

Resolution passed by the Congress of the Belgian section 7-9 February 2025

A strategy for the national and social liberation of the Palestinian masses (Part 1)

- 2.1. Since 7 October 2023, following the Hamas attack, the genocide of the Palestinian people has entered a new phase. According to the Hamas Ministry of Health, at least 46,000 people died, including more than 18,000 children. But these figures are far lower than the reality. This is according to The Lancet, which estimates that the number of deaths is underestimated by 41%. The Lancet indicated that the real number of deaths in Gaza could be higher than 186,000 if indirect deaths, notably due to famine and lack of health care, were taken into account.
- 2.2. After 15 months of genocide, a ceasefire agreement has been reached between Hamas and the Israeli state. The agreement, which normally comprises three phases, stipulates that Hamas will release 33 Israeli prisoners, including all women (soldiers and civilians), children (under 19) and men over 50. In exchange, Israel will release 30 Palestinian prisoners for every civilian hostage released and 50 Palestinian prisoners for every Israeli soldier released by Hamas. The number of Palestinians released will depend on the number of hostages released and could be between 990 and 1650 detainees.
- 2.3. Although the ceasefire agreement represents relief and respite for Palestinians living in Gaza, it does not mean an end to the colonial war or to the genocide. In the short term, the Israeli state could sabotage the ceasefire agreement once all the hostages have been released by Hamas, and resume its genocidal offensive. Furthermore, even if the agreement were respected, a return to the status quo offers no solution for the Palestinians, particularly as the Israeli government intends to continue its settlement policy. The state has built more than 700 settlements beyond the "green line" in 50 years, and violent raids by settlers on Palestinian villages have increased since the genocide began. There can be no peace as long as the colonisation, apartheid and massacres committed by the Israeli state continue.
- 2.4. With the ceasefire, the movement's immediate demand for solidarity with the Palestinian people has been met. This does not necessarily mean that the movement will run out of steam. The question of what strategy for genuine national liberation

national liberation will become central to the movement. This underlines the need for revolutionary organisations to be able to present the movement with a programme capable of achieving this objective.

- 2.5. In order to play a role in the struggle for Palestinian national and social liberation, the organisation must be able to question some of our traditions. The international movement has placed the Palestinian question in a global perspective, refocusing Palestine in the global political debate and avoiding falling back into the trap of the Oslo peace process. The two-state rhetoric was denounced, while Israeli domination of the whole of historic Palestine was exposed. By integrating the situation of refugees and Palestinians from 1948, the movement gave a wider resonance to the Palestinian struggle. The solidarity movement with Palestine does not limit solidarity to the Palestinian question alone, but also expresses a broader anti-colonial consciousness. Solidarity with the peoples of Sudan and eastern Congo are good examples.
- 2.6. The party must now review all its positions on the Palestinian national question, particularly on the following issues:
 - a. Analysis of the Israeli state, Zionism and apartheid, as well as the position of "two socialist states in a socialist federation in the Middle East".
 - b. The role we assign to the Israeli working class and labour movement.
 - c. Our approach to the Palestinian resistance, and to the movement in support of Palestine more generally.

What Israeli working class are we talking about? The working class in Palestine-Israel and its composition

- 2.7. Our organisation differs from the majority of revolutionary organisations that support the national liberation of the Palestinian people in that it gives the Israeli working class an important role. It relies on the class fractures present within Israeli society, and hopes that these fractures will create the basis for a union of the Palestinian and Israeli masses against the Israeli bourgeoisie and its state, as well as against the Palestinian bourgeois or reactionary forces; within the framework of a regional and international struggle against the capitalist mode of production as a whole.
- 2.8. The key factor in the struggle for the liberation of the Palestinian people is clearly not the Israeli Jewish working class, but the strategy of exploiting the class contradictions within Israeli Jewish society remains relevant. While the Israeli working class enjoys very significant material advantages over the Palestinian working class, there remains a fundamental relationship of exploitation between workers and bosses, as in all capitalist societies. Moreover, the Zionist state has clearly not kept its promise of security for the Jews, since any security based on a

system of apartheid and repression will also be temporary and illusory.

- 2.9. However, bringing this perspective forward today also means honestly acknowledging the extent of racist, chauvinist and genocidal feelings within Israeli Jewish society, including the working class. These feelings are worse than they have perhaps ever been. To take just one example, a recent survey found that 52% of Jewish Israelis fully supported Trump's plan to ethnically cleanse Gaza, while 30% considered it "not practical, but desirable". Only 3% described the plan as "immoral". The Palestinian movement, whether in the region or the international solidarity movement, should not try to adapt to the current consciousness of Israeli Jewish workers. On the contrary, it must openly question it.
- 2.10. The Israeli working class is not a monolithic bloc, but a heterogeneous whole made up of Jewish workers, indigenous workers with Israeli citizenship, and workers from the West Bank and Gaza, with or without work permits. The material living conditions of these different strata are radically unequal. Major sectors of the Israeli economy draw on a workforce from the West Bank and Gaza. This workforce, regulated by the Israeli administration through the allocation of movement and work permits, compensates for the shortage of Israeli labour depending on the economic situation and for specific sectors of activity (mainly construction, agriculture and catering). For example, during the Israeli economic recession from 1973 to 1976, while the Israeli unemployment rate remained stable, the number of Palestinian workers fell considerably.
- 2.11. The state issues these permits through a quota system, and many applicants are excluded. Those who do obtain a permit face daily challenges, including long waits at border crossings, strict security checks and exhausting journeys. 19,000 Palestinians in Gaza are in this situation. These workers are employed in particularly arduous, dangerous and physically demanding jobs where there is a shortage of Israeli labour, such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing. There is also an internal division in the workplace between Arab and Jewish workers, in which Palestinian workers are the least well paid and the most exploited.
- 2.12. The small proportion of workers who obtain a work permit have no legal recourse or medical cover and work in sectors with a high accident risk. They are often mistreated by employers who know full well that Palestinian workers do not enjoy the most basic rights and protections.
- 2.13. Apart from the economic advantages of using such a workforce, it is also an effective way of monitoring this population. To obtain a work permit in Israel or in the settlements, a Palestinian from the West Bank or Gaza must ensure that their file is approved by the Israeli military administration. They and their close relatives must not take part in any trade union or political activity deemed hostile to the occupation. Families, and sometimes entire villages, are thus careful not to be the

subject of any "security ban" so as not to be deprived of an Israeli work permit.

- 2.14. In this context, working in Palestine and being a trade unionist in Palestine means being constantly confronted with a double constraint: that of the daily struggle for a wage, for a job, but it also means doing so in very specific conditions: those of occupation and colonisation. In the post-7 October situation, resources are blocked by Israel and as a result wages are not paid. The struggle for the right to a salary and a job takes on a particular meaning.
- 2.15. These constraints due to colonisation, occupation and apartheid are specific to Palestinian workers. Israeli Jewish workers have completely different material conditions, which has implications for the way in which they organise their struggles, particularly in terms of demands. The Israeli workers' movement has never integrated the demands of Palestinian workers living and/or working inside the "green line". On the contrary, the main organisations of the Israeli workers' movement have historically been built on the dispossession, exploitation and extermination of the Palestinian people.
- 2.16. The post-war Keynesian model - fuelled by donations from Zionist sympathisers around the world, from imperialist countries and supported by German reparations - ran into hyperinflation in the 1970s, as it did in many capitalist countries. From 1985 onwards, the Israeli capitalist state - partly under pressure from the Reagan administration in the United States - decided to switch to neo-liberal policies of privatisation, wage moderation and deregulation.
- 2.17. While in the 1970s the Israeli state was still trying to integrate Palestinian workers as an over-exploited and discriminated layer, the neo-liberal turn reinforces the trend towards the marginalisation of Palestinian workers, coupled with continuing waves of immigration from the former Soviet Union and other parts of the world.
- 2.18. The neo-liberal decline is affecting not only Palestinians, but also the Israeli Jewish working class. Neo-liberal policies are leading to a decline in purchasing power, partly because of the high cost of housing. Israel is the second most unequal country in the OECD and spends the least on its social security system, partly because of the high price paid for the policies of military occupation.
- 2.19. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 53% of Palestinian families were living in poverty in 2023. Among the Jewish population, the figure was 18%. This reflects not only the enormous marginalisation, discrimination and over-exploitation of Palestinians, but also a relatively high level of poverty among Jewish families in Israel (higher than poverty among the white working class in Belgium). According to a study carried out in 2022, around a third of Holocaust survivors in Israel were living in poverty.

The Israeli workers' movement: a movement with colonial and Zionist origins

- 2.20. The dominant trend in Zionism for most of the twentieth century was "Labour Zionism". Unlike the "political Zionist" trend founded by Theodor Herzl and advocated by Chaim Weizmann, Labour Zionists did not believe that a Jewish state could be created simply by appealing to the international community or to a powerful imperialist power, such as the United Kingdom. On the contrary, Labour Zionists believed that a Jewish state could only be created through the settlement efforts of a Jewish working class in Palestine. It is this "left" Zionist movement that will produce the frameworks and structures of the future Israeli state, not the theocratic right.
- 2.21. At the origin of this trend was Poale Zion (Workers of Zion), which was supposedly inspired by Marxism. The emergence of Poale Zion marked a fundamental break with the Jewish Marxist tradition. Whereas before, Jewish liberation could only come about in the diaspora, through class struggle and the advent of socialism, it is now impossible to envisage Jewish emancipation without the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine.
- 2.22. In October 1906, Poale Zion, then renamed the "Party of Jewish Social Democratic Workers in Israel", held its congress in Jaffa. David Ben-Gurion, the central figure of the future Israeli state, chaired the sessions. At this congress, he defended a line hostile to collaboration between Jewish and Palestinian workers. On the contrary, he argued that the Arab and Jewish economies should be segregated. He justified his position by pointing out that it was necessary to combat the Arab labour force then employed in the Jewish settlements, as it was cheaper than the labour force of Jewish settlers. To convince the landowners, he argued that although Jewish labour was more expensive than Arab labour, it would offer a better return on investment in the long term. This was because Jewish labour was "more intelligent and industrious". He added that this policy would foster a sense of national belonging, enabling the Zionist movement to transcend class divisions.
- 2.23. At the end of the congress, Ben-Gurion was elected to the party's central committee and immediately launched a campaign to exclude Palestinian workers from the land held by the Jewish National Fund (a body of the Zionist movement founded in Basel in 1901 to manage the purchase of land in Palestine). This initiative marked the first stage of the "socialist" Zionist project of *Kibbush Ha'avoda* ("conquest of labour"), which called for the "dictatorship of the Hebrew proletariat".
- 2.24. When it became clear that the Jewish settlers had no intention of cohabiting with the indigenous populations, but rather of replacing them, the Palestinian people began an anti-colonial struggle against Zionism and the British occupiers. As in many other cases of resistance to colonialism, this struggle often took the

form of violent armed combat.

- 2.25. Between 1936 and 1939, there was a massive anti-colonial uprising which began with violent action by an Arab militia, resulting in a few casualties among the Jewish settlers, followed by equally deadly action by a Zionist militia. This action led to a vast strike movement and the creation of National Committees in the towns to develop the movement.
- 2.26. The wealthy Palestinian families who led the nationalist movement placed themselves at the head of this strike movement, collecting money for the strikers, but also pushing for a policy of reconciliation with the British occupying forces.
- 2.27. This is the same Palestinian elite that provided civil servants and occupied positions in the state apparatus under the Ottoman Empire. These wealthy families played a similar role in the 1920s and 1930s, under the British occupation, which encouraged Zionist colonisation. They are said to have organised the nationalist resistance, but this did not stop the same wealthy strata from secretly selling land to Zionist settlers.
- 2.28. In response, the Jewish Social Democratic Workers' Party in Israel created the Hashomer, a Jewish militia to defend the settlers. At the time, the settlers were very explicit about their aim of driving out the Palestinians and taking over their land. This rhetoric of "self-defence" remains, even today, a central tool of the Israeli state to justify both the genocide of Palestinians and the expansion of Israeli borders and settlements.
- 2.29. Following the Jaffa Congress, the Jewish National Fund continued its expansion. The strategy consisted of buying up land from landowners - who often did not even live in Palestine - before expelling Palestinian workers and replacing them with Jewish workers. It was on this despoiled land that the famous "kibbutzim" were built. The supposedly collectivist and pseudo-socialist utopia of the kibbutzim was built on the expropriation of the Palestinians.
- 2.30. Poale Zion split in 1919-1920, following a similar division to that which had occurred within the Workers' International. The right wing, led by Ben-Gurion, formed Ahdut HaAvoda (Labour Unity) and opposed affiliation to the Comintern, preferring a rapprochement with the Second International.
- 2.31. Left-wing splits from Poale Zion founded the Palestinian Communist Party in 1923. Initially, the leadership was made up almost exclusively of Jewish activists and intellectuals. The Comintern leadership was wary of an exclusively Jewish organisation and asked the PCP to fight against Zionist dispossession and to change the social composition of the party.
- 2.32. The PCP organised groups of Jewish and Palestinian workers on the basis of the industrialisation that accompanied the creation of the territory under British

mandate. At the end of the 1920s, it organised unions uniting Jewish and Arab workers under Stalinist leadership. During the anti-colonial strike movement of 1936-1939, the PCP uncritically followed the nationalist Palestinian leaders who inhibited the movement, without proposing an independent class policy.

- 2.33. Ahdut HaAvoda replaced the Hashomer with a more structured and sophisticated military force: the Haganah (Defence). Trained by the British, this new military organisation would later become Tsahal, Israel's "Defence" Forces. The rise of the Haganah was a response to the intensification of Palestinian resistance to the occupation, hence the need for an armed force capable of maintaining and imposing the occupation regime by force.
- 2.34. In 1920, the same year that the Haganah was founded, the General Federation of Workers in the Land of Israel, known as Histadrut, was created. Histadrut was distinguished by its central role in the Jewish colonisation project in Palestine. Its main objective was to establish a Jewish national home, an essential condition for achieving the "conquest of labour". This institution is therefore part of a colonial logic rather than a perspective of defending workers' rights.
- 2.35. To achieve this objective, the Histadrut set about actively destroying unions such as the railway, post and telegraph unions, which brought together Palestinian Jewish and Arab workers. Although there were socialist currents favourable to the joint organisation of Jewish and Arab workers, these were liquidated in 1926. The dominant trend remained that of Jewish nationalism, where the Histadrut's main enemy was not the employers, but the Palestinians.
- 2.36. Within the Jewish left and the trade union movement in Mandatory Palestine, there were groups and individuals (comparatively few) who opposed Zionism and sought genuine solidarity with Palestinian workers. There were also important examples of united struggle between Jewish and Palestinian workers, including the 1946 general strike. These examples of unity always met with hostility from the leadership of the Zionist Labour organisation and were never strong enough to break the hold of that leadership over the majority of the Jewish working class in Palestine. For real and lasting unity to emerge, it would have taken more than a simple common struggle over wages and working conditions, but also a rejection of Zionism on the part of Jewish workers, since the Zionist project was correctly understood by Arab workers as implying their dispossession and subordination.
- 2.37. Planned and structured discrimination, similar to that of apartheid, permeated the Histadrut's actions. In 1927, Haïm Arzlosoroff, a Zionist Labour leader and collaborator of the Nazi regime, proposed that Zionism should be inspired by the South African ban on people of colour, which excluded black workers from skilled union jobs. As a result, Palestinian workers were prevented from organising within the Histadrut.

2.38. Histadrut's aim was to "educate" the Jewish proletariat in manual labour so that they could "become" Israelis. The aim was not to fight the bosses, but on the contrary to advocate class collaboration, which was seen as essential to the unity of the Jewish nation. As a result, the Histadrut functioned as a yellow trade union.

- i. *"The socialist regime and the commune can have no interest for us in this country if those who apply them are not Jewish workers. We did not come here to organise anyone, and we are not here to spread the socialist idea to anyone. We are here to establish a homeland of work for the Jewish people"* (Lutte Ouvrière, David Ben-Gourion quoted in *Israël - Après la victoire du Hamas et avant les élections du 28 mars*, 2006).

2.39. As soon as it was founded, the union integrated the Haganah. The Histadrut became a key driving force behind the colonisation of Palestine. It established itself as a key organisation in all aspects of the settlers' daily lives, acting as a veritable government in the making. All the functions characteristic of a modern state were already established there, which enabled the future Israeli state to immediately equip itself with a highly effective administrative and operational structure.

2.40. The Histadrut ran a colossal economic empire, including agricultural colonies, transport cooperatives, and industrial, commercial and financial establishments, all dedicated to creating exclusively Jewish economic enclaves. The union went so far as to recruit "labour guards", who visited building sites and factories to intimidate employers and workers. They used threats to demand that Arab workers be replaced by Jewish settlers.

2.41. In 1930, under the supervision of the Histadrut, Ahdut HaAvoda merged with another pseudo-socialist party, Hapoel Hatzair (The Young Worker) to form Mapai (Workers' Party in the Land of Israel), again led by David Ben-Gurion. Mapai quickly became the dominant force in Israeli politics, responsible for the Nakba, the occupation and apartheid, until it was transformed into HaAvoda (Israeli Workers' Party) in 1968, where it retained a major influence in occupation policy. On 30 November 2024, the party merged with Meretz to become "The Democrats".

2.42. Histadrut still represents the majority of Israeli workers, with almost one million members. It remains actively involved in the colonisation and apartheid process. In particular, Histadrut collects social security contributions from Palestinians working in the territories controlled by the Israeli state, even though these contributions should theoretically go to the Palestinian trade unions. These contributions, withheld by Histadrut, are not always redistributed to Palestinian workers.

2.43. From the founding of Poale Zion to Mapai and then the Israeli Workers' Party,

via the Kibbutz, Histadrut, Hashomer and Haganah, the Israeli workers' movement and "socialist" Zionism have shaped every aspect of Israeli society. This movement, in close collaboration with a "liberal" Zionist bourgeoisie, organised the colonisation and occupation, as well as the economy, finance, culture and education. It also structured the state and the army. It was only in the last period, under the influence of neo-liberalism, that the workers' movement saw its influence diminish, giving way to right-wing and far-right forces such as Likud. The rise of Likud must also be understood in the light of the war in Lebanon in 1982, the political failures of the Labour Party in the negotiations, and the strategic errors of the PLO.

2.44. As it stands, the Israeli workers' movement is incapable of playing a leading role in the liberation of the Palestinians, let alone in the establishment of a socialist society. Until the Israeli masses renounce Zionism and colonial society as a whole, there can be no lasting alliance between the Palestinian masses and the Jewish workers of Israel. In this sense, Zionist "socialism" is an aberration. Zionism is the particular form of capitalism in Israel. Just as there can be no anti-racist racists or anti-fascist fascists, there can be no socialist Zionism

2.45. At the same time, struggles that organise Jewish and Palestinian workers together or bring Jewish workers and oppressed people into conflict with their own ruling class can play a positive role, opening up the possibility for sections of Israeli Jewish workers to break with Zionism - even if this is not their starting point. However, this potential is unlikely to be realised unless there are political forces that put forward a bold programme explaining the need for a total break with Zionism, apartheid and colonialism for the Israeli Jewish working class.

Mobilisation against judicial reform

2.46. Contemporary social mobilisations in Israel continue to ignore the colonial nature of society and the state. This is particularly true of the mobilisations against Netanyahu's judicial reform, which are widely promoted by the organisation, notably in the newspaper's publications and internally, to highlight a climate of political instability and fragility in Netanyahu's government that the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023 is said to have interrupted and consigned to oblivion.

2.47. Although a small minority of demonstrators brandished demands or slogans against the occupation, the vast majority of this movement did not voice any criticism of the government's policy of colonisation and apartheid. Threats by Israeli reservists to stop their military service - which often consists of committing war crimes - have only served to exert pressure in favour of a victory against judicial reform. In this way, the survival of the Palestinians and the maintenance of oppression in the occupied territories have been used as a lever for blackmail to guarantee better living conditions or more democratic rights for Israeli citizens.

- 2.48. These demonstrations took place within a colonial consensus firmly rooted in Zionism, whether authoritarian or liberal. They were encouraged, even directed, by the liberal opposition to Netanyahu's government and are part of a wider dynamic of attacks against the government, led by another current of the Israeli bourgeoisie, opposed to the government.
- 2.49. Broadly speaking, Israel is based on two bourgeoisies: the first, associated with cutting-edge technologies, the military-industrial complex and a "liberal" establishment; the second, linked to colonial expansion. Although their borders are porous, the first bourgeoisie, dependent on international economic exchanges, is concerned about Israel's image abroad. Faced with a government that is multiplying its racist excesses and weakening the institutions of "Jewish democracy", this economic and military elite has taken the lead in the protests, seeking to promote a different image of Israel, one that is supposedly committed to freedoms.
- 2.50. For the first time, it was the descendants of the former dominant pole of the Israeli bourgeoisie who supported these demonstrations. Senior members of the state apparatus, leading military figures and figures from the Israeli bourgeoisie found themselves in the camp opposing the government.
- 2.51. The apparatchiks supervising military activities in the occupied territories formed the hard core of the movement and played a crucial role in the opposition bloc to the government. Coming from an Ashkenazi (European Jewish) elite, they see Netanyahu's reforms as a frontal attack on their dominant positions within the state: not only in the security apparatus, but also in financial institutions, the judiciary and academia. This liberal bourgeoisie believes that the reforms would weaken its historic hold on these levers of power while strengthening a protest coalition of Orthodox Jews, settlers and Mizrahi (Eastern Jewish) supporters affiliated to Likud and the second bourgeois bloc, who aim to make Israel more religious, nationalist and expansionist. In the eyes of this liberal bourgeoisie, the triumph of this coalition would represent a threat to their secular way of life, compromise the security of the State and further tarnish its image on the international stage.
- 2.52. The image conveyed by the Western media, which described these mobilisations as an attempt to save democracy, is profoundly misleading. The movement was not about protecting the rights of minorities, let alone those of Palestinians on either side of the Green Line. During the first hundred days of the new Netanyahu government, while secular Israeli Jews were demonstrating to preserve their so-called democracy, nearly a hundred Palestinians, including many children, were killed by the Israeli armed forces. These murders were not mentioned in the speeches at the demonstrations.
- 2.53. However, these killings, like the pogrom in the Palestinian town of Huwara in

February 2023, motivated some young people to join this movement against Netanyahu's racist regime. The few Palestinian flags flying alongside Israeli flags were quickly removed by the other demonstrators. These Palestinian flags often came from the youngest demonstrators. All they know about Israel is Netanyahu's regime, where LGBTQIA+ and women's rights are under constant attack. Among a layer of radicalised youth, this means a much more developed understanding of the intersection between the struggle for democratic rights and the struggle for Palestinian liberation.

- 2.54. For the Zionist opposition, whether from the Labour Party or aligned with leaders Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid, the urgency was to "safeguard democracy". "This is not the place for purist arguments", said former Labour MP Stav Shaffir in a tweet. By advocating the defence of "democracy" while ignoring abuses, these protests revealed Israel's fundamental paradox: a state that claims to be both democratic, guaranteeing equality for all, while at the same time giving supremacy to Jewish identity and interests to the detriment of non-Jews. Israel cannot be democratic and a Zionist apartheid regime at the same time.
- 2.55. The party has systematically overstated the positive elements of these mobilisations, while dismissing the reactionary aspects. Although the mobilisations in Israel may play a significant role, they are not necessarily a sign of a break between the bourgeoisie and the Israeli working class. Consequently, it is wrong to say that one of the negative aspects of 7 October is that it put an end to mobilisation.
- 2.56. It is true that one of the aims of the right-wing attack on the Supreme Court was to pave the way for the circumvention of the minor restrictions that the Supreme Court had sometimes imposed on the oppression of Palestinians by the Israeli state. It would be normal for Marxists based in the State of Israel to participate in these demonstrations, but with policies that put the oppression of the Palestinian people first. Nevertheless, the Palestinian masses would never join a movement based on the blind defence of a "democracy" which colonises, despoils and enslaves them. How would the Palestinians enter this struggle?
- 2.57. The starting point for solidarity between Israeli and Palestinian Jewish workers is the need to challenge the racist and chauvinist consciousness, a direct consequence of colonisation, which currently prevails very widely in the Israeli Jewish working class, as it is by far the greatest obstacle to the development of such unity. It is a mistake if, in the name of a united struggle, we deny or diminish the reality of this reactionary consciousness.

Apartheid

- 2.58. Some members of the organisation have frequently contested the use of the term "apartheid" to describe Israeli society, arguing that the existence of a working

class in Israel is proof of a different reality. According to this position, Israeli society cannot be likened to South Africa under apartheid, where white settlers formed a bourgeois elite that economically dominated the black population. The presence of a Jewish working class in Palestine-Israel would thus mark a major distinction from the South African regime, where the white population as a whole enjoyed a dominant position.

- 2.59. Apartheid in South Africa was based on the exploitation of black labour in the service of the white ruling class. The white bourgeoisie maintained its domination through direct control of the economy, natural resources and systematic exploitation of the black working class. Internal struggles, particularly trade union struggles, disrupted the profitability of capital and weighed on the economy. In Palestine-Israel, on the other hand, the Palestinian working class is largely undervalued. Israel has largely managed to do without Palestinian labour, thanks to economic globalisation and the management of "surplus populations". Despite the use of Palestinian workers in many sectors, the main objective of the Israeli ruling class's policy towards Palestinians has been displacement rather than over-exploitation.
- 2.60. But apartheid is not defined in terms of the class nature of the dominant group. The existence of a Jewish Israeli working class is therefore not a relevant factor in characterising apartheid. What characterises apartheid is the institutionalisation of racial oppression: one dominant group imposes its supremacy on another through a legal system of segregation. In the case of Israel, state laws and policies are designed to ensure the domination of the Jewish Israeli population over the Palestinian population.
- 2.61. This domination is exercised not only in the occupied territories and illegal settlements, such as Gaza, but also within the "green line", where Palestinians who are citizens of Israel reside. Israeli policies in the occupied territories include strict population and spatial control measures, such as checkpoints and movement restrictions for Palestinians. These policies have led to a fragmentation of the Palestinian territory and a restriction of the rights of the populations concerned.
- 2.62. One hundred and twenty-two years after Herzl published *The State of the Jews*, a further step was taken with the adoption, on 19 July 2018, of a fundamental law with constitutional force passed by the Israeli parliament. Entitled "Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People", this law openly endorses a system of apartheid. Article 1 stipulates: "The exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is reserved for the Jewish people", a right denied to Palestinians who are citizens and residents of the same State, but granted to a Jew living on the other side of the world.
- 2.63. According to this law, the State's resources must be used exclusively for the benefit of the Jewish majority. This principle is directly reflected in Netanyahu's

government programme, which states that the Jewish people have "an inalienable and exclusive right to all parts of the Land of Israel". This programme explicitly includes the development of settlements in "Galilee, the Negev, the Golan Heights and Judea Samaria".

2.64. This discriminatory approach was also recently reflected in an amendment to the Law on Nationality and Entry into Israel, adopted on 15 February 2023. This revision makes it easier to deprive Palestinians of their nationality and permanent resident status, which risks rendering some of them stateless.

2.65. Also, by stating that "Hebrew is the language of the State of Israel", this law strips Arabic of its status as an official language, granting it only a "special status to be determined at a later date". This decision is part of a wider process of cultural marginalisation aimed at erasing any form of institutional recognition of the Arabic language, which remains the mother tongue of the majority of Palestinians living in Israel and the occupied territories.

2.66. In this respect, some comrades are trying, in a spirit of comparison, to draw parallels between this situation and the cultural erasure of Amazigh or Tamazight in the face of the Arabic language. Palestinian Arabic represents a form of resistance against a colonial project aimed at erasing all traces of Palestinian identity. To set this linguistic oppression against others is to ignore the intersectional dimensions of the struggles: each oppression is shaped by specific historical, geopolitical and social features, which makes any attempt at hierarchisation futile.

2.67. The violence against these "second-class citizens" stems from the contradictions inherent in Zionism, a project aimed at establishing a "State of the Jews" in a territory largely populated by non-Jews. This ethno-nationalist model justifies the adoption of discriminatory laws conferring rights and privileges on the Jewish population, while denying Palestinians living in the same territory access to the same rights. Apartheid is rooted in this racial hierarchy.

2.68. In short, the fact that Palestinians are subjected to mobility restrictions, land confiscations, discriminatory laws and separate management of their economic and social rights amounts to a regime of apartheid. The Israeli case certainly has some notable differences with South Africa, notably the genocidal nature of the occupation. While South African apartheid was based on the use of military and police force to repress all opposition, it focused mainly on marginalising the black population, confining them to areas often deprived of resources and economic opportunities, in order to maintain a relationship of dependence. On the other hand, the Israeli occupation went further by imposing genocidal policies, aspects that have no direct equivalent in the South African context.

2.69. Thus, ignoring the reality of apartheid has not only weakened our link with the

movement, but has also led to major political errors. It has obscured the centrality of colonial domination to the class struggle in Palestine-Israel. Massacres, forced displacements and strategies of systematic destruction, such as those seen in Gaza in 2023-2024, go beyond racial segregation and are part of a genocidal project.

The question of two socialist states in a socialist federation in the Middle East

- 2.70. For years, our international, and therefore the PSL, has defended the solution of two socialist states. The old position put forward a socialist Palestine and a socialist Israel. This went hand in hand with our pride in having a section in Israel-Palestine, making us the only Trotskyist organisation to have a presence there. We argued that this position was the only one that could be understood by the Israeli working class, which was seen as a key element in the liberation of Palestine. This analysis was then extrapolated to the whole of our international in order to maintain a coherent programme, often coupled with the false idea that the same slogans and the same presentation of ideas were necessary in different countries and situations.
- 2.71. The basic position of socialists must be full equality from river to sea for Palestinians and Jews; this means no Zionist state and the right of return for Palestinian refugees, which, if implemented, would mean a significant demographic majority of Palestinians over Jews in the region and has therefore always been rejected by all sections of the Israeli ruling class. For socialists, it is necessary to reject the Israeli state as a state based on institutionalised racism, as well as Zionism in its entirety.
- 2.72. The expression "socialist Israel" is inappropriate, particularly in a context of genocide, pervasive policies of occupation, as in the West Bank, and the total destruction of the population and infrastructure in Gaza. The fundamental problem with this position, however socialist it may claim to be, lies in the fact that the structuring institutions of Israeli society cannot be dissociated from its colonial character. Today - and this should probably have been the case even before the genocide in Gaza - we should be putting more emphasis on the fact that the region would be radically different after a socialist revolution and the overthrow of capitalism. The term "Israel" expresses a continuity of borders that we should avoid.
- 2.73. A socialist transformation in the region would have a significant effect on the Jewish-Israeli working class. Even more pronounced than the enthusiasm of the Jewish working class when the Mubarak dictatorship in Egypt was overthrown by mass mobilisations in 2011.
- 2.74. This will need to be accompanied by the building of a revolutionary force in Israel that advocates higher wages and benefits for all, whatever their origin. This force should also defend workers' control and management of big business and

banks and advocate equal rights for Palestinians. It should propose a revolutionary conference with democratically elected representatives of Palestinian workers and oppressed people - from all over historic Palestine, including, for example, elected representatives of Palestinian refugees from other countries - to discuss the right to self-determination of Palestinian workers and their families and, at the same time, that of the Israeli working class.

- 2.75. Ultimately, an analysis of the nature of Zionism can only lead to one conclusion: we support the dismantling of the capitalist and Zionist Israeli state. We stand for absolute freedom for the Palestinian people and an end to the system of oppression, where some live under colonial rule while others enjoy racial privilege. Our position must be aimed at breaking this system of apartheid, guaranteeing the rights of the Palestinian people and creating the conditions for Palestinians and Jews to live together on this land.

The importance of words

- 2.76. After the attack and massacres of 7 October, the organisation referred to Hamas and the Israeli State as back to back, in effect equating State terrorism with that of Hamas. Even if the organisation did not explicitly formulate this position, the material used, and in particular the slogan "Solidarity with all victims of war, terrorism and State terrorism". Subsequently, our organisation refused for several months to use the term "genocide" to describe the Zionist state's attacks on Gaza. These imprecisions in the choice of words to describe the events were critical political errors.
- 2.77. The focus on terrorism ignores the political context in which we live. Although the actions of Hamas may be terrorist acts in the traditional Marxist sense of the term, the word is now used by the white media bourgeoisie to discredit any form of resistance to imperialism, particularly in relation to the Palestinian struggle. More generally, the term helps to stimulate an Islamophobic atmosphere.
- 2.78. A striking example is the accusations and convictions for "apologie du terrorisme" in France, targeting people like Rima Hassan, and more recently, Anasse Kazib, as well as other supporters of the Palestinian cause. This illustrates how the dominant Israeli discourse and that of its Western allies systematically incorporate this vocabulary into their media propaganda and legal arsenal. Their objective is obvious: to systematically associate any form of Palestinian resistance, or indeed any Palestinian individual, with terrorism.
- 2.79. Similarly, our reluctance to use the terms "genocide" or "apartheid" reflects our fear of offending the Israeli working class, heirs to the collective trauma of the Shoah, as well as a sensitivity to the prevailing media discourse, a consequence of our lack of attention to these issues. The refusal to use this word, which is justified because any colonial project based on settlements necessarily leads to genocide,

is also due to the concessions made to the Israeli section during the debates within the ASI.

The Palestinian flag: an anti-colonial symbol

- 2.80. Ever since the Palestine solidarity movement took off, opposition to the use of the Palestinian flag and other symbols of the movement, such as the watermelon, has arisen within our organisation. This reticence is often based on the idea that this flag is also used by the Palestinian Authority (PA), masking class contradictions. However, such a perception betrays a profound disconnection with the Palestinian masses, for whom this flag embodies above all resistance to colonial oppression, Zionism and imperialism.
- 2.81. Our position cannot be limited to abstract pacifism or moralistic criticism. This is not an inter-imperialist war, but a colonial confrontation, where solidarity must translate into unequivocal support for the victory of the oppressed people against their oppressor. Although the new Cold War is influencing recent events, it is not the dominant feature of this historic confrontation. We condemn, of course, the PA as an instrument of collaboration with Zionism. However, to confuse this institution with the Palestinian flag is a major error, which weakens our commitment to the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people.
- 2.82. By refusing to use the Palestinian flag and other Palestinian symbols, we claimed to know better than the masses what this symbol represented. Our role as a revolutionary party is clear: to support anti-imperialist struggles while going beyond the narrow confines of nationalism. The Palestinian flag must be reappropriated for what it really represents: a symbol of collective resistance, bearing the hope and dignity of the Palestinian people.

On the resistance of the Palestinian people

- 2.83. To refine this support it is necessary to carry out an analysis of the balance of power within the resistance. This is why it was agreed within the CoCom to postpone the analysis of a Marxist approach to guerrilla warfare and the Palestinian resistance until the next session of the congress. To tackle this question, it will be crucial to restore the historical complexity of the Palestinian resistance. This postponement will allow for a more complete reflection, based on a rigorous study of Palestinian resistance and the links between past dynamics and current events.

Conclusion

- 2.84. In voting for this resolution, we declare that :
- 2.85. The recognition of errors of evaluation in the analysis of the composition of the working class in Israel, and of overestimation of the role that can be played by the Israeli workers' movement without breaking with Zionism. The organisation

should launch a publication to present our position and explain the corrections made to it. Consideration should also be given to adding a warning to articles and publications that have presented inappropriate positions.

- 2.86. Clear and unequivocal recognition and condemnation of the genocide of the Palestinian people perpetrated by the State of Israel in Gaza and the maintenance of an apartheid regime throughout the territories controlled by the Israeli state, both inside the Green Line and in the settlements. Class solidarity requires an anti-colonial struggle and recognition of the racism of Israeli society from its inception and in its very institutions.
- 2.87. Recognition of the centrality of colonialism, including settlement colonialism, in the class struggle in Palestine-Israel. This centrality of the colonial fact must be highlighted in our public material, and must be a priority in the party's programme, particularly as regards the struggle against the apartheid regime.
- 2.88. The abandonment of the old demand for two socialist states in Palestine-Israel.
- 2.89. An end to the use of the term terrorist in public material to describe any act of anti-colonial resistance in Palestine.
- 2.90. Support, not condemnation, of the use of the Palestinian flag, both in our publications and at demonstrations, for those comrades who wish to do so.
- 2.91. The approach to be adopted towards Jewish workers living in Israel is to convince those elements of the Israeli working class who can be won over to an internationalist approach to assist the resistance of the Palestinian proletariat, even if this resistance is violent. These elements must also fight for the rights of Palestinian workers and against the apartheid . These are necessary conditions for the liberation of the working class in Israel.
- 2.92. The organisation's support for the resistance of the Palestinian people, including armed resistance. We also affirm the need to continue discussions on this issue, and to put it to the vote at the next session of Congress.