

PALESTINE WILL BE FREE!

Zionism, White Supremacy and the Palestinian Revolution



This pamphlet is a reprint of an editorial in Breakthrough, the political journal of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. It was written in the spring of 1982, before the genocidal Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The U.S.-backed invasion continued the Camp David strategy of attempting to isolate and destroy the P.L.O. We invite your comments on this pamphlet. Contact PFOC at:

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In November 1981, at an anti-Klan conference in San Francisco, a representative of the Palestinian struggle stated that "it is perhaps safe to assume, based on material facts, that one of the most confused questions of our times is the Palestinian question." The truth of this is apparent in the current debates within the left and women's movement over the issues of Zionism and anti-semitism. Too often this debate has been clouded by tacit acceptance of Zionist mythology: "The Palestinians are anti-semitic," "fighting anti-semitism means supporting Israel," "Zionism is a national liberation movement." This resurgence of Zionism within the white left acts as a brake on building solidarity with Palestine and undermines support for national liberation within the U.S.

Anti-semitism is a reactionary, vicious ideology and practice which must be fought by progressive people. But the Palestinian Revolution is not anti-Jewish; it has opposed anti-semitism while exposing the racist, col-

onialist nature of Zionism. The Palestinian Revolution is the spearhead of the battle for revolutionary change in the Middle East. For anti-imperialists, it is of great importance to expose the lies of Zionism and to fight for the truth about Palestine.

News of the latest mass uprisings in Palestine underscores the urgency of building solidarity with the Palestinian Revolution. Day after day, Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights have taken to the streets in militant protest, fighting back with bricks and stones against the bullets of the Israeli occupiers. They have shown the world that Palestinians will never accept Israeli rule, whether in the form of outright military terror or phony "autonomy" and "self-rule" schemes designed to maintain Israeli power. By their courage and sacrifice, the Palestinian masses have made it clear that Palestine will one day be free.

In 1948, under the orchestration of Western imperialism, the Zionist state of Israel was carved out of the colonized nation of Palestine. The Israeli army terrorized two million Palestinians, forcing them off their land and into exile. Since then, Israel has become a military monster, expanding its borders through aggressive wars. Israel is a garrison for Western imperialism in the Middle East, guarding vital shipping lanes for oil and other resources, and attacking the revolutionary and progressive movements in the region. Recently the U.S. announced a new "strategic alliance" with Israel, involving even closer collaboration on military and intelligence matters. Israeli Prime Minister Begin remarked, "We've always said that Israel has a friend in the White House. Now we can say that we have a very good friend indeed." Despite U.S. talk of the "Soviet threat," the Israeli-U.S. strategic alliance is directed at crushing the Palestinian Revolution.

PEOPLE'S WAR IN PALESTINE

Leading forces of the Palestinian struggle are carrying out a strategy of protracted peoples' war as the only road to victory. The armed struggle has been carried to all areas where Palestinians live, mobilizing wide sectors of the dispersed population in the war against Zionism. Refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria have become base areas and centers of resistance. Residents of the West Bank and Gaza are dramatically escalating their courageous struggle against the Israeli settlers and occupiers, as are the 1.2 million Palestinians who remain colonized within the pre-1967 boundaries of Israel.



This struggle is growing in the face of brutal terror by the Israeli military. In July 1981, Israeli jets killed 300 and wounded 800 in a bombing raid on Beirut, one of many carried out against urban centers and refugee camps in Lebanon. Israeli military police conduct systematic torture of Palestinian militants and routinely shoot down unarmed demonstrators in the West Bank. But the armed struggle continues to sharpen and the resistance of the Palestinian masses has firmly established the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Revolutionary Palestinian organizations within the PLO, like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), have made it clear that the struggle is not just against Israel but is directed at the whole system of imperialism and its reactionary client states in the Middle East. The PFLP argues that:

The Palestinian revolution bears a special responsibility for furthering the polarization between the pro- and anti-imperialist forces in the region. The battle for Palestine is part of the battle for the region, and only in firm alliance with the other patriotic forces and clearly distanced from Arab reaction can the Palestinian revolution achieve victory.

The coordinated resistance waged by Palestinian and Lebanese revolutionaries to the brutal 1978 Israeli invasion demonstrates the developing alliances which threaten reactionary rule throughout the region. By identifying conservative Arab regimes as enemies, the Palestinians advance the process of building socialist and revolutionary consciousness in the course of the war for national liberation. This includes the struggle for the liberation of women in Arab societies. Their mobilization is part of transforming the revolutionary process into one of people's war. Palestinian women are taking up the military and political battle against the Zionist state and withstanding brutal repression. At the same time they are overturning their oppression, rooted in centuries of Arab feudalism and European colonial domination. As the PFLP notes, "While the war of liberation rages, the foundation of the new society is being laid and the process of eliminating all forms of oppression begins—a process in which women must play a crucial and equal role."

U.S. imperialism's strategy in the Middle East aims at strengthening Israel's political, economic and military role while bringing reactionary Arab regimes into a formal alliance with Zionism. This was the goal of the Camp David agreement. But Camp David didn't succeed in breaking Palestinian unity or in bringing any Arab governments except Egypt into a formal treaty with Israel. The recent sale of AWAC planes to Saudi Arabia and U.S. promotion of the eight-point Saudi "peace plan," which recognizes the existence of Israel

and proposes the creation of a Palestinian "mini-state," are current expressions of this strategy. Many people regard the "mini-state" as a logical answer to the Palestinian demand for self-determination. But the Palestinians have a right to all of Palestine. Coexistence beside a powerful militarized Israel would pressure Palestinians to compromise revolutionary principles and subordinate themselves economically and militarily to Zionism. The Saudi Plan, along with diplomatic initiatives by Western European powers, aims to subvert the unity of the PLO, isolate the PFLP and other revolutionary Palestinian forces and secure recognition of the state of Israel. But these neocolonial schemes have been rejected by the PLO.

The stated goal of the PLO is to win back the land and create a democratic, secular Palestinian state in the whole of what is now called Israel. This is not a demand to "drive the Jews into the sea," as the Zionists always charge. It is a demand to end the Zionist state of Israel, to eliminate the privileges and colonial power which Jews maintain over Palestinians.

This is the only just basis for Palestinian national liberation. But there are many in the U.S. left who reject the Palestinian program and instead promote a vision of a "socialist Jewish state" sitting side-by-side with a Palestinian mini-state. Advocates of this position are "left" Zionists who accept the basic premise of Zionism (that Jews have the right to the land of Palestine) while mouthing support for Palestinian human rights. They argue that Israel has the right to exist in Palestine because of the murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis. Israel is a "special case" in which colonial conquest is justified.

The holocaust was one of history's terrible crimes, the brutal culmination of years of violent attacks against Jews in Europe. But invoking the holocaust to justify Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people is historically and morally indefensible. German fascism, not the Palestinian people, committed genocide against the Jews. Nazi death camps were part of a strategy to consolidate fascist power and unite the German nation behind imperialist war. Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Treblinka and Dachau stand as stark reminders of the barbarism of fascism. The horrors of the holocaust, like the genocidal crimes committed by the U.S. against the peoples of Indochina, should harden our resolve to destroy the imperialist system responsible for such brutality.

ISRAEL IS A SETTLER COLONY

Israel is no "special case." The Zionist state is an illegitimate settler colony occupying conquered Arab land, where Palestinians had lived and worked for thousands of years. From its inception, the Zionist movement put forward Jewish settlement of Palestine as a vehicle for securing British colonial interests in the



The Reagan and Begin regimes are strategic partners. Despite occasional wrist-slapping by the U.S. in response to Israeli atrocities, the Zionist government carries out U.S. objectives in the Middle East.

Middle East and also as a means of combatting Jewish participation in proletarian struggle for socialism in Europe. Zionism was promoted by the Jewish bourgeoisie, in close alliance with Western imperialist powers, particularly Britain. Zionism was rabidly anti-communist, working with other bourgeois forces to isolate and attack the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

At the turn of the century, there were hardly any Jews in Palestine. Despite Zionist efforts, by the 1930s Arabs still far outnumbered Jews in the country. But with the rise of Nazism in Germany and the outbreak of World War, the Zionists were able to organize a mass invasion of Palestine by white European Jews, while the Zionists' Western allies (despite their professed concern about aiding Jewish victims of Nazism) blocked Jewish immigration into their own countries. With the cooperation of the British (who still controlled Palestine), the European settlers acquired Arab land by terrorizing Arab owners to sell at low prices or by outright theft. In November 1947, when the Zionists had built up their numbers and military strength, the U.S.-dominated United Nations partitioned Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state. The Zionists then moved militarily to seize much of the remaining Pal-

estinian land. Zionist terror organizations wiped out whole villages of Palestinians. In April 1948, the Irgun, led by Menachem Begin, attacked the village of Deir Yassin, brutally massacring 250 Arabs. But Zionism persists in the lie that Palestinians left Palestine of their own "free will."

Terror and land theft continue to this day in the new Zionist settlements on the West Bank. Current Israeli plans call for 100,000 Jewish settlers, backed by the full power of the military, to complete the invasion and occupation of this Palestinian territory.

Israel is a classic settler colony. This is further revealed by its relationship with South Africa, another racist state founded by white Europeans on land stolen from the indigenous population. This alliance is somewhat ironic, considering the anti-semitism of the South African government and the fact that many of the current leaders of South Africa were Nazi collaborators during the Second World War. The Israeli-South Africa axis is rooted in a long history of collaboration between Zionism and settler colonialism in Southern Africa, based on commonality of interests and origin. Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, was a close friend and supporter of Cecil Rhodes, the architect of British imperialism, colonizer of Zimbabwe and foremost proponent of the "white man's burden" to civilize Africa. Herzl put forth similar views in regard to Palestine: "We should form there (in Palestine) part of a wall of defense for Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism."

Israel and South Africa are now each other's primary trading partners, supplying each other with advanced technology, military hardware and personnel, and political/diplomatic support. The Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO) has documented the presence of Israeli soldiers among the South African occupying troops in Namibia. Western imperialism relies heavily on the Israeli/South Africa axis as a striking force against revolution in Africa and the Middle East.

ZIONISM IS WHITE SUPREMACY

Zionism is an integral part of white supremacist movement in the U.S. It is rooted in the defense of white privilege over colonized people. Zionists lay claim to Palestine based on the alleged Biblical right of Jews, the "chosen people" to return to the "promised land." This is markedly similar to the claim of racial and religious mission that Europeans have traditionally asserted to justify their violent conquest of Third World people. The U.S. version is "manifest destiny," the racist license to commit genocide against Native people, occupy and conquer Northern Mexico, enslave

and colonize Africans and then expand U.S. empire to Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines in 1898.

Empire-building is always glorified by the conqueror. Romantic images of the American pioneer—good, fearless people who tamed the West—go hand-in-hand with the stereotypes of Native people, Mexicanos and Blacks as primitive obstacles to progress. Similarly Zionism projects Israeli pioneers as “agricultural geniuses who take arid land from lazy Arabs and make the desert bloom.” For Zionism, the Palestinians simply do not exist as a nation. Israeli settlers assume the right to steal Palestinian land and water, to super-exploit Palestinian labor, while all the time posing as the victims of Palestinian and Arab aggression.

Zionism has become a vehicle through which many Jews in the U.S. are drawn into the racist offensive against Third World people. Most Jews would never support the Ku Klux Klan, because of its virulent anti-semitism. But many see nothing wrong with the Jewish Defense League, a paramilitary formation responsible for many violent attacks against Black, Puerto Rican and ChicanoMexicano people. Zionism creates a base in the Jewish community for these fascist organizations and legitimizes their actions.

Entering the 1960s, most Jewish people identified as liberals, generally supportive of the Civil Rights movement and active in the emerging antiwar fight. But the rise of Zionism, coupled with a “white backlash” among Jewish progressives in response to the Black Liberation Movement, changed this to the point where in 1972, the Jewish vote went to the great friend of Israel, Richard Nixon.

The Zionist political offensive coincided with the Six Day War in June 1967. The powerful, U.S.-equipped Israeli military invaded the surrounding Arab states and seized Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, the Syrian Golan Heights and the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Zionist propaganda machine portrayed Israel as a brave, tiny David surrounded by the Goliath of vast, hostile Arab states. American Jews raised tens of millions of dollars for the war effort. Fighting anti-semitism was made synonymous with support for Israeli conquest. Simultaneously, Zionist organizations began opposing and attacking the Black liberation movement. Responding to Black rebellion in the cities and to the demand for Black Power, they charged “reverse racism” and raised the battle cry of “Black anti-semitism.”

In the New York teachers' strike of 1969, the United Federation of Teachers, led by AFL-CIO vice president Albert Shankar, whipped up racist hysteria among Jewish teachers, calling on them to defend their jobs and positions against the demands of Black parents in



credit: PFLP Bulletin

WE SHALL REMAIN

*It is a thousand times easier for you
to pass an elephant through a needle's eye,
to catch fried fish in the Milky Way,
to plow the sea or teach an alligator to speak;
Than to smother with your oppression
the spark of an idea,
or to force us to deviate
a single step from our chosen march...
Here we shall remain upon your chests;
and in your throats we shall remain
a piece of glass, a cactus thorn;
and in your eyes, a blazing fire...
We breed rebellions
One after another...
Here we shall spill our dearest blood;
Here we have a past
a present,
and a future...
Our roots are entrenched
Deep in the earth
in Lydda, in Ramleh, in Galilee—
Here we shall remain.*

—Tawfiq Zayyad



The para-military Jewish Defense League is actively organizing a white supremacist base among Jews to oppose national liberation in the U.S. Here the JDL carries out an "anti-crime" patrol in Los Angeles. In Brooklyn, NY in April, the "militant faction" of the JDL bombed an Arab restaurant killing an elderly woman.

the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community for more control over the education of Black children in the schools. The fact that Black revolutionary organizations were beginning to take open stands in support of the Palestinian revolution was further fuel for the Zionist attack on the Black movement.

This reactionary direction has intensified to the point where Zionists now occupy leading positions in the racist anti-busing movement, sharing the territory with the KKK. Last year, the JDL joined in a demonstration with U.S. Nazis in which Iranian students were violently attacked. Banners reading "Never Again" flew beside swastikas and signs reading "White Power." When Menachem Begin came to the U.S. recently and warmly embraced Jerry Falwell, the right-wing anti-semitic leader of the Moral Majority, as a "true friend of Israel and the Jewish people," he was merely putting the finishing touches on a process which has been going on for years.

There are many Jews, especially those who consider themselves "liberals," who oppose Begin as a narrow-minded extremist and who disagree with the blatantly

racist settlements policy on the West Bank. But most still refuse to question the colonial nature of Israel or to support Palestine. They have been won to the Zionist view that the PLO is a "terrorist" organization and that defense of Israel is the prime responsibility of every Jewish person in the world.

ZIONISM IS NOT NATIONAL LIBERATION

It is in this light that we have to evaluate the trend among many progressive Jews towards acceptance of Zionism as a legitimate expression of Jewish identity. In a recent issue of *Big Mama Rag*, a Jewish feminist from Boston writes:

I adamantly refuse to accept the indictment of Israel as a "settler colonial state" and I refuse to equate Zionism with racism. The national liberation movement of no other group of people is equated with racism and no other state, however corrupt, imperialist or authoritarian, is denied the right to exist. (I support the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as demanded by the recent Saudi peace plan.)

Zionism is *not* a national liberation movement! It has meant the plunder by Europeans of the land and resources of a Third World nation. It has meant the establishment of an outpost for Western imperialism in the Middle East. It means genocide and terror directed against the Palestinian people—the rightful owners of the land. This is why no national liberation movement in the world supports the Zionist state of Israel. This is why Israel's closest allies are Western imperialist powers and their racist partners like South Africa. This is why Israel has armed and supported fascist regimes like Somoza's in Nicaragua, the Salvadorean junta and the Pinochet regime in Chile. The state of Israel has no right to exist. Just as South Africa has no right to exist as a white settler state oppressing the Azanian masses; nor for that matter, does the U.S. have the right to exist on conquered land as an prisoner of colonized nations.

Many Jewish women in the women's movement have begun to equate the struggle against anti-semitism with the fight of Third World people against racist oppression and even to identify themselves as "other than white." Anti-semitism remains a reality in the U.S. and elsewhere. But it is a lie to equate the situation of Jews with the genocidal attacks experienced by Third World people. Like other oppressed and exploited European immigrants, Jews have been incorporated into a privileged white oppressor nation which dominates internally colonized people within the U.S. To deny this ex-



Solidarity with the Palestinian Revolution and opposing Zionism are fundamental to building an anti-imperialist movement in the U.S.

emptys Jewish people from the responsibility of struggling against white supremacy. Within the women's movement, this line undermines support for national liberation in the name of Jewish women "focusing on our own oppression." This furthers the reformist view within the women's movement which separates the struggle for women's liberation from the overall fight to defeat the imperialist system.

The imperialist system is responding to profound crisis with increasingly fascist solutions. This has spawned the rise of neo-Nazi and fascist mass movement in both Western Europe and the U.S. Along with this comes the rise of anti-semitism. There is a tradition of Jews fighting back against fascism and anti-semitism, from the battles against the pogroms in Europe and Tsarist Russia to the heroic Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis in Poland. To call up this history of resistance in defense of Israeli fascism and genocide is a betrayal of that history. For progressive Jews the only principled stand is total rejection of Zionism and support for Palestine.

VICTORY TO THE ARMED STRUGGLE

Drawing on the lessons of the victorious national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the Palestinian people have chosen the difficult path of people's war to reclaim their homeland.

Fighting from base areas in Syria and Lebanon, from within the West Bank and Gaza, and from within Israel itself, the Palestinian freedom fighters have thwarted Israeli attempts to wipe out their nation.

The state of Israel has become one of the most highly militarized in history, with a vast U.S.-supplied arsenal. Its farms and frontier settlements are armed to the teeth to guard against guerrilla infiltration. Every Zionist settler functions as some part of the colonizing army, defending Israel against the ever-increasing advances of the Palestinian guerrilla forces. As in every people's war, the Zionists must contend with every Palestinian, and must consider each Palestinian a potential enemy. Not only does Israel have to guard against attack from outside its borders, but it has to protect itself from the Palestinian masses who still live and work as colonial subjects within Israel. It is a great strength of the Palestinian revolution that the war for Palestine has been brought into the heart of Israel, striking at the frontier settlements and within the urban centers.

The Israelis scream "terrorism" whenever a bomb explodes inside one of their cities or settlements. At the same time, Israeli pilots flying U.S.-made fighter bombers rain down indiscriminate terror on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The Israelis call these attacks "self-defense."

Many people in the U.S left echo the Israeli charges of "terrorism" against the Palestinians. They raise the issue of attacks against the "civilian population," ignoring the fact that in Israel the civilian population functions as an armed militia directed against Palestinians. But criticism of Palestinian military actions reflects a more basic disagreement with the Palestinian strategy of people's war. Those who would deprive the Palestinians of their most effective weapons against the Israeli invaders and occupiers have no real commitment to the destruction of Zionism.

Left critics of the Palestinians also attack the actions of the FALN, the BLA and other armed clandestine formations inside the U.S. For these people, the time is never right for armed struggle, and the harsh realities of wars for national liberation should never be brought to the heart of the empire.

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Nineteen eighty-one was the year the Zionists unleashed the Beirut raid and other attacks against Lebanon, destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor, escalated attacks by riot police and soldiers against Palestinians on the West Bank, and annexed the Golan Heights. But for all its ferocity, Israel can only succeed in buying time. No amount of Zionist military aggression and expansionism or maneuvering by U.S. imperialism can destroy the Palestinian commitment and capacity to see their nation liberated. The destruction of Zionism, however long it takes, and the building of a free, independent and socialist Palestine will be an historic victory in the anti-imperialist struggle. The time is long overdue for those of us in the U.S. left to break with the politics of collaboration with Zionism and white supremacy, which has denied the Palestinian revolution essential solidarity. ■

VICTORY TO PALESTINE!

