

# Communists in Palestine

THERE is no need to overestimate the influence of the Communists in the present disturbances in Palestine. They are only one factor, and far from the most important, in the tension in the country. But the question at issue is not the degree of their effectiveness or the measure of their responsibility. Be their direct blood-guilt large or small, the fact remains that they are systematically engaged in instigating the ignorant Arab peasantry against the Jewish population.

There is no point in discussing or refuting the theoretical Communist objections to Zionism at the present moment. We are concerned now with the practice that the theory assumes. What are the actual tactics of the Communists in Palestine? What does their "revolutionary" activity consist of?

To properly understand the manner in which they advance the cause of the proletariat, one must realize that their present attitude is not new.

They are following a consistent party-line, which dictates that Arab murders of innocent Jews are to be glorified as "revolution"—which is to be encouraged in so far as provocative proclamations and appeals are able to do so. The Communist reaction to the Arab riots of 1929 outraged the Jewish world. The ruthless and irresponsible fanaticism of their position has not deviated one inch since then. If anything, the Communists have become more firmly entrenched in their determination to propagandize the Arabs against the Jews regardless of the consequences of such propaganda. For a complete picture of their activities one must review the situation since 1929, when the "correct" direction was apparently first announced.

Since the outbreaks of 1929 — outbreaks in which helpless children and old men were slaughtered, the New York Communist newspaper, the *Freiheit* hailed the massacre as a "revolutionary

uprising". It is interesting to note that the *Freiheit* did not see so clearly and so correctly at once. From August 20 to August 28 it indicated natural sympathy for the Jewish victims. On August 26, it even praised the heroic resistance of the Jews to attack. "When a pogrom breaks out there is no other choice"; those were the words of the *Freiheit*. On August 28, the "pogrom" became a "revolutionary uprising". On August 29, the *Freiheit* made a clean breast of its change of heart in the following terms: "During the first few days, the *Freiheit* failed to perceive the national-revolutionary character of the uprising—that was an error. It pointed to the Jewish self-defense as a progressive necessity—that was an error." On August 31, the nature of the apocalypse vouchsafed the editors of the *Freiheit*, was revealed. They had gotten the party-line. They published a resolution of the political bureau of the Communist party which explained that the first viewpoint expressed by the paper was "a counter-revolutionary viewpoint characteristic of social democrats and the bourgeoisie." And so, purified by the right doctrine, the murderers of the children of Hebron became "revolutionaries."

That same year—1929—the West European Bureau of the Executive committee of the Communist International issued a circular entitled "The significance of the events in Palestine." The circular contains the sentence "It is the duty of all our parties to fight against Jewish immigration into Palestine."

Fighting against Jewish immigration has, of course, become the special task of the Jewish Communists in Palestine. And instigating the ignorant Arab population against the Jewish settlers has become their "revolutionary activity". One of the strangest unions in history is that of the Communists and the feudal Mufti nationalists. The United Front in Palestine means not a united front with the Jewish Socialist workers but with the blackest reactionary elements of the Arab nationalists — the Pan-Islam — Pan-Arab-groups. Why the imperialism of Pan-Islam or Pan-Arabistan slides so easily down the Communist palate is another mystery of their revolutionary zeal.

In practice, Communist activity in Palestine means creating a pogrom-psychology against the peaceful Jewish population — hand-in-hand with the terrorist band, the Arab feudal reactionaries.

The text of the proclamation they issued in November is worth quoting, even though it has already appeared: "You have seen the shamefulness of Zionist occupation. They (the Zionists) have succeeded in seizing the largest part of your community land. They were not satisfied with the establishment of their national home with the support of British imperialism and a large

number of illegal Zionist immigrants. They began to strengthen it with ammunition, with large quantities of weapons aimed solely at Arab hearts to exterminate them completely."

The proclamation goes on to remind the Arabs "that the government armed the Jews several times. It provided them with ammunition and instructors in the years 1920, 1929 and 1933, under the pretext of self-defense."

The second part of the proclamation is an emotional appeal pointing to two paths before the Arab nation: a life of cowards or a death of honor. "He who chooses the second path must fight the way your fathers and forefathers fought, shedding their blood for their fatherland. Now you have the opportunity—the day of the Arab strike, which should assume a mass character and be spent in revolutionary demonstration instead of in sleeping in houses or cafes."

"Don't stop the strike unless the government stops Jewish immigration and the purchase of land—unless they disarm the Jews and arm the Arabs."

"Fight for searches in Tel Aviv and the Jewish colonies, for confiscation of ammunition whether secret or openly kept; for the appointment of committees to guard and inspect the borders and customs houses and for the permission to arm the Arab masses." Propaganda so unscrupulous in tone, hardly requires comment! Even the New York *Freiheit* was outraged by the brazen, provocative tone of this document. It promptly characterized the text as a clumsy forgery.

Unfortunately for the *Freiheit* however, the Palestine Communists admitted authorship. However, they cabled that it was an "error of judgment." How did they rectify this error of judgment? The original proclamation was published in Arabic. They published a new one in *Hebrew* in which they substituted the word *Zionists* for *Jews*. Since, the Palestine Arabs are Hebrew scholars, and so few Jews in Palestine are Zionists, the effect of the correction may be gauged.

One must remember that the Communists are not instigating Marxian scholars. Phrases like the "class-struggle" mean very little to the illiterate *fellah*, the Arab peasant. But he does understand phrases like the "Zionists have succeeded in seizing the largest part of your community land" or words such as "don't stop the strike unless they disarm the Jews and arm the Arabs."

We have a "strike" in Palestine today. We have murder in Palestine today. We have the burning of forests and fields. We have the shooting down of helpless men. The Communists alone are not responsible, but they have helped. And they are continuing to help.

In the midst of the present murder and wanton destruction, have they remembered their "error

of judgment"? How have they made amends? They have issued another proclamation which appeals to Arabs and Jewish youth to fight Jewish immigration and British imperialism in the approved Communist phraseology. It also makes another appeal. "It (the Communist Party) appeals at the same time to the Jewish youth urging it to abandon its participation in the bloody Zionist attack and not to support the army and the police in their suppression of activities against the revolting Arab masses."

"The bloody Zionist attack" and the "revolting Arab masses"! Who dares visualize the effect of such a phrase on an ignorant "revolting" Arab peasant, whose "revolt" is inflamed by such revolutionary forces as the Grand Mufti clericals, the fascists and the Hitler emissaries?

The heroic restraint of the Jewish community despite Arab terrorism becomes a "bloody Zionist attack." Nor is this nomenclature the specialty of the Palestinian Communists. Mr. Olgin, editor of the *Freiheit*, has occasion to comment on an article on Palestine by Alter Brody which appeared in the *New Masses*. It seems, according to Mr. Olgin, that though Mr. Brody gave a "correct formulation" of British imperialism, he had an "erroneous explanation" of the immediate causes of the Arab clashes. Mr. Olgin has the right explanation: It is "the Zionist policy of conquest." (May 16)

The same *Freiheit* (May 12) reported the burning of fields in the Emek as follows: "In the Emek, members of the *Kvutzahs* looked on from the distance as their harvest burned and made no attempt to extinguish the fire. They feared an

armed attack on the *Kvutzahs* because the Arabs bear a special hatred to this region where they were driven off the soil."

Even in a supposedly objective piece of reporting the animus of the paper is revealed. The reporter cannot withstand the temptation of putting in that bit of fiction about "this region where they were driven off the soil." Is there any one who pretends to information about Palestine who does not know that the Emek is, of all places, the most extraordinary example of reclamation in Palestine—reclamation which made room and opportunity to live, where no one, neither Jew nor Arab could live before?

But what are considerations of truth when the party-line is at stake?

The unholy alliance of the Palestine Communists with Arab terrorists and fascists is a stigma which the Communist movement should seek to wipe out, instead of white-washing with further "doctrine." To the honor of the French Communists be it said, that they protested against Communist incitement in Palestine. Apparently there are some Communists who feel a closer kinship with the peaceful Jewish worker settling in cooperative farms than with the reactionary forces behind the present attacks. In the meantime, the "pogrom" talents displayed in such abundance by the Jewish Communists is creating a gap in the proposed United Front which becomes increasingly difficult to bridge. One cannot forget that when a Jew, escaped from Poland or Germany, is shot down by an Arab murderer, the fire behind that shot may have been fed by a Communist proclamation.