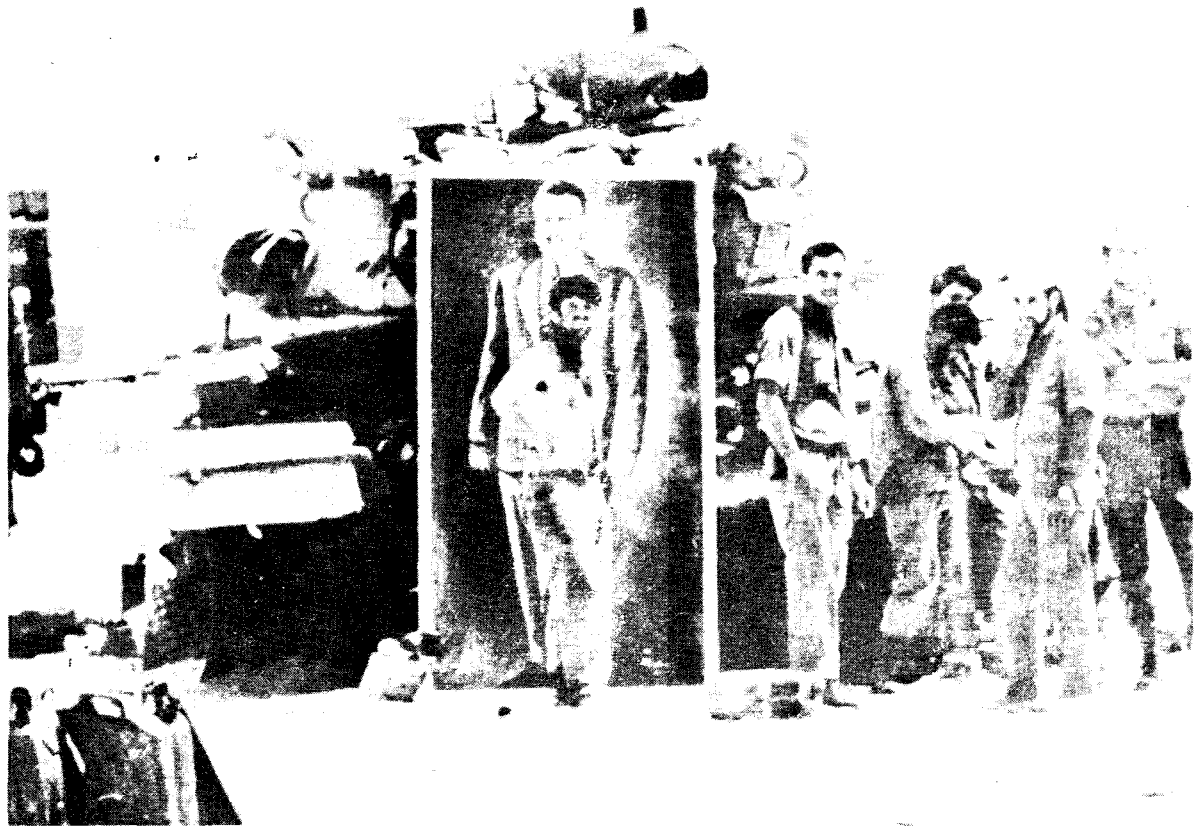


Murderous Nationalism and Stalinist Betrayal in Near East



Israeli soldiers gloat over captured Egyptian booty during June 1967 war. USSR kept tight control over its military hardware after Egyptians abandoned hundreds of Soviet tanks, other armour and missiles in the Sinai desert.

The violence at the Olympics which resulted in the deaths of Israeli athletes and Arab terrorists, and the swift and savage military "response" of the Israeli state, catapulted the Near East once again into the front-page headlines. The indefensible petty-bourgeois terrorist frenzy manifested at Munich grows out of the evident Israeli consolidation of the victories carved out of the living body of the Arab peoples. Respectable world bourgeois public opinion—such as that emanating from the current butcher of Vietnam, Nixon—against the Arab terrorist violence only obscures the fundamental violence of the continued denial of the rights of the Palestinian Arab population victimized by the State of Israel. Moreover, the bourgeois outcry passes lightly over the vastly bloodier retaliation by the Israeli state which, responding as if it were still a gang of Zionist terrorists, maimed and murdered Arab villagers, including children.

So long as bourgeois nationalism is pitted against bourgeois nationalism, no matter who had the last victory, the masses of the laboring population of the defeated will pay for that victory and be fertile objects for further nationalist manipulation. Thus the counterposing of Arab nationalism to Zionism in the absence of a decisive thrust for working-class power in the Near East leads inexorably to outbursts of the "Black September" type and to the inevitable fierce reprisals.

Somewhat less sensational than the events at the Olympics, but far more important in its implications, was the precipitous expulsion of Soviet military personnel from Egypt some weeks earlier. The Soviet Stalinists are reaping the fruit of their catastrophic alliances with the reactionary Arab military cliques, as part of the policy of great-power maneuvering and "peaceful coexistence."

Soviet Arms Squandered

The Soviets' policies have been equally catastrophic since the 1967 Near East war and before. Strewn across the Sinai desert and Egyptian airfields, 550 immobilized and deserted tanks, the twisted burned-out wreckage of 365 jet fighters and 69 bombers, over a billion dollars in Soviet military aid squandered—these were the spoils of the Six Days' War for the USSR and its "progressive" ally, Egypt. The fate of North Vietnam may hang by a thread as it bears the full brunt of U.S. imperialism's assault, while the Commissars and Party secretaries in the Kremlin

dole out aid with an eyedropper. But for the bourgeois Arab military regimes nothing was too good. Since the 1967 war the Soviet Union has completely rebuilt the Egyptian armed forces, lavishing upon them the very finest and most advanced military hardware. Thus, by the end of last year Egypt had received 525 fighter bombers, including the latest model MiG-23's, 200 advanced MiG-21J interceptors and 110 SU-7 fighter bombers. Along the Suez Canal the Russians built 63 SAM batteries. For their "comrades" in North Vietnam the Soviets could spare only 10 bombers, 155 fighters (primarily MiG-19's, 17's and 15's) and 35 SAM batteries.

The recent North Vietnamese spring offensive gave dramatic evidence of the lack of sophisticated military equipment. In order to launch substantial troop movements into South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese were required to move *all* of their SAMs up to the DMZ to provide some protection from U.S. bombing. But this stripped their major cities of air cover and exposed them to heavy B-52 raids. Groups like Progressive Labor and the Maoists, who claim that sophisticated weaponry is unnecessary and the sheer will to fight "People's War" will defeat U.S. imperialism, only serve as apologists for the cowardly stinginess of the Soviet Union and China. Had the armaments which now rust on the desert sands or have been captured by Moshe Dayan gone instead to North Vietnam, U.S. imperialism would have been years ago plunged into a militarily untenable situation.

The Russian Stalinists' apparently unshakable determination to aid and abet anti-Soviet regimes in the Near East is not a policy of recent origin. Sadat's predecessor, Nasser, was second to none in anti-Soviet zeal. In a speech on 20 March 1959 he ranted:

"Through our unity which enabled us to destroy imperialism and its stooges, we will, God willing, destroy Communism and dependence. Using the same weapons which helped us defeat imperialism and imperialist stooges, we can defeat Communism, its agents and Communist parties."

Yet in a speech on 23 July 1968 Nasser was able to boast:

"In reality we have so far paid not one millieme for the arms we obtained from the Soviet Union to equip our armed forces....I wish to tell you frankly and clearly that the Soviet Union has never tried, not even in our most crucial times, to dictate conditions to us or to ask anything of us."

This policy of munificent military support to the reactionary Arab nationalist regimes led directly to the Russians' inglorious departure from Egypt.

For no doubt a variety of reasons, the dumping of military equipment into Egypt was resented among sections of Soviet society. Soviet workers, in particular, were disgruntled about seeing their productivity wasted on reactionary Arab regimes. In an article entitled "No Love for Freeloaders" (31 July 1972), *Newsweek* reported:

"Under the pressure of this discontent, the Kremlin has even taken to disguising its shipments to the Middle East—stamping special code words on packing crates instead of labeling them with destinations such as Latakia, Syria or Alexandria, Egypt."

While Stalinism is immune from learning the political lessons of its mistakes, the Soviet Union at least learned never to trust with sophisti-

cated weapons an army composed of corrupt officers and unskilled peasant soldiers. Along with the jet planes, SAMs and three armoured divisions came 12,000 Soviet soldiers to operate and man this equipment, and 4,000 Russian advisors to attempt to instruct the Egyptian army in its use. (Needless to say, not one Russian soldier or military cadre could be spared for North Vietnam.)

Sadat Placates Military Clique

The presence of the Soviet troops, who had exclusive access to the Russian weaponry, and the advisors, who had, justifiably, nothing but contempt for the leadership capacity of the corrupt Egyptian officers and the fighting capacity of the Egyptian troops, undermined and incensed the Egyptian officer corps, whose xenophobia is exceeded

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Speed-Up Pressures Mount in Auto

Auto workers across the country are reeling under the impact of incredible speed-ups, layoffs and deteriorating working conditions as the auto companies attempt to drive up production on the new models. Their United Auto Workers (UAW) union "leadership" however, continues its blatant betrayals and policy of class-collaboration unhindered by any effective opposition.

The pressure remains acute in General Motors, which, complaining about lack of worker "productivity," instituted its special Assembly Division (GMAD) management team to drive up exploitation of labor through layoffs and speed-ups to counter the effects the capitalist economic crisis is having on auto companies (see *WV* No. 9). This pressure has resulted in several bitter walkouts in the GM system in the period since the 1970 GM strike, such as at the new "model" plant at Lordstown, and the longest GM strike in history at Norwood, Ohio for which the leadership had accepted a settlement at press time.

In the Reutherite tradition, the UAW bureaucracy under Leonard Woodcock is keeping the lid on rank-and-file unrest by isolating local walkouts rather than mobilizing a nationwide defense. The Lordstown strikers were allowed to burn themselves out before being railroaded back to work, and the International is doing its best to forget the Norwood strike. The September issue of the International's paper, *UAW Solidarity*, buries news of the strike on its back pages, referring to it vaguely as a "job description issue," with no mention of the special GMAD "productivity" measures and similar pressures throughout the auto industry

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only by its anti-communism. This officer caste is the bulwark of such "progressive" regimes as Sadat's Egypt, Numeiry's Sudan, Baathist Syria and Iraq, which are *bonapartist*. Their "progressive" nature consists in the fact that, having been turned down by the World Pawnbroker for bankrupt bourgeois regimes—U.S. imperialism—they trudge shamefaced to Moscow to do their begging. As readily as a derelict "discovers Christ" to get his bowl of soup, these tinpot "revolutionary" colonels mouth the proper "anti-imperialist" phrases to get their hands on MiGs and SAMs. And just as readily on the morrow as the derelict finds his way back to the road of sin for a bottle of wine, so all these "progressive Third World leaders" will throw out Soviet advisors, butcher the local "reds" and denounce "Soviet imperialism" at the slightest beckoning from the American bourgeoisie. Meanwhile the North Vietnamese, despite their Stalinist leadership, are locked in a struggle with American imperialism and thus do not have the threat of a warm welcome from the imperialists to enhance their bargaining position with the Soviets.

Sadat's generals put up with the Russians only to get their hands on those fancy weapons, hoping to bluster the Israelis out of occupied territories, and perhaps even dreaming of someday taking the offensive. But the Soviets were determined to see no repetition of the 1967 war: the Russians and not the Egyptians were going to control the weapons and no offensive armaments would even be brought into Egypt. And the Israelis would not budge, secure in the knowledge that the Russian presence was a check on Egyptian military ambitions. Following the exodus of the Russians from Egypt, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir told the Israeli Parliament:

"If the Egyptians are right in claiming that the Soviets did not respond to demands which, if met, would have caused and made possible renewal of the war—if that really was so, it should not be charged to the discredit of the Soviet Union."

Both the Soviet Union and Israel had an interest in maintaining the status quo in the Near East. For Israel, it meant that it could consolidate its hold over the territories seized in 1967. For the Russians, it meant they could stay in Egypt, keeping the U.S. out while blocking a renewal of the war with Israel which would mean not only the squandering of Soviet equipment but the danger of a direct military confrontation with the U.S. Further, as long as the USSR stayed in Egypt it was permitted to use Egyptian airbases for surveillance of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and to use Egyptian port facilities to build up its own naval power in the Mediterranean.

Anwar Sadat, the colorless President of Egypt who creeps so gingerly in the shadow of his predecessor, knows full well that his real base of support is the privileged officer caste. The endless demonstrations of fanatic, xenophobic university students, who take Radio Cairo's anti-Israeli propaganda almost as seriously as they take the Koran, could be either ignored or disciplined by the army, but the officer corps must be kept contented if Sadat is to stay in power. The 6,000,000-member Arab Socialist Union, like the Baathist parties, is simply the political expression of bonapartism which hides the rule by decree behind the "democratic" facade of referendums and rallies. Further, a strike wave had broken out in the textile factories and unrest was spreading to the peasantry. In Egypt as in all "Third World" capitalist countries, the bonapartist regime must feed the restless, hungry masses a steady diet of chauvinist demagoguery;

the expulsion of "the foreigners"—whether they be Russian military personnel in Egypt, Indian merchants in Uganda or Indian workers on the Ceylon tea plantations—is always a popular sop. But what motivated Sadat to give the Russians the boot was first and foremost keeping the loyalty of the officer caste.

Sadat Keeps the Peace

Like the Soviets, Sadat learned his lesson from the Six Day's War. Any mass army must reflect the society of which it is the product. The Egyptian army is no exception; it reflects the



Brezhnev greets Sadat in Moscow—friendly reception failed to prevent break-up of unholy alliance.

backwardness of Egyptian society as a whole. No matter how well equipped, the Egyptian army could not stand up to the better trained army across the Nile. Sadat does not want a renewal of the war with Israel although he may be forced into it by the logic of his own demagoguery.

In this context it is easier to understand why Sadat has apparently been reluctant to jump at a marriage which on the surface offers so many advantages—the merger with Libya. The merger would provide Egypt with two things it desperately lacks: foreign exchange and *lebensraum*. With the Suez Canal (which once provided nearly half of Egypt's foreign exchange) still closed, Libya's \$2.5 billion a year in oil revenues would be a spectacular acquisition. Further, Egypt with a land area of 386,000 square miles and a population of 34 million is terribly overpopulated; Libya with 680,000 square miles and 2 million people is underpopulated. But along with cash and land the proposed marriage brings with it the suit-or—the fanatical, tumultuous Libyan President Colonel Qaddafi, the most virulent anti-communist among Arab leaders and the one most dedicated to resuming the war with Zionism. Thus while Sadat was willing to throw the Russians out to get the engagement going, he seems reluctant to consummate the marriage.

Finally, Sadat recognizes that, along with the Soviet's blind eye to the mining and bombing of North Vietnam, a free hand for the U.S. in the Near East was part of the door prize used to lure Cold Warrior Nixon to the Kremlin. The Moscow Summit redrew the "spheres of influence," with the Soviets at least partially ceding Southeast Asia north of the 17th parallel and the Nile valley to U.S. imperialism in exchange for promises of American investment, jointly-sponsored outer space spectacles and ecological ventures. Thus, the road for Egypt to regain the Israeli-occupied territories no longer passes through Moscow but through Washington, and no longer consists in escalating the military pressure

through Russian weapons but through undermining U.S. support for Israel. By expelling the Russians, Sadat has eliminated at least one of the U.S. rationales for supporting Israel: as a bulwark against Communism. Sadat would like to return to the fold of U.S. imperialism, but as both Nixon and the Democratic Pretender are in mad pursuit of the "Jewish vote" Sadat knows he will have to wait until after the elections to see if throwing out the Russians carries enough weight in Washington.

Of course, the doubletalk Soviet press, which turns every defeat into a victory, claims that the Russians were not expelled but that, "Their mission completed, the servicemen returned home and the Egyptian leaders thanked them for their conscientious, selfless efforts to help the Egyptian army heighten its military skills and capability to stand up to the enemy" (Moscow *New Times*, No. 34, 1972).

In the Russian Near East experience there lurks a message regarding the Middle East, i.e., Soviet policy in the Indian subcontinent. But the Soviet bureaucracy cannot comprehend the message because it is trapped within the strait jacket imposed upon it of attempting to defend the Russian workers state internationally by either great power militaristic sabre-rattling or grovelling capitulation to the powerful American imperialists. The Soviets' great and good friend, capitalist India, victorious in ripping East Bengal from Pakistan, will repeat the Egyptian conduct. The present Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has made this very clear.

The Russian bureaucrats outsmart themselves. They hope their massive arms aid will be used by an Egypt or an Indonesia or an India against clients of the Americans or the Chinese (or best of all against the Americans or Chinese directly as in the India-China border war). And to the Russian Stalinists it is but an incidental price that the arms will also be used against the masses. Since Stalin's rise the Russian bureaucracy by virtue of its social position has been incapable of recognizing the organic link between revolutionary upheaval abroad and defense of the Russian workers state. They are therefore endlessly surprised when their arms end up being used directly against Russian state interests, not "just" against the mass movement.

Nationalism and Stalinism

An examination of Soviet policy in the "Third World" provides striking vindication of the Trotskyist analysis that the Kremlin bureaucracy, which subordinates everything to the "defense" of so-called "socialism in one country," is incapable of really defending the Russian degenerated workers state. Even in terms of the narrowest national interests, Stalinist diplomacy among the underdeveloped countries—from Ben Bella's Algeria, to Sukarno's Indonesia, to Nkrumah's Ghana, to Sadat's Egypt—has been a history of defeats.

A characteristic example of the perfidy of Soviet diplomacy can be found in Iran. The Shah's regime is thoroughly despised by virtually the entire population of Iran, from the fledgling proletariat, poor peasants and left-wing students on the one hand to the fanatical mullahs and separatist tribes on the other. In 1964, confronted with acute social unrest and trying to reduce internal tensions to a minimum, the Teheran government announced it would not permit the establishment of rocket bases in Iran. In the myopic eyes of the Russian bureaucrats this immediately transformed the Shah's regime from a reactionary monarchical tyranny to a "progressive," "anti-imperialist" regime. The Shah was subsequently invited to Moscow and Eastern Europe where he was effusively praised. In the meantime members of the Tudeh (Iranian Communist Party) were being viciously hunted down by the Shah's police and army. Considering the relative popularity of the Tudeh party, and the widespread disgust with the Shah, the Tudeh might have led a revolution in the 1964-65 period, had

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that been the wish of either the Moscow or Persian Stalinists. Instead they contributed to the stabilization of the Shah's regime.

In underdeveloped, bonapartist-led countries, Soviet diplomacy operates on the proposition that it is possible to split the army into reactionary and "anti-imperialist" components and win over the latter. The Russians themselves provided an exquisite picture of these regimes in a description of Baathist Syria in 1963 after it had been through eight coups in eighteen months:

"While this political merry-go-round continued, Syria presented an extraordinary spectacle: ministers and senior officials appointed to their posts exclusively on the principle of 'reliability' but often having no idea of the real situation and its economic problems, and interested only in political cabals; officers each of them thinking that his hour would come at any moment, and that a battalion of soldiers or a dozen armed cars would be enough to seize power; journalists trying to guess who in fact would carry out the next coup. Plots, rumors of plots, denials of rumors of plots, suspicious troop movements. No one trusts his neighbor, everyone tries to outsmart his partner, superiors look searchingly at their subordinates: who will be the next to strike?"

—*New Times* No. 34, 1963

What the *New Times* report omits is that the Soviets are usually in the thick of the political cabals and palace coups. While their nimble zig-zags in switching their support to whomever comes out on top has won them cabinet posts in Syria, in countries like the Sudan and Indonesia it has resulted in disaster. In both Indonesia and the Sudan, large, well-organized Communist Parties

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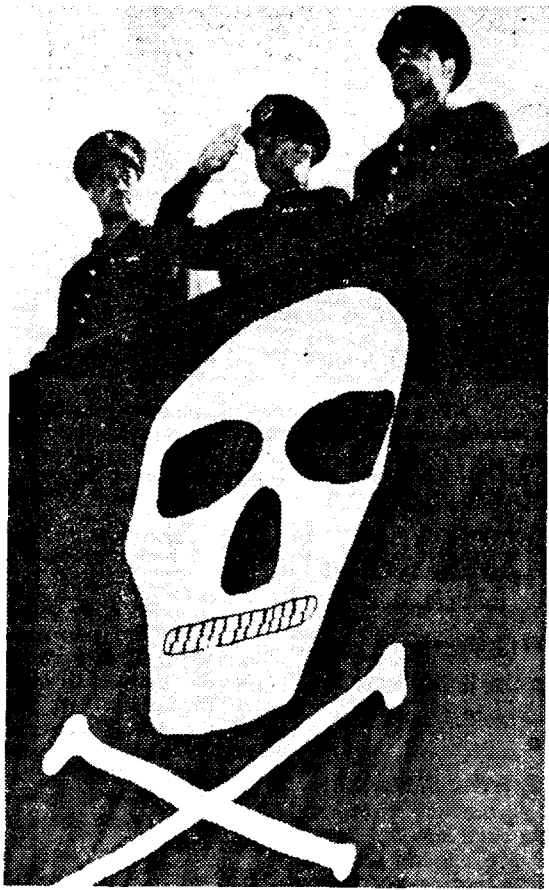
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Libyan President Qaddafi, Sadat's new ally.



Nasser (left) stands above symbol of "progressive" Egypt's National Guard.

NY Times, 24 July 1972



Shah of Iran.

were wiped out by Russian-equipped armies. And this scenario has been repeated in nearly every "progressive" country, though on a lesser scale.

Soviet support to these reactionary bonapartist regimes is always rationalized under the guise of support for "national liberation." But precisely because these regimes are intensely nationalist, they are almost invariably built through the suppression of other nations. (The creation of the state of Israel is itself a prime example.) By underwriting nationalism in Egypt the Soviets paved the way for their own expulsion. Numeiry too is a "progressive nationalist" who in the name of Arab nationalism, and using his Russian-equipped army, massacred half a million South Sudanese blacks and then wiped out the Sudan Communist Party. And it is under the banner of pan-African nationalism that Nigeria's Gowon massacred the Ibos and 100,000 Hutu tribesmen in Birundi are wiped out.

"Progressive" Nationalism?

The national question is a legacy of the imperialist dictum "divide and rule." Thus the British brought Indians to Uganda during the 1890's to build the East Africa Railroad just as they brought Tamil-speaking Indians to work the tea plantations of Ceylon during the 1840's and 1850's. The Indians in Uganda prospered and were subsequently used by the British as merchants and middlemen; the Indian-derived Tamil population of Ceylon became the most exploited section of the Ceylon proletariat. The ethnic antagonisms resulting from imperialism's transfer of populations is now used to buttress the nationalist regimes: the self-styled Fuhrer of Uganda, General Amin, turns the Asians in Uganda into displaced persons, while Mrs. Bandaranaike's so-called "socialist" regime in Ceylon continues to whip up anti-Tamil chauvinism among

the dominant ethnic group, the Sinhalese.

Nor is the nationalism of the oppressed any more noble. Let it not be forgotten that the Palestinian Arabs are victims of the nationalism of the oppressed turned oppressor. In Birundi, had the Hutu's coup against the ruling minority Tutsi been successful, the tribalism of the oppressed would have translated itself into the genocidal nationalism of the oppressor. All nationalism is reactionary, for successful nationalism equals genocide. Under British colonialism the nationalism of the Nassers and the Numeiry's was the nationalism of the oppressed. Today, in victory, it is the instrument for the subjugation of other nationalities and the block to revolutionary class consciousness.

In the mythology of the petty-bourgeois nationalists and Stalinists, the particular conjunctural posture of various states is transmuted into morally categorizing the nationalities presided over by these state powers. We see the creation of the categories "reactionary peoples" and "progressive peoples." At least until lately, Arabs are "progressive peoples," even while the Sudanese Arabs were exterminating half a million black Africans. At the time of the partition of India, the Hindus were deemed progressive and all the Moslems were "reactionary." But today the Moslem East Bengalis have been re-awarded the merit badge of "progressive," while the millions of Bihari Moslems, now double refugees—having fled in 1948 from the Indian state of Bihar to throw themselves on the mercy of the West Pakistani government, now in a completely untenable position in the new Bangladesh and refused readmission to Indian Bihar and with no place else to turn—are deemed so reactionary as to have become complete un-persons, in distinction for example to the somewhat less numerous, internationally maintained (however miserably), "super-progressive" Palestinian refugees.

The classic model for the transmutation of a people in the eyes of those who cannot see beyond "national character" was the Armenians, who were deemed very progressive indeed following the terrible brutalities visited upon them by the Ottoman empire. One British statesman was moved to declare, "He who defends Armenia defends civilization." The Armenian Dashnag Party, a petty-bourgeois formation much akin to the pre-World War II Zionists (and so similar ideologically to their contemporary radical nationalist Arab counterparts), gained ascendancy in the Armenian population, and as the Ottoman empire fell to pieces

the Armenians exhibited their "progressive" character by fighting ardently to continue the first World War, resisting the Russian Revolution and then launching an abortive drive for a "greater Armenia" by seeking to butcher every last Turk in large areas of Eastern Anatolia. The point is that the criterion of erstwhile progressive or reactionary national character is fundamentally wrong when not simply demagogically dishonest, and that the real underlying irrepressible axis in the condition of peoples is the class question: the class question within nations and the class question between nations. To believe otherwise is to open the door to the simple and frequently recurring inability to tell a progressive from a fascist, especially since the one so often becomes the other (Mussolini, Pilsudski, Chiang Kai-shek).

20th Century Nationalism

Why is nationalism the political expression of the petty-bourgeoisie? It is the ideological envelope, i.e., the program, expressing the appetite for the transformation of the (perhaps even poverty-stricken) upper strata of the downtrodden nation to become a full-flown bourgeoisie in its own right.

Out of the consolidation of West European nations in the 17th and 18th centuries (and elsewhere in the 19th) emerged the great world imperialist powers. The consolidation of the first great national states had profoundly reactionary sides and it was only in the balance that Marx characterized the economic core, the development of industrial capitalism, as progressive. As the Marxists since have noted (one of the essential implications of Trotsky's Permanent Revolution), the attempt to mechanically repeat the process everywhere is reactionary and utopian.

Hence the negative features of attempted national consolidations loom large in this century, in particular the process of national compacting. Unlike the developed imperialists, who undertake the far-flung exploitation of many peoples in utter contemptuous indifference to the national character of their spheres of influence, the emerging nationalists, as a pre-condition for becoming would-be imperialist powers, must center their historic sights on the "purification of their own nation"—i.e., the creation of a nationally homogeneous population. The predominant mechanism of former centuries was the assimilation of differing populations, partly forcible but largely through automatic economic means. The English relied upon both toward the Welsh and the Scots.

But the "new nations" do not have economic power at their disposal; it has been pre-empted by those dominant in the world market. The Hebrew nation in Palestine exemplifies the contradictions of new nations in the 20th century. The crux of Zionist social policy was the exact opposite of the appetite to exploit the Arab population—rather, the aim was to exclude the Arabs from all economic life to create a clear-cut national enclave. The expulsion of Indians from Burma, cynically projected as nationalization to achieve Burman socialism, was a similar example. The Stalinists' and petty-bourgeois radicals' counterposition of new 20th century nationalism to imperialism is not only partial and at bottom false; it also denies and thereby conceals imperialist elements within all 20th century nationalism and the oppressive and even genocidal consequences for the objects of its revanchist and expansionist appetites.

For the Permanent Revolution!

The masses' resistance to national oppression can be mobilized on the side of the class-conscious proletariat in the struggle to end all oppression and exploitation by the overthrow of capitalism. But nationalism is a re-

actionary ideology whose precise function is to prevent a class solution to oppression. The national antagonisms which the imperialists fostered to maintain their rule are now manipulated by the bonapartists to prevent the working masses from turning their anger against their main enemies and uniting to overthrow the privileged military cliques.

Thus the Marxists, in confronting the sequence of Near Eastern wars, have had to carefully distinguish the element of national emancipation from that of national aggrandizement. In the 1948-49 first round, when the main contenders were the Haganah and British imperialism's Arab Legion commanded by General Glubb, the issue was at bottom the national survival of the Jewish people, although naturally enough the Zionist consolidation of that victory at the expense of the Palestinian Arab population created the preconditions for ensuing decades of nationalist antagonisms. The attitude of the Marxists should have been one of revolutionary defensism to shatter the hold of the Zionists ideologically, as an aspect of overthrowing the Zionist bourgeoisie and thus turning the Hebrew portion of Palestine into a springboard for revolution in the region. Instead, it has been conveniently employed as a counterrevolutionary lightning rod ever since by the rulers in the surrounding states.

In 1956 the second round of warfare was very simple. Israel was used as a cat's paw in British and French imperialism's feeble effort to maintain a Near East presence through retention of their Suez Canal holding. Critical support, i.e., a revolutionary defensist policy toward the Egyptians, was indicated. By 1967 in the third round, the secondary great power considerations aside, the core of the conflict centered on straight-out territorial confrontation between the Egyptian and Israeli rulers. Revolutionary defeatism—i.e., the position that proletarian aims could be won only by the overthrow of both the ruling classes and their respective war aims—was the only principled orientation.

It is not up to us to seek to specify the exact form of solution to the national question in the Near East in the outcome of victorious proletarian revolution. Certainly the content must be a regional socialist federation. Whether or not separate national entities, with territorial adjustments, or bi-national state formations emerge initially will depend on the particular course of the struggles leading to revolution in the face of accumulated national insecurities and distrust among the populations involved. But one thing is sure: only the dictatorship of the proletariat can have real authority on the national question, stemming from its real interest in an equitable reconstruction in the interests of all the working people. At the other pole, in the heart of every nationalist lurks the appetite for genocide of other peoples.

Nasser was quite right when he stated time and time again that "nationalism and communism are incompatible." What he failed to mention was that nationalism and genuine national liberation are also incompatible. The Nassers and Numeiry's, no matter how virulent their anti-imperialist rhetoric, are linked ever more closely to world imperialism than to any abstract national sovereignty. In the epoch of imperialist decay the nation has outlived its usefulness and become a reactionary institution. The struggle for national emancipation must be a struggle against imperialism, capitalism and nationalism—a struggle for internationalism, for communism through the building of a revolutionary workers party whose understanding of the Permanent Revolution alone permits it to project a concrete internationalist program capable of transcending in theory and action the nationalist impasse and the consequent manipulation of the aspirations of the peoples of the region by the great foreign powers—imperialist or Stalinist. ■