

# As red as a Palestinian watermelon

## RM Editorial Board

The 2023 issue of *Revolutionary Marxism* is presenting an important dossier to its readership, which should offer a glimpse into the unflinching anti-Zionist tradition of revolutionary Marxism. The dossier has been put together under the conditions where the heroic people of Palestine has been facing a genocidal onslaught for six weeks and counting, under thunderous applause of imperialist states, euphemistically called the “international community.” Yet, the Zionist terror and the bloodshed it entails is but one part of the story. True to form, Palestinians resist – in Palestine with arms and in the diaspora with massive mobilizations, as popular movements in their support rock the imperialist world, with their brothers and sisters of all creeds and nations taking to the streets under the chants of “Free Palestine.” In this watershed moment, as revolutionary Marxists, we march, organize, and fight with the slogans of destruction of imperialism and Zionism written on our banners for a Palestine where Arabs and Jews will live fraternally.

Yet, our struggle against Zionism and for a free Palestine is nothing new: For the standard bearers of revolutionary Marxism that we are, it is a time-honored tradition, older than the Zionist state itself, to be precise. Accordingly, we would like to introduce episodes from this proud history of ours in this issue with three crucial documents. The first, from the Fourth International (FI) itself, clearly illustrates the organization’s adamant and principled opposition to the partition of Palestine in 1947, on the eve of its dismembering by imperialism with active

support of Stalinism. The second, published the same year, further illustrates this position – this time uttered by the Palestinian section of the FI, the Revolutionary Communist League. However, these are no mere historical curiosities separated from us by decades of history. To recall the actuality of our anti-Zionist struggle, we proudly present a statement signed by the RedMed Web Network and the Christian Rakovski International Socialist Center.

### A brief timeline

To fully appreciate the meaning of the documents presented here, their contextualization and an emphasis on their stark contrast with the Stalinist position is in order. Let us start by recalling the timeline, albeit in an admittedly schematic manner.

The Zionist movement itself emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly as a product of increasing anti-semitism and pogroms in Europe, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe as well as Russia. Reflecting its emergence as a European organization directly resulting from anti-semitism in Europe, approximately half of the delegates at the First World Zionist Congress held in 1897 in Basel were from Eastern Europe and around one-fourth from the Russian Empire.

The Bolshevik tradition's fight against Zionism started well before the October Revolution, with Lenin himself penning a number of articles against Zionism – still a relatively marginal international current – which he correctly identified as a reactionary movement, harmful to both for the international working class and the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup> The communist movement held this anti-Zionist credo high, even (and particularly) when a sizeable number of militants came to communism from a sort of left-Zionism gathered around the organization called Poalei Zion and constituted the initial cadre of the communist party in Palestine. It was patent for all within the communist movement, including those who had a stint in Zionism in their youth, that any remnant of Zionist ideology would be anathema to communism. Notably, the communist's uncompromising attitude towards the Zionists remained steadfast, even in the immediate aftermath of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust, which created a renewed interest towards Zionism.

The principled position would only be compromised by the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1947, just as British colonialism – hastily leaving Palestine and terminating its mandate over the country - decided to partition Palestine to placate the Zionists, with whom it had an uneasy alliance since the Balfour Declaration in 1917. To give the partition the cloak of impartial international mediation, a sub-entity of the fledgling UN dispatched a mission to advise on the post-mandate transition. Some members of the mission (delegates of India, Iran, and Yugoslavia) proposed a federal one-state solution, while others suggested a partition. In 1947, the UN voted for a revised version of this so-called majority plan, giving the planned Jewish state more than 55 percent of historic Palestine. At that point, Jews formed merely one-third of the country's population. The Arab Higher Committee (AHC), representing

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<sup>1</sup> See Jean Allemand and Jean-Claude Sage, *Lénine et la lutte contre les agents sionistes dans le monde ouvrier*, Paris: Editions Le Communiste, 1971.

the Palestinian side, resolutely rejected the offer. It was clear that the AHC position had the backing of the Palestinian population, as the Palestinian revolt had persisted between 1936 and 1939, notwithstanding ferocious British oppression and only dwindling with the conflagration of World War II.<sup>2</sup>

It is in this precise context that Stalinism displayed one of its numerous about-faces, trampling on yet another cornerstone of communist politics. When the Soviet delegate to the UN, Andrei Gromyko, announced that his state would vote for the partition plan (even if he said that they were still for a one-state solution in principle, hence duly paying lip service to the correct political position before sacrificing the Palestinian nationhood), also carrying four other members of the newly-forming “Eastern bloc,” this amounted to nothing less than Stalinism severing one of its few remaining ties to historical positions of communism.

Make no mistake, it was no one-off blunder nor a mere diplomatic compromise. After the proclamation of the state of Israel in 1948, the Soviet Union moved all in to establish itself as the biggest ally of the Zionist dystopia incarnate. It was the first state to extend *de jure* recognition to Israel (even if the US had offered its *de facto* recognition via a phone call a few minutes after the proclamation). Through the proxy of Czechoslovakia, it supplied arms and munition to the Zionist armies, giving them an edge over the ill-equipped and poorly-trained Arab armies. ***This infamy alone would have been enough for us to never forgive Stalinism: the workers’ state’s arms served in the Nakba***, in which up to 750 thousand Palestinians were forcibly displaced by Zionist armies.<sup>3</sup> Let the extent of vileness be crystal clear: the first prime minister of Israel and the butcher of Palestinian civilians, David Ben-Gurion, would go so far as to say that the Soviet aid had “saved the country.”<sup>4</sup> This was not the first occasion – nor would it be the last – where Stalinism saved the enemies of the working class and of oppressed peoples.

Now, with this dossier, we want to introduce our reader to another strand of communism – one that stood by the Palestinian cause through thick and thin, sometimes with humility due to the modest extent of its forces, yet without apology. In other words, a communist tradition as red as a Palestinian watermelon: our unsullied banner of revolutionary Marxism.

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2 Ghassan Kanafani, “The 1936-39 Revolt in Palestine”, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kanafani/1972/revolt.htm>

3 For Nakba, see Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oxford: Oneworld Books, 2007, 2nd Edition.

4 Marin Kramer, “Who Saved Israel in 1947”, <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/israel-zionism/2017/11/who-saved-israel-in-1947/>

# Friends of Palestine Against Imperialism and Zionism



The Friends of Palestine Against Imperialism and Zionism platform is fighting Zionism and its lackeys in Turkey since 2018.

It aims to support the Palestinian cause in the quest for the total destruction of Israel and the foundation of a free, democratic, secular and socialist Palestine from the river to the sea, for Arab and Jewish Palestinians.

It seeks to unmask the fake support of the despotism regime in Turkey of the Palestinian cause and to expose its complicity with Zionists by not heeding the boycott, divestment, and sanctions call of the Palestinians, and by maintaining economic, military, and diplomatic relations with Israel.

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