism's decay which raises once more all the problems that had been solved in its period of expansion. The Fourth International, basing itself firmly on its program and on a scientific analysis of the situation in Palestine but at the same time taking into account the actual state of mind of the Jewish masses, must recognize that their desire to lead their own national existence is a legitimate one. The Fourth International must show concretely that the winning of their nationality cannot be realized within decaying capitalist society, and is especially unrealizable and reactionary in Palestine. The Fourth International must show that for the Jews as for all other peoples of the earth, the defense or the final winning of their own nationality cannot be achieved by building "closed" states and economies, but that a planned world socialist economy is the only realistic framework within which the free and normal development of a people is possible today. The Fourth International must make the Jewish masses aware of the terrible catastrophes which await them if the decay of capitalism continues its course. Integration of the Jewish emancipation movement within the movement of the world working-class is the only thing that will make possible a harmonious solution of the Jewish problem. Socialist planned economy, "completely altering the topography of the globe" (Trotsky), will assure to all who desire it their own national existence within the framework of the United States of the World.

### A Program of Action

8. But the Fourth International will never win decisive influence over the Jewish masses by simply proclaiming that only the socialist revolution will bring their emancipation. Only by taking leadership of a vast world movement of solidarity on the part of the proletariat toward the victims of imperialist and fascist persecution, only by showing the Jews in practice that the solutions proposed by the revolutionary movement offer more hope and are more realistic than the Zionist "solution" – only in this way will the Fourth International succeed at the next turn in drawing the Jewish masses into the world struggle against imperialism. To march against the Zionist current today, and to oppose to it another immediate and concrete solution – these are the two indispensable factors in making preparations for the next stage. When the Jewish masses have gone through their disillusioning experience with Zionism and have learned the futility of their efforts and sacrifices, they will turn toward us – provided we understand how to move toward them today with our solutions as well as with an intransigent criticism of Zionism.

1. All sections of the Fourth International must advance the slogan: "Open the doors of every country to the Jewish refugees! Abolish all restrictions on immigration!" This slogan must be supported especially in the United States, on the one hand, and by the English, Canadian, French and all the Latin American sections on the other. The latter, particularly the Argentine and Brazil sections, and also our Australian section, must add to this the slogan: "Abolish all discriminatory racial and religious clauses in immigration legislation!" Every concrete occasion (complaints about the insufficiency of manpower and the population decline, partial opening of the country to certain categories of immigrants, actions in commemoration of the victims of fascism, etc.) must be utilized to arouse the working-class public opinion of the country and to demand the launching of concrete actions as the way to get immediate results. Resolutions like those of the CIO must be used as a point of departure for demanding actions from the World Federation of Trade Unions, for organizing joint movements in those sections of the economy and society which are most ready to express their solidarity in action (seamen, government employees, etc.) through slow-down strikes, organized sabotage of discriminatory measures, protest actions, joint meetings and manifestations, etc. Only insofar as our sections can prove to the Jews that they are carrying on a real and effective struggle for the opening of their own country to immigration – only thus will they succeed in getting the Jews to choose immigration into these

countries rather than into Palestine, since immigration into Palestine would then be more difficult while at the same time constituting an act contrary to the interests of the anti-imperialist masses of the Middle East.

2. All sections of the Fourth International must devote themselves seriously to the task of combating the foul vapors of anti-Semitic ideology existing or steadily growing in large layers of the population of every country. This work of disinfection is all the more urgent because the "official" working-class movement, whether through conservatism, cowardliness or narrow partisan calculation (the anti-Trotskyism of the French CP is expressed not infrequently in anti-Semitic arguments), does nothing to eliminate from the consciousness of the masses the anti-Jewish poison introduced by the Hitler propaganda.

On every concrete occasion our sections must demolish the fascist lies about "Jewish capitalism" or the "Jewish monopolists." They must constantly warn the proletarian mass organizations against every attempt to rebuild anti-Semitic organizations. Using the tragic examples of the last years, they must impregnate the consciousness of the masses with the fundamental truth that their own fate is at stake in the struggle against anti-Semitic gangsterism. Only insofar as our sections can bring the masses to understand this truth and to translate it into action – only thus will they succeed in convincing the Jews that the integration of their emancipation movement into the world working-class movement is the only thing which will put them in a position to defend themselves effectively against new waves of anti-Semitism.

3. All sections of the Fourth International which are faced with an organized fascist movement making full use of anti-Semitic demagoguery and proceeding to terrorist acts against the Jews, must strive to mobilize the working class in armed formations (militias, etc.) to defend the Jewish people. Wherever the Jewish population, is geographically concentrated in Jewish quarters, they must propose and help to set up armed defense guards, while endeavoring to fuse them with the workers' militias. They must explain to the Jewish masses that only such fusion in the armed struggle can guarantee an effective defense; but at the same time they must warn the workers that only armed defense of the Jews can prevent the crushing of the entire working-class movement later on by the same fascist weapons.

## C. The Present Aspect of the Palestine Problem

9. The Palestine problem has received a new and special importance since the end of the Second World War because of a number of "new factors" profoundly changing its physiognomy:

1. The industrialization of the Near and Middle East has to some extent strengthened the native Arab bourgeoisie in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and to a lesser degree in the other Arab countries. The social differentiation of the old feudal or patriarchal Arab society has been speeded up. An Arab proletariat much more powerful numerically and already politically conscious has appeared on the political scene in numerous countries of the Middle East (strikes in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Iran). Arab nationalism shows the same differentiations. Alongside feudal and reactionary pan-Islamism there now appears a progressive pan-Arab current which sees in the realization of a union of the Arab countries of the Middle East the only real framework for the development of the productive forces and for the constitution of an Arab state. The bourgeoisie can support this idea only in a hesitant way on an ideological plane, insofar as it desires expansion of the market for its industry which has been plunged in a profound crisis since the end of the war. The only force capable of accomplishing the program of the national-democratic revolution in the Arab world is the proletariat, which alone can carry out to the end, through the mechanism of the permanent revolution, the struggle against feudalism, for the agrarian revolution, for the emancipation of the Arab world from imperialist intervention, and for the constitution of the unity of the Arab world.

2. Growth of anti-imperialist movements within the framework of the colonial revolutions, the most significant upheavals of the immediate postwar period. The weakening of the old imperialist powers (Great Britain, France, Italy) had the result that the bourgeoisie and even certain feudal layers seized the opportunity of obtaining by pressure – and without having to unloose genuine mass struggles, from which they always recoil – important concessions from

the occupying powers, such as withdrawal of French troops from Syria and Lebanon and preparatory steps for withdrawal of British troops from Egypt. These various retreats on the part of imperialism are an incentive for the anti-imperialist struggle in the other colonial or semi-colonial countries of the Middle East. They strike a powerful blow at the prestige of imperialism and they increase the confidence of the native masses in their own strength.

3. Transformation of Palestine into the key position in the system of imperialist defense in the Eastern Mediterranean. After the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt, Palestine will be the main base for the British fleet, air force, land army and secret services in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the key position for defense of the Suez Canal and the imperialist route to India. The terrorist actions are used simply as a pretext for the large concentrations of British troops in Palestine. In reality, what is involved for British imperialism is constructing a strong base with a view to the coming conflicts and for defense of the Empire.

4. Transformation of the Middle East into one of the main stakes in the rivalry between the "Big Three." Before the war the Middle East was the part of the world where the predominant influence of British imperialism was least menaced. Since then, the drive of Rommel all the way to El Alamein, the installing of American "observers" in the kingdom of Ibn Saud, the outbreak of the Anglo-American dispute over Arabian oil and the Russo-Anglo-American dispute over Iranian oil, the Russian penetration into Iranian Azerbaijan, the Russian attempts to threaten the integrity of Turkish territory, the organizing of the Orthodox Church throughout the Middle East as a powerful agency of the Kremlin diplomacy – all these have brought into question the exclusive domination of Great Britain in this part of the world and have transformed it into an arena of constant conflicts between the great powers. And since the Middle East is, moreover, the least tapped and most important source of oil in the entire world, it is now becoming the principal contested area in the world struggle for this strategic raw material, the reserves of which in the United States and the Soviet Union are greatly reduced. The various "tactical" movements of American and Soviet diplomacy toward the Zionist movement must be seen as elements in their intrigues to supplant British domination in the Arab world.

5. The demand for immigration into Palestine – advanced by the mass of Jewish refugees in Europe and supported by a powerful protest movement on the part of American Zionism, and culminating in the "peaceful" actions of the Hagana in Palestine as well as the terrorism of the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern group.

## Our Point of Departure

10. The starting point for the position of the Fourth International on the Palestine problem must be an understanding of the necessity for the anti-imperialist struggle waged by the Arabs, setting as the goal of this struggle the establishment of a union of the Arab countries of the Middle East. The Arab masses, the workers and poor peasants, constitute the revolutionary force of the Middle East and also of Palestine, because of their numbers, their social conditions and the material conditions of their existence which set them in direct conflict with imperialism. The revolutionary party must base itself first of all on the dynamics of the class struggle waged in defense of their interests. The Middle East section of the Fourth International, growing as the Arab proletariat develops and grows in strength, and built on the base of the existing nuclei in Palestine and Egypt, must lead the actions of the masses in defense of their daily interests, must raise the workers' consciousness to an understanding of the necessity of political action, and must strive to weld a bloc of all the exploited around the revolutionary proletariat through a struggle for the four following essential demands:

1. Immediate withdrawal of British troops. Complete independence for Palestine.
2. Immediate calling of a single and sovereign Constituent Assembly.
3. Expropriation of the lands of the effendis, with management of the expropriated land by committees of poor peasants.
4. Expropriation of all enterprises which are the property of foreign capital, with workers' management of the nationalized enterprises.

Through the struggle for these four central objectives the revolutionary party will educate the masses on the need for

setting themselves increasingly in opposition to the Arab bourgeoisie which is so closely tied to the effendis. When the struggle of the masses reaches its peak, when committees of workers and peasants cover all the Middle East and the question of seizure of power by the Arab proletariat is placed on the order of the day, the revolutionary party will have sufficiently educated the masses to be able to lead them on to expropriation of the "national" bourgeoisie.

11. Can these four objectives be realized at the present stage in a common struggle of the Arab masses and the Jewish working-class masses? To answer this question we must start not from abstract formulas but from the social and ideological realities of Jewish life in Palestine. With the exception of several thousand Jewish workers employed on the railroads, in the IPC, the refineries and the port facilities, the entire Jewish industrial and agricultural proletariat of Palestine is employed in "closed" Jewish industry, which operates on the basis of the steady imports of foreign capital and guarantees the Jewish workers a standard of living far above that of the Arab workers. Moreover, the Jewish community in Palestine lives in constant fear of an Arab uprising, and in the face of this danger places all its hopes in continuous immigration and maintenance of the British occupation. We can therefore assert the following:

(a) Far from desiring the immediate withdrawal of the British occupation forces, the Jewish masses on the contrary wish to have them maintained in the country. The only thing demanded by the Zionist leaders, bourgeois as well as workers, is concessions on immigration and on the setting up of a Jewish state. But the overwhelming majority of Jews in Palestine (primarily the Hagana ) are not ready to "act" against imperialism except insofar as such "action" does not endanger the fundamental "security" of the Jewish community as against the Arab world. That is why armed struggle or even large-scale sabotage undertaken by the Jewish masses is at the present stage virtually excluded. The aim of Zionist action today is simply to exert pressure on British imperialism in order to win concessions, and not to strive to expel British imperialism from Palestine.

The terrorist movement and the so-called "Hebrew Committee of National Liberation" do set forth the objective of expelling British imperialism from Palestine. But they cannot conceive of such expulsion except in the form of a general arming of the Jews in Palestine who would hold the Arab world in check until such time as large-scale immigration of Jews would give them the military strength to oppose the "Arab menace." These ideas, an abstraction formed out of complete utopianism, are ultra-reactionary and can only deepen still further the gulf separating the Jewish and the Arab workers in Palestine.

(b) All the Jews in Palestine are opposed to the immediate calling of a Constituent Assembly, which would place power in the hands of the Arab majority of the population.

The terrorists claim that they are struggling for a free, independent and democratic Palestine. But since they are the most ardent partisans of a "Jewish state," they also have to find an excuse for depriving the majority of the population of sovereignty. They say they are not ready to organize general elections until the Jews in exile have been given "the opportunity within a certain period of time" to return to their country. In other words, they do not support general elections until such moment as the Jews constitute an absolute majority of the population.

(c) The Jews have no interest in expropriation of the effendis, for this would actually deprive them of any possibility of buying new lands and enlarging their "closed Jewish economy" in Palestine.

(d) They are even more violently opposed to expropriation of the enterprises built with foreign capital and to the closing of the country to capital imports, since this would be a deathblow to their Jewish economy.

Thus the conclusion is inevitable that at the present stage the Jewish masses in Palestine do not as a whole constitute an anti-imperialist force, and that the establishing of a Jewish-Arab anti-imperialist bloc cannot become a slogan for immediate agitation.

12. The question of Jewish immigration into Palestine must be viewed in the light of the foregoing considerations. As long as the Jewish and Arab economies exist as two separate economies in Palestine, the Arab working population will consider every new influx of Jewish immigrants as an act of open hostility. With the entire population of Palestine living under the perspective of the outbreak of a bloody conflict in the Middle East, the Arab masses must necessarily look upon the arrival of new immigrants as the arrival of enemy soldiers; and this point of view is confirmed, moreover, by the way in which the Jewish masses look upon this, immigration. That is why we must recognize the fact that continuance of Jewish immigration into Palestine widens the breach between the Jewish and the Arab workers, strengthens the positions of and prolongs the presence of British imperialism, and cannot but prepare the ground for the complete extermination of the Jewish minority when the Arab uprising comes in the next stage.

The Fourth International must therefore do its utmost to dissuade the Jewish refugees from immigration to Palestine; it must endeavor, within the framework of a movement of world solidarity, to get the doors of other countries opened to them, and must warn that Palestine is for them a terrible trap; and in its concrete propaganda on the question of Jewish immigration, it must start from the sovereignty of the Arab population. Only the Arab population has the right to determine whether or not immigration into Palestine should be open or closed to the Jews. The immigration question must be decided by the Constituent Assembly elected by all the population from the age of 18. That is the only democratic position on this question – and at the same time it is a position which fits into the framework of general revolutionary strategy in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the Fourth International must condemn and combat the British repression of Jewish immigration, denounce all their police measures and constantly oppose to these the concrete demand for withdrawal of the British troops. It will not be hard to explain to the Arab masses that this imperialist repression, now limited to the Jews, is only the preparation for much more savage repression of future Arab movements. It is in the interest of the Arab masses that every protest movement against British police terror should be utilized to bring forward concretely the question of withdrawal of British troops. Moreover, it would then become clear that the very “victims” of the repression would not at all accept a consistent struggle against their “oppressors.”

Similarly, the Fourth International must oppose all the “solutions” proposed and perhaps carried out by imperialism, with or without the help of its agents in the Jewish Agency. All these solutions, such as division of Palestine, limited immigration of 100,000 Jews, surrender of the British mandate to the UN, have the aim of prolonging the presence of British troops in the country, and they all deprive the majority of the population of its right to self-determination.

13. At the present stage, large-scale unity between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine is unrealizable; only on a very limited scale and to the extent that a section of the Jewish workers is employed outside the “closed” Jewish economy, has it been possible for Jewish-Arab strikes such as those of the past year to occur. But this does not mean that such unity is excluded for all time. Up to now the Jewish population in Palestine has bent all its efforts toward strengthening its autonomous economic and political positions. But already the radical section of the Jewish nationalist youth has recognized the futility of the Jewish Agency’s efforts at “conciliation” and “maneuvering” in order to win from imperialism or from the great powers unlimited immigration and establishment of a Jewish state. The present waves of terrorism on the part of the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern group are acts of despair on the part of this minority which is first utilized and then abandoned by the bourgeois leaders of the Zionist movement and which arose because of the blind alley into which the entire movement has wandered. Obviously this terrorism of despair is not in itself the road to a solution of the Palestine problem. Quite the contrary. Against this terrorism, the Arab feudal lords and bourgeoisie are able to create an atmosphere of artificial “solidarity” between the masses and imperialism, and to aggravate the hostility between the Arab and the Jewish workers. From a military standpoint, the terrorist acts can only hasten the establishment of a British police force in Palestine, the goal of the entire postwar imperialist policy. But as the ultimate phase of Zionism, terrorism, achieving no concrete results, may make the most conscious and most active elements among the Jewish masses more disposed to reconsider the whole question of Zionism and the solution of the Jewish problem. This reconsideration of the entire question is what the Fourth International must work for today.

Any possible unity between the Jews and the Arabs must first of all move along the road of the abolishing of all racial ideology and practice on the part of the Jews.

- \* Down with exclusively Jewish enterprises! For the employment of Arab workers in every industry in the country!
- \* Down with separate Jewish and Arab trade unions! For the establishment of Jewish and Arab trade unions!
- \* Down with the hidden boycott of Arab or Jewish products! Down with the “closed Jewish economy!” For the mutual integration of the Jewish and Arab economies!
- \* Down with the idea of a “Jewish state” imposed on the majority of the population! For the elimination of Zionist concepts from the workers’ movement! For the integration of the Jewish workers into the national-democratic revolutionary movement of the Arab masses!
- \* For the breaking-away of the Jewish trade unions and working-class organizations from the Jewish Agency, and the publication in full of all the secret proceedings of the Agency.
- \* For the breaking-away of the Arab trade unions and working-class organizations from the Arab League and the Arab High Committee for Palestine, and the publication in full of all the secret proceedings of these organizations.

All these slogans, which today can be advanced only as general propaganda slogans, will necessarily meet with furious opposition from the Zionists, not only for ideological reasons but also and especially because the privileged material situation of the Jews in relation to the Arab masses is thus threatened. But as the bankruptcy of Zionism becomes more and more strikingly revealed to the masses; as immigration slows down and the terrible danger of the Arab explosion comes nearer; as our propaganda helps in getting the masses to realize that it is a life-or-death question for them to find a common ground with the Arab masses, even at the price of temporarily giving up certain privileges – under these conditions our slogans will be able to pass from the propaganda stage to the stage of agitation, and will help in bringing about a split between the workers’ movement and Zionism. This is the condition sine qua non for the realization of Jewish-Arab unity of action against imperialism. This alone can prevent the Arab revolution in the Middle East from passing over the corpse of Palestinian Judaism. In Palestine as well as among the Jewish masses in the rest of the world, a firm position today against the current is the only thing which will make it possible to work toward a reversal of the current in the next stage.

This means also that it is necessary for the sections of the Fourth International to carry on preliminary propaganda work within the Zionist organizations of the extreme left. While showing that the slogan of a “bi-national state” is a nationalist and anti-democratic slogan, running counter to both the right of self-determination and the immediate needs of the anti-imperialist struggle in Palestine, our members must at the same time constantly put on the order of the day the question of concrete realization of the slogan of Jewish-Arab unity. They must confront the centrist leaders with their responsibilities, they must put on the order of the day the adoption of the anti-racial program outlined above, and thus speed the development of the consciousness of the Jewish working-class vanguard beyond the stage of Zionism.

*January 1, 1947*

From Fourth International, Vol.9, No. 1, January-February 1948, pp. 18-24.

Transcribed & marked up by Daniel Gaido for the Marxists’ Internet Archive in 2006. Proofread by Scott Wilson.

[Note by the transcriber: This document appeared anonymously but was actually drafted by Ernest Mandel [Ernest Germain]. The original French version is available online as [Projet de thèses sur la question juive après la seconde guerre impérialiste.](#)]