

# Nigel Ward

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# ZIONISM— WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

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# INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet is intended to deal with the development of Zionist ideology, its nature, the creation of the state of Israel, and to deduce from these the best tactics for anti-Zionists to use in their fight against the Zionist movement in Britain. A clear understanding of Zionism is necessary for two reasons. Firstly, the ideological battle demands a precise recognition of the adversary, if for no other reason than this is the best way to achieve success. Secondly, Zionists themselves distort the history of Judaism and their own movement to support their arguments. Thus a de-mystification of Zionism is central to the struggle against it.

The pamphlet is not intended to catalogue the crimes of the Zionist movement and the Israeli state, against the Palestinian Arabs. Such material is easily available; the terrorist activities of the Irgun, the discrimination against Arabs and even Jews originating from the Arab countries, details of the infamous law of return (which bars Palestinians from rights guaranteed to Jews from Manhattan to Moscow), the treatment of Arab prisoners, and many other items are well documented. The author of this pamphlet would be pleased to supply the sources of such information to anyone interested upon request.\*

\* For further information or comments on this pamphlet, please address correspondence to : N.Ward, P.O.Box 50, Upper Street, London N.1.



# ORIGINS OF ZIONISM

One of the main arguments used by Zionists against their opponents is that any and all opposition to Zionism implies an anti-Semitic viewpoint. We shall prove the falseness of this assertion in several parts of this pamphlet. To begin with, it is necessary to deal with the idea that Judaism is equivalent to Zionism, an association that allows Zionists to make this statement. The equation is based on a falsification of Jewish history. The Zionists claim that the Jews were forcibly dispersed from Palestine at the time of the wars with the Romans and the fall of Jerusalem, and longed ever after for a return to Palestine. The Zionist project for the ingathering of world Jewry in Palestine is therefore a seemingly logical response to this aspiration.

In the first place, it was not merely 'acts of violence' that motivated the dispersion of the Jews. This dispersal began centuries before the Roman wars; years before the fall of Jerusalem, three quarters of the Jews lived outside of Palestine. In fact, the emigration of Jews from Palestine was in response to the better existence to be gleaned elsewhere. Studies of Palestine at this time, including the recent BBC-TV series "Archaeology of the Bible Lands", have shown that Palestine was a major trading root. The experience of the Jewish traders was utilized to secure their position in the Roman empire.

Secondly, the argument of the Zionists presupposes that religious groups continue to exist simply because of their religious fervour. As Marxists we reject such idealistic arguments in favour of the lessons of historical experience; in particular, that ideas are not just abstract thoughts, but are the thoughts of human beings and as such are determined by social reality. "We must not start with religion in order to explain Jewish history; on the contrary, the preservation of the Jewish religion or nationality can be explained only by the 'real Jew', that is to say, by the Jew in his economic and social role." \* For example, up to the eleventh century

\* Abram Leon, The Jewish Question; A Marxist Interpretation, Pathfinder, 1970



in Western Europe, the Jews were noted for their commercial and usurious activity, a position that only became threatened with the development of early capitalism. In Eastern Europe, the Jews remained as traders and middlemen, a situation which continued until the attempts of modern capitalism to impose itself on this underdeveloped region. "The poverty of the Jews in Russia dates only from the abolition of serfdom and of the feudal regime in rural property. So long as the former and latter existed the Jews found wide possibilities for subsisting as merchants and middlemen".\* It was because the Jews were able to occupy a particular economic position that they retained, amongst other things, their religious particularism.

Where then, and when, did Zionism originate? It is necessary to begin with Eastern Europe at the time of the collapse of feudalism. The Jews, having existed with a clear economic task in the old order, were now outcasts and the scapegoats for the violent shocks that were rocking the old society. This led to massive emigration of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe -- five million went to America and the 'new countries' where they rapidly became assimilated. New York alone today has more Jews than the whole of Israel. But the emigration to Western Europe was in vain. Whilst the feudal society of the east was being ruined, the already developed capitalist economy of the west was being racked by economic crises. Thus the Jews were not assimilated into the fabric of western society. Rather, the middle classes, motivated by the pressure on their position created by capitalist concentration, were diverted into making the Jews scapegoats for the crisis of capitalism. This was the cauldron in which Zionism was born -- the Russian pogroms of 1882 and the Dreyfus affair in France.

In fact, it was the latter event that stirred Theodor Herzl to write the book "The Jewish State", that later became the foundation stone of the Zionist movement. What were the ideas of the early Zionists based on? We have already said that Marxists look for explanations of ideas in the development of society. So it is for the emergence of Zionism.

The development of capitalism was the bearer of two political

\* W.Sombart, L'Apogee du Capitalisme, Paris, 1932, p.430. Quote taken from A.Leon, The Jewish Question, p.83.



phenomena: nationalism and colonization of underdeveloped continents. All Zionist political thought did was to interpret the dominant views of the time in relation to the persecution of the Jews in Europe, utilizing the argument for an ingathering of Jews in Palestine. Zionism was therefore a product of its time. As Herzl said, "We should there (Palestine) form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism." \* It would be hard to find a clearer statement of the sort of reactionary nationalist ideology that was prevalent in Western Europe at the time.

This view of the development of Zionism is confirmed by the history of Judaism. Zionists often claim that Zionism and Judaism are compatible or even identical. Why then were the forerunners of Herzl, such as Sabbatai Zeli, violently attacked by orthodox Judaism? The only answer can be that Zionism did not gain its foothold until the social conditions for its emergence were ripe.

The crises of a rising capitalism in Eastern Europe in the late 19th century were matched in the first half of the 20th century with the decline and stagnation of the already advanced capitalism in Western Europe and the US. Whereas the former had produced the first socialist revolution in Russia, the latter was accompanied by a wave of defeats for the revolutionary movement and the rise of fascism. Once again, the Jews, Gypsies, and other minorities became the scapegoats. A wave of anti-Semitism swept Poland in the 1920's and Germany in the 1930's and 1940's. Although it can be said that Zionism originated in Eastern Europe, it most certainly developed and came to maturity with the spread of fascism. For the first time the Zionist movement acquired for itself a genuine mass social base. Emigration to Palestine increased enormously as this table shows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Jews in Palestine</u>
1922	83,790
1931	174,606
1945	579,227
1946	608,225

\* Theodor Herzl, The Jewish State, London, 1896. Taken from M. Rodinson, Israel And The Arabs.



# ZIONISM AND IMPERIALISM

So it is that we can trace political Zionism back to the first congress held in Basel in 1897. But this new nationalist current was significantly different from the movements in Western Europe that were its forerunners and inspirers. Firstly, the Zionist movement was born in Europe with virtually no links with the Jews of Palestine. It wanted to colonize not simply for the economic and political benefits motivating the imperialist countries, but also in order to create its own national state. The Zionist movement was therefore presented with an obvious problem: how do you obtain a geographical area under the control of a great power when your supporters are hundreds of miles from the area? Precisely because there was no Zionist state, the traditional European method of acquiring colonies by armed occupation, wars, and gunboat diplomacy, were not available to the Zionists. The only road open was to persuade whatever great power was controlling Palestine that the creation of a Jewish state would be to its advantage. So began the negotiations of the Zionist movement with the great powers. As one imperialist power blossomed forth, so the Zionist movement would orientate towards it; with the emergence of a new power in the area, so the movement re-oriented.

Herzl's deputy, Max Nordau once proclaimed: "Our aspirations point to Palestine as a compass points to the north, therefore we must orientate ourselves towards those powers (Germany and Turkey) under whose influence Palestine happens to be". Or, returning again to Herzl himself: "If His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine we could undertake to regulate Turkey's finances...As a neutral state, we would remain in constant touch with all of Europe, which would guarrantee our existence." \*

Thus the Zionists sought to gather pickings from the disin-

\* ibid. Taken from M.Rodinson, Israel; A Colonial Settler State.



tegrating Ottoman empire. But the decline of Ottoman power, and the possibility of gaining ground by exploiting the inter-imperialist conflict of the First World War, demanded that they turn toward Britain. Seeking to utilize the Jews, the British government issued the infamous Balfour declaration -- a promise to favour the creation of a "national home for the Jewish people". Prior to this the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann had written to the government saying: "...in submitting our resolution we entrusted our national and Zionist destiny to the Foreign Office and the Imperial War Cabinet in the hope that the problem would be considered in the light of imperial interests and the principles for which the Entente stands." \*

Later with the decline of the British empire and its proven inability after the Arab Revolt of 1936-39 to maintain control in Palestine, the Zionists sought US support for their project. The outcome of the reliance of the Zionists on imperialism for the creation and maintenance of the Israeli state was the ardently pro-imperialist policies of the Israeli state from the time of the Korean war onwards.



# THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL

We have shown that the Zionist movement saw its task as colonizing Palestine for 'civilization' -- read imperialism. However, it would be misguided to equate this colonization with what happened for example in South Africa. The white colonists of this latter region were the frontier fighters of laissez-faire capitalism. They sought to exploit the local resources and population for immediate profit. Today we see the economic apartheid in South Africa -- blacks forming the backbone of the manual working class whilst the whites fill the skilled and managerial levels. The outlook of the Zionists was very different from this. The specific feature of Zionism which distinguishes it from all other modern settler colonization movements is that it wanted not simply the resources of Palestine (which were not very great in any case) but the country itself for the establishment of a new national state which through immigration would create its own classes -- including a working class. The Arabs were therefore not to be exploited, but totally replaced.

Consequently the central slogans of the Zionist colonization process were: 'Conquest of the Land', 'Jewish Labour', and 'Buy Jewish'. In short, Israel was to be exclusively Jewish in every respect (economically, socially and politically).

It is important not to forget the complicity of the Arab ruling classes in the Zionist project. The main landowners, the Al-Husseinis, Auni Abdul Hadi, and others all sold land to the Zionists, who it must be remembered, had regulations forbidding its re-sale to Arabs. On the political level, the Hashemite kings collaborated with Zionism. In 1922 King Faisal signed an agreement with Weizmann, including the endorsement of the Balfour declaration and an article stating: "All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration into Palestine on a large scale." Finally, in

\* Taken from M. Rodinson, Israel; A Colonial Settler State.



1948, Ben Gurion and Abdullah, King of Jordan, agreed to divide Palestine between themselves.

It is well known what the result of Zionist colonization was. In 1948 there were 580,000 Arab refugees; massive land confiscations meant Arabs lost 40-50% of their land. Perhaps the clearest reflection of Zionist ideals is the infamous "Law of Return", promulgated in July 1950. This states that every Jew has the right to come and settle in Israel. The law of nationality passed nearly two years later conferred Israeli nationality on any settler. However, the Palestinian Arabs who had fled the fighting following organized massacres like that of Deir Yassin were to be treated as foreigners; naturalization would be granted only after the applicant had sworn an oath of allegiance to the new state and the application had to be approved by the Minister of the Interior.

The Israeli nationality law is revealing of another fundamental cornerstone of Zionist ideology deriving from the false equation of Zionism with Judaism. The Zionists believe that world Jewry constitute a nation which was scattered thousands of years ago during 'the Diaspora', but which still retains its common basis. This preposterous notion can at best only make the concept of a nation or nationality meaningless. How can Jews from different countries, with completely different economic, social, cultural, and political histories be considered a single unit! And if they did constitute a nation, why is it that today, 30 years after the foundation of the Zionist state, the overwhelming majority of Jews consciously chose not to emigrate to Israel no matter how ardently many of them defend the policies of the Israeli state. It is estimated that a mere 3.0 million out of a world population of about 16.0 million Jews reside today in Israel.

When we begin to review the practice of Zionism, including the creation of the Israeli state, it becomes apparent as to why this ideology can be described as racist. Zionism has created a creature that has institutionalized expulsion of Arabs from their land, discrimination against Arabs in every aspect of life, and does not even officially recognize the existence of 'Palestinians'. The rationalization of the colonization of Palestine at the expense of its Arab inhabitants has created an ideology and society which is racist to the core.

However, it would be wrong to simplistically project this



onto the early Zionist movement. In fact, the early Zionists were oblivious to the situation in Palestine and even the existence of its Arab inhabitants."When Max Nordau, Herzl's second in command, first received details on the existence of an Arab population in Palestine, he came shocked to Herzl, exclaiming: 'I never realized this -- we are committing an injustice'". \*\*

This original naivete quickly gave way to the pragmatic policies of the Jewish Agency, the head of whose colonization department, R.Weitz, commented in 1967 that 27 years earlier he had made the following notation in his diary:"Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country...We shall not achieve our goal of being an independent people with the Arabs in this small country. The only solution is a Palestine, at least Western Palestine (west of the Jordan river) without Arabs ... And there is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them: Not one village, not one tribe, should be left...Only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb the millions of our own brethren. There is no other way out." \*\*\*

Later speaking in the aftermath of the Six Day War, he made this interesting comparison:" ...the War of Independence (1948) broke out to our great fortune. In this war, a twofold miracle occurred: territorial victory and the flight of the Arabs. In the Six Day War, there was one miracle: a tremendous territorial victory. But the general population of the liberated territories remained 'stuck' in their places, and this may destroy the very foundation of our state," \*\*\*



# ZIONISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM

A further argument for defining Zionism as a form of racism is its attitude toward non-Jews. How do the Zionists hope to win all Jews to their project? Simple -- label all non-Jews as anti-semitic and offer Israel as the one refuge from discrimination and persecution. In other words, anti-semitism is universal and endemic among non-Jews.

Not only does this attitude share the same racist premise as anti-semitic ideology, and fail to explain its basis in the capitalist system, but also it actively encourages Jews to be defeatist in the fight against anti-semitism. This is what the founder of Zionism, Herzl, said: "In Paris, as I have said, I achieved a freer attitude towards anti-semitism, which I now began to understand historically and to pardon. Above all, I recognized the emptiness and futility in trying to 'combat' anti-semitism." \*

In fact the Zionists have on numerous occasions used anti-semitism to encourage Jews to emigrate to Israel. Uri Harary in the February 1969 issue of Yediot Aharanot wrote: "It is of course not customary to talk about it in public, but many of us felt a tiny bit of joy when we read newspaper reports of the swastika epidemic in Europe in 1960; or about the pro-Nazi movement in Argentina".

Historically the Zionists have frequently allied themselves with anti-semites. Herzl negotiated with Plehve, the Minister of Interior of the Tsarist government and a notorious anti-semite. The result was a letter in 1903 promising "moral and material assistance with respect to the measures taken by the Zionist movement which would lead to the diminution of the Jewish population in Russia". Similar agreements

\* *ibid*, p.167.



were negotiated by Arlossorof, secretary of the Histradut, with the Nazis in 1934. Ten years later, Rudolph Kastner, secretary of the Zionist committee in Budapest, negotiated a deal with Adolph Eichmann to allow a thousand of the wealthiest Jews to escape to Switzerland. In return, Kastner encouraged 800,000 Hungarian Jews to board the trains to Auschwitz.

There is finally the wave of bombings that took place in Synagogues and meeting places of the Jewish community of Bagdad in the early 1950's. Recently the true facts surrounding these incidents have come to light. It is known that the Iraqi monarchy had negotiated a deal with Israel after the 1948 war to allow the Iraqi Jewish population to emigrate to Israel. A daily plane service between Bagdad and Tel Aviv was set up. There was only one problem. The Iraqi Jews did not want to emigrate to Israel. It is at this point that the bombings started, leading to a mass exodus of Jews from Iraq. Today it is established, and has even been reported in the Israeli press, that Zionist agents were responsible for the bombings. Their aim was to stimulate a wave of anti-semitism that would encourage Jewish emigration.

In conclusion: Zionism is racist on two counts. The first and most important is the daily, official and unofficial, racism that is directed against the Palestinian Arabs. The second more subtle aspect of the racist nature of Zionist ideology is revealed by the fact that it shares the same assumptions as anti-semitism of all varieties. The anti-semites want Jews to 'go away', while the Zionists want them to 'come away'. Therefore, not only is it false to brand -- as do the Zionists -- all forms of opposition to Zionism as anti-semitism, but paradoxically Zionism itself has a lot in common with anti-semitism.





Israeli soldier and Palestinian schoolgirl on the West Bank



# ZIONISM AND FASCISM

Although Zionism is thoroughly racist, it is wrong to label it as fascist in any meaningful sense of the word. A fascist movement, like the National Front in Britain for example, is built on a base of middle class and lumpen workers and is aimed at resolving crises at the immediate expense of the working class, destroying all forms of independent working class organization and expression. Zionism, on the other hand, historically arose as a reactionary nationalist response to the situation of Jews in Europe. When the fascists marched on Lewisham in London, they did so in order to terrorize its immigrant population. Their very organized existence on the streets trampled over the democratic rights of the local black population. The same cannot be said of the Zionist movement in Britain.

Furthermore in Palestine the Zionist state certainly is not fascist with regards to the Jewish working class, which enjoys the same range of bourgeois democratic rights as for example the British working class. With regards to the daily racism practised against Arabs, it should be remembered that this also is not fascism. A 'pure' Zionist society does not even want the Arabs around to exploit! They want their expulsion, in order to construct an exclusively Jewish state and social structure.

This may be even worse than fascism, but it certainly is not fascism in the historical sense in which it developed in Europe. Moreover, the methods of combating Zionism in the Arab world are, and will always be, completely different from those employed in the imperialist countries. In Palestine, the Arabs are facing an actual state power with all its immense machinery of repression directed against any



rise of the Arab revolution. In the imperialist countries, the struggle against Zionism is primarily an ideological battle to win over the labour movement -- which it should not be forgotten is still overwhelmingly influenced by decades of Zionist propoganda -- to a committment against the Zionist entity.

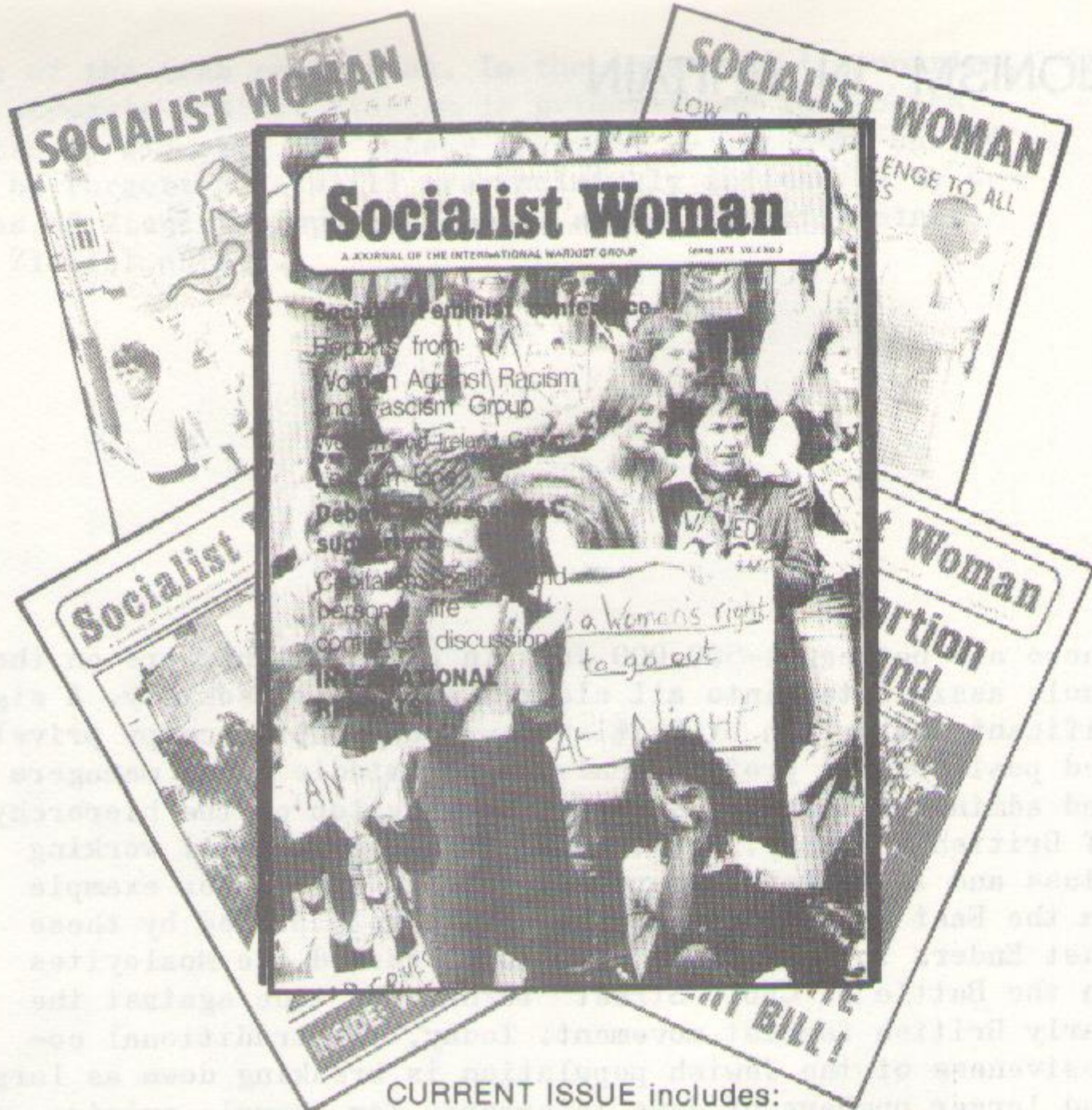


# ZIONISM IN BRITAIN

There are between 4-500,000 Jews in Britain. They are on the whole assimilated into all classes of British society. A significant proportion of British Jewry currently occupy privileged positions as professionals, upper middle class managers and administrators and even at the very top of the hierarchy of British industry. However, important pockets of working class and lower petit-bourgeois Jews do exist, for example in the East End of London. The heroic role played by these East Enders in the 1930's when they crushed the Mosleyites in the Battle of Cable Street turned the tide against the early British fascist movement. Today, the traditional cohesiveness of the Jewish population is breaking down as larger and larger numbers of Jews intermarry for example outside of the traditional Jewish community. But by no means can this process be said to have completed itself.

Whenever the Zionist movement finds itself confronted with the unwillingness of the local Jewish population to emigrate to Israel -- as is the case in the imperialist countries today -- it resorts to two other options. The first is to use this population for channelling funds to Israel. This is normally done with the active assistance of the imperialist government, through for example tax concessions of all kinds. The second and ultimately more important way in which the world Zionist movement operates is to utilize the Jewish community as a lever in a campaign to support Israel and put pressure on the capitalist state, if necessary, to adopt consistently pro-Zionist policies. This is an important way in which a climate of opinion favorable to Zionism and its racist policies in Palestine has been created in almost all the imperialist countries (especially the USA) since 1948.





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The labour movement and almost all the mass organizations of the working class in the imperialist countries have therefore not been immune to Zionist ideology.

The 1967 war, the rise of the Palestinian Resistance Movement, the arrogant continuation of colonization in the newly occupied territories, the growth of anti-war sentiment in the West, the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, and last but not least the beginnings of a far-reaching process of radicalization of the European working classes, all of these developments have begun to erode Zionism's social base of support. On an individual level, the revolutionary movement is full of people of Jewish origin who are today amongst the most articulate opponents of Zionism in the imperialist countries. But the battle has by no means been won.

The structural crisis of capitalism in the imperialist countries today is quite capable of recreating the conditions for a resurgence of anti-Semitism. Organizations like the National Front are anti-Semitic through and through, even though they may not be in a position to be blatantly explicit about it.

The possibility of a partial resurgence of anti-Semitism will be taken advantage of to the hilt by the Zionists in Britain. They have learnt many tricks since the 1920's, and are past masters at the art of using anti-Semitism or even the distant threat of its emergence, to further the aims of Zionist colonization in Palestine.

Recently we have witnessed in the debate that opened up in the National Union of Students (NUS) a good example of Zionist tactics in a situation that has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. The attempts of some student union branches to either ban Zionist speakers from a platform in the NUS, or -- a milder version -- deny Jewish student societies that adopt Zionist policies access to union facilities, have been futile. Not only do the Zionists have a significant proportion of the bourgeois publishing world more or less at their disposal, but also the puny resources of individual student unions are incomparable to the sort of resources that the Zionist movement is capable of mobilizing in Britain. From a purely material point of view therefore, bans in student unions will have no influence on Zionist activity.



The predictable Zionist response to the debate in the NUS has been to use proposed bans to brand all opposition to Zionism as anti-Semitic. This unfortunately has led to a temporary resurgence of Zionism in the British student movement. Jewish/Israel societies are being revived all over Britain, and being established in places they never existed before. The resources being put into this operation by the Zionist movement are very large. The 'Jewish Chronicle' has become an organizing paper, regularly tracing the development of the Zionist campaign on this issue. Another very dangerous aspect to the whole campaign is that this partial Zionist resurgence is spearheading a general right wing offensive on the left inside the British student movement.

The ignorance of many individuals and some organizations on the revolutionary left of the nature of the enemy they are trying to fight has unfortunately given the Zionist movement in Britain some newly acquired strength. This will not last. But in order to speed up the demise of Zionist influence in both the student and labour movement, we must choose the right tactical approach for defeating it. We must remember that because Zionism attempts to shroud itself in myths and gain prestige from the crimes committed against Jews by anti-Semites, the best way of combatting this ideology in the imperialist countries is through the most open debate possible. There is one thing that upsets the Zionists more than anything else -- that is being confronted by anti-Zionist Jews. In Israel they try to label socialist anti-Zionists as "self-haters"; Moshe Machover a well known socialist, has been threatened by Zionist thugs in colleges; Norman Templar, of the British Anti-Zionist Organization, was banned from speaking in Liverpool University. In short, we have everything to gain and nothing to lose from debating the Zionists and exposing the history, nature and crimes of Zionism against Arabs and Jews. Having dispossessed the Palestinian Arabs, the Zionists have led thousands of Jews away from a fight against anti-Semitism, and into an alliance with the worst enemy of the Jews and of humanity, imperialism.

To conclude: banning Zionist groups in colleges is a wrong tactic to use in the fight against Zionism. No case can be made that Zionism is fascist and therefore needs to be banned in order to defend the labour movement from a mortal enemy. Whilst Zionism has undoubtedly developed as a racist ideology, this does not constitute grounds for banning groups



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that espouse this ideology. If such bans and 'no platform for racists' positions were applied to all forms of racism in Britain, then we would logically have to be in favour of denying the right of 90% of the British working class to express their views! It is obvious that what we have to determine are the best tactics for fighting racism, and Zionism as a particular form of racist ideology. Practice has shown that bans on Zionist groups are counter-productive, because the Zionists skillfully exploit the fear of anti-Semitism to make out that they are the ones being denied their democratic rights in the unions, thereby turning the debate away from what it should be about, namely the oppression of the Palestinian Arabs by the Zionist state in the Middle East.

The fight against Zionism has two components to it; the de-mystification of the history of the Zionist movement, and the exposure of the practice of this movement in Palestine. Such a campaign necessarily has to be complemented by a fight for the building of a broad-based solidarity movement with the struggle of the victims of Zionist colonization -- the Palestinian Arabs.



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