

Zionism - is it racist?

Two Statements on the UN Resolution

by

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and

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Foreword

The two articles in this pamphlet dealing with Zionism and racism are presented by the Committee for a Just Peace in the Middle East, an organization which has long worked for a peaceful solution of the Middle East conflict based upon the withdrawal of Israel from occupied Arab territories, recognition of the just rights of the Arab Palestine people, and for the right of the State of Israel and all other states in the area to exist in peace and security.

The first of the articles is by Dr. Hyman Lumer, editor of the magazines Political Affairs and Jewish Affairs. Dr. Lumer has travelled widely in the Middle East, and is the author of many books, pamphlets and articles on Zionism and Middle East questions.

The second article is a speech delivered on October 20, 1975 to the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) by Meir Vilner, General Secretary of the Israeli Communist Party, to which he is a Deputy.

The deep interest in the UN General Assembly resolution characterizing Zionism as a form of racism, the widespread misinformation about the resolution conducted by the mass communications media, and its connection to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, make it important that these be presented to the public.

It is the opinion of our Committee that these documents make a significant contribution to understanding the true nature of Zionism and, by so doing, advance the cause of peace, national liberation, and security of all states and peoples in the Middle East.

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(An article by Dr. Hyman Lumer, which appeared in the Daily World Magazine November 29, 1975)

On October 17 the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Commission of the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." Needless to say, this action evoked a flood of angry protests from the Zionists and their supporters.

Typical of these reactions are the following:

An ad in **The New York Times** (November 2), by the Zionist Organization of America, says, in part:

"Who is it that presumes to sit in judgment on Zionism? International conspirators, oppressors, dictators, terrorists and murderers . . .

"Free mankind esteems Zionism as one of the noblest liberation movements of modern history.

"Zionism is synonymous with Judaism. An attack on Zionism is an attack on the Jewish people.

"Zionism built and sustains the state of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East . . .

"Zionism inspired subjected peoples in Africa and Asia to free themselves from colonialism."

Abba Eban, in an article in **The New York Times** (November 3), charged that the UN "is on the way to becoming the world center of anti-Semitism" and stated that "Hitler himself would have felt at home in a forum which gave applause to a gun-toting Yasir Arafat and an obsequious ovation to the murderous Idi Amin." He charged a "Moslem-Communist coalition" with seeking to defame Zionism—"an ideology, a historic doctrine and a spiritual faith endorsed by the United Nations itself 28 years ago."

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, wrote in a letter to **The Times** (November 5):

"I am appalled at the grotesque attempt to equate Zionism and racism in the draft resolution . . . Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, seeking exactly what other national movements seek: statehood and self-determination. The attack upon Zionism amounts to the grossest form of anti-Semitism, since it is clear that the term Zionism is used by its opponents as a code word for Judaism and Jews."

The **AFL-CIO News** reacted on November 1 with an editorial statement saying that "the United Nations General Assembly faces one of the gravest challenges in its 30-year history . . . the question of whether it will officially endorse anti-Semitism."

Statements of condemnation were issued by a number of groups of academic figures, professionals, public officials and others. In addition, virtually the whole House of Representatives and the entire Senate endorsed a resolution declaring that the UN resolution "wrongfully equates Zionism with racism and racial discrimination." In short, a campaign of unprecedented proportions was already developing.

When, on November 10, the resolution submitted by the committee was adopted by the entire General Assembly (72 to 35, with 32 abstentions), the floodgates were opened wide. The anger and outrage of the pro-Zionist forces knew no bounds, and they could scarcely find language strong enough to express these sentiments.

The Israeli UN representative, Chaim Herzog, melodramatically tore up a copy of the resolution on the podium and charged that the UN was on the way to becoming a world center of anti-Semitism. Others spoke of it as an obscenity, a curse and an abomination. The question was raised in a number of areas whether the U.S. should continue its adherence to the UN. A resolution introduced in the U.S. Senate

called for "hearings immediately to reassess the United States' further participation in the United Nations General Assembly." A mass demonstration in New York City's garment center on November 11 served further to whip up the anti-UN hysteria. The communications media and numerous organizations and public figures have added their voices to the outcry that the UN is being converted by a "Communist-Arab bloc" into an organ of anti-Semitism.

Much more could be said about the current wave of hysteria, but the foregoing will suffice to demonstrate the ability of the Zionists and their supporters to stand truth on its head and, with the help of the ruling class, to portray Zionism as a great liberating movement. But this picture is utterly false.

To begin with, Zionism is not in any sense "the national liberation movement of the Jewish people." The fountainhead of national and racial oppression is imperialism, and real national liberation movements are by their very nature anti-imperialist. How, then, are we to explain a "liberation movement" which has based itself from the outset on **alliance** with the forces of imperialism, and which is today a vassal of U.S. imperialism?

From whom are the Jewish people to be liberated? Is it from the Arab peoples, and particularly the Palestinian Arabs, themselves struggling for their own liberation? Are these the real oppressors of the Jewish people?

And not least, is it not a strange liberation movement which numbers among its chief supporters the forces of political reaction in this country and counts among the leading "friends of Israel" such right-wing racists and anti-Semites as the Buckleys, the Reagans, and now the disgusting racist Moynihan, who has been elevated to the status of a national hero?

To term such a movement, associated

with the world forces of imperialist reaction, racism and fascism (note, among other things, the Meir regime's recognition of the former puppet Thieu government in Vietnam, also the present close ties of the Israeli government with the fascist Chilean junta and with the bestial apartheid regime in South Africa), a movement of national liberation is sheer mockery.

Equally false is the claim that branding Zionism as racist is **ipso facto** a form of anti-Semitism, since Zionism and Judaism are allegedly identical. This piece of sophistry is most clearly expressed in the above-cited **Times** article by Abba Eban. He says: "There is, of course, no difference whatever between anti-Semitism and the denial of Israel's statehood. Classical anti-Semitism denies the equal rights of Jews as citizens within society. Anti-Zionism denies the equal rights of the Jewish people to its lawful sovereignty within the community of nations. The common principle in the two cases is discrimination."

This is a fraudulent presentation of the issue. First of all the question is not the "denial of Israel's statehood." Virtually all of the countries which voted for the resolution do not deny this right. In particular, the Soviet Union has expressed itself very clearly on this point. In his address to the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow in October 1973, Leonid Brezhnev stated: "Our firm stand is that all the states and peoples of the Middle East — I repeat, all of them — must be assured of peace, security and inviolability of borders. The Soviet Union is prepared to take part in the relevant guarantees."

This position has been repeatedly stated. Yet the Soviet leadership is and always has been totally opposed to Zionism and the policies flowing from it.

Zionism cannot be made synonymous with Judaism and the welfare of the Jewish people. On the contrary, it is a reactionary nationalist ideology which is hostile to their interests.

It is inherently a racist ideology which

gives rise to racist practices. The Communist Party of Israel, in its theses for its 17th Congress, states:

“Zionist ideology is reactionary because its point of departure is nationalist, racist. Zionism claims that the solution of the Jewish question, the liberation of the Jews from persecution and from anti-Semitism, lies in their leaving the countries in which they live and in their immigration to Israel. Thereby it ignores the capitalist class roots of anti-Semitism and denies the sole correct and realistic solution, which is the change of regime and the triumph of democracy and socialism. This theory is racist because it assumes a priori that under no regime can members of different peoples live in brotherhood and friendship and that this is valid in particular for the Jews. This is a sort of inverse anti-Semitic doctrine. The Zionist ideologues attribute to members of other peoples, to non-Jews, because of their not being Jews, the same characteristics which the anti-Semites attribute to Jews because of their being Jews. The two theories, Zionism as well as anti-Semitism, have one origin: racialism; and their aim is division between the workers of different peoples to the satisfaction of the class enemy.” (Information Bulletin, CPI, Special Number, 1972)

Accordingly, the Zionists conceive of the State of Israel not as a state in which Jews and Arabs live together in equality and friendship but as one designed to serve exclusively the interests of the Jews, who hold a privileged position by law in all aspects of life. The Arabs are looked upon as an impediment, as a fifth column, at best to be tolerated and kept under strict control, and where possible to be gotten rid of. The result is a society permeated with racist practices and attitudes, whose source is the ideology of Zionism.

Space forbids a detailed account of this racism. We can present only a few examples. But these will suffice to show beyond question that Zionism is truly a racist ideology.

First, it should be noted that whereas any Jew anywhere in the world is given the privilege of migrating to Israel and claiming all the privileges of Israeli citizenship, no such rights are granted to Arabs, including the more than a million refugees who were driven or fled from Israel and the occupied territories, even though they and their ancestors may have lived there for centuries.

Second, with the establishment of the State of Israel the British emergency regulations of 1945 were removed for Jews but not for Arabs. Among other things these permitted the closing off of areas of land on grounds of “security” and forbidding their former residents to re-enter. Many of these have become “internal refugees,” living in shacks in nearby villages, while others have found their way into crowded slum ghettos in the cities.

Israeli law permits the expropriation of land also for cultivation, development and construction. This has been used as a device for dispersing the Arab population, concentrated in the Galilee, in which the Jews now constitute 45% of the total population. In the fifties and sixties, large areas of land were requisitioned adjacent to Nazareth, a totally Arab city, and a modern all-Jewish suburb, Upper Nazareth, was constructed. It is now larger than Nazareth itself. Other Jewish towns were similarly constructed in the area. Now a new wave of requisitioning is developing whose ultimate objective, according to Arab leaders, is the taking over of some 15-20,000 acres, with the aim of creating a Jewish majority.

Altogether, more than half the land belonging to Arabs has been expropriated. To be sure, compensation is frequently offered but the amounts are grossly inadequate. Moreover, all this has been done by compulsion, regardless of the wishes of the Arabs concerned.

Third, the Israeli Arabs suffer severe discrimination in all spheres of life. The annual incomes of Arab families are less than two-thirds of those of Jewish fami-

lies, even though the number of earners per Arab family is larger. Only half of the Arab workers are members of the Histadrut (to which they were first admitted only in 1957) compared to three-fourths of the Jewish workers. And only one-third are members of the Health Insurance Fund as against 72% of the Jewish workers. Moreover, the Fund has few clinics in Arab villages, hence the service received by Arab members is far inferior to that received by the Jewish members.

Arab farmers are discriminated against by the government in the granting of credits, in providing irrigation and in assistance with mechanization. Many Arab villages are not yet provided with electricity.

There is gross discrimination in education. Arab schools receive far less in the way of funds, facilities and teacher training than do the Jewish schools. To cite but one illustration, Shulamit Aloni, Member of the Knesset, quotes a letter from the head of a Bedouin settlement in Galili, who describes "a school for four hundred pupils that lacks all services and water. (The lack of water still exists, even though inhabitants paid long ago for connections to waterlines that have not yet been made.) Is there any Jewish settlement, even the newest, without such school services and without water?" (*Yediot Aharonot*, October 10, 1975.)

While Arabs comprise 12% of the population, they constitute only 1.5% of the student body of institutions of higher learning. The small number who graduate find it almost impossible to obtain employment in their professions, and from some professions Arabs are completely barred as "security risks."

Nor is such discrimination confined to the Arab population. It is visited also upon the darker-skinned Oriental Jews who make up well over 60% of Israel's population. They are confined to the lowest-paying jobs; they are packed into crumbling "old city" ghettos; they suffer the same educational disabilities as Arabs; and they are subjected to all sorts of indignities and insults.

Especially outrageous is the treatment of the Arab people in the occupied territories, which has been repeatedly condemned in the UN as well as by the World Peace Council and other bodies. Here people are denied all democratic rights. Instead of abiding by the Geneva Conventions the Israeli Occupation authorities have applied the infamous British emergency regulation of 1945. They have outlawed all forms of political action and organization. They have instituted administrative arrests with no charges, no trial, and no definite period of imprisonment. They have resorted to collective punishments such as imposing endless curfews, blowing up houses of peoplesuspected of aiding Arab guerrillas, and they have engaged in the widespread use of torture. They have driven additional scores of thousands of refugees from these territories and have summarily deported many leading public figures without charges or trial.

At the same time, a process of "creeping annexation" is taking place, with the establishment of growing numbers of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, the aim being to annex these territories to Israel through a succession of "accomplished facts." And this is justified in the name of the historical right of the Jews to all of Palestine.

The foregoing is of necessity an abbreviated account of the racial and national oppression in Israel. (For a more detailed account, the reader is referred to such books as *The Arabs in Israel* by Sabri Jiryis, published by the Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1969, and this writer's *Zionism: Its Role in World Politics*, International Publishers, New York, 1973, and to the pamphlet by Carl Bloice, *Israel: Image and Reality*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1973. See also the recent series of articles by Ted Bassett in the *Daily World*.) Nevertheless, it is enough to show beyond question the racist character of the present State of Israel and its op-

pression of other peoples, stemming from the principles of Zionism by which its policies are guided.

The racist character of Zionism is shown also by the conduct of Zionists elsewhere. Thus, in South Africa the Zionist organizations are staunch supporters of the apartheid regime. In the United States, the racist influence of Zionism is evident in the support of leading Jewish organizations to Shankerism, in their campaigns against preferential hiring and open admissions, in their attacks on so-called "Black anti-Semitism," in their alliance with reactionary, racist political figures and in other ways.

The essence of Zionism is the thesis that the interests of the Jewish people are opposed to those of non-Jews, and from this arises the concept of an exclusively Jewish state in which Arabs are to be repressed or driven out. But the maxim that those who oppress others cannot themselves be free still holds good, and the inescapable fact is that the Jewish people cannot solve their problems at the expense of others. The insecurity of the State of Israel alone amply demonstrates this.

Zionism holds no future for the Jewish people. It is, on the contrary, their worst enemy. It can only serve to isolate them from their real allies — the workingclass and national liberation forces — and to place them at the mercy of the forces of imperialist reaction, the very source of racism and anti-Semitism. For the Israeli Jews it can lead only to ultimate catastrophe.

Zionism sees Israel as the state of all Jews everywhere who supposedly constitute a single nation. And when people like Abba Eban speak of the right of self-determination they refer not only to the people of Israel but to the totality of Jews on a world scale.

But by no means do all Jews accept these ideas. On the contrary, the great majority reject the concept that they are

members of a world Jewish nation and that their homeland is Israel. They view themselves rather as citizens of the countries in which they live and the fight for liberation as a fight for full equality with all other citizens and against all anti-Semitic discrimination. This struggle, in alliance with the struggles of the working class and all oppressed peoples, is part of the anti-monopoly movement, and ultimately of the movement for socialism.

This is how, the slanders of its Zionist enemies notwithstanding, the Jewish question was resolved in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and this is the path to its solution in the United States.

In Israel, support of Zionism is by no means unanimous. The Communist Party has always opposed it, together with other sectors of the left. Among these is Uri Avneri, editor of the widely read weekly **Haolam Hazeh**, and author of a book entitled **Israel Without Zionists**. A growing section of Israeli youth, despite intense indoctrination, is beginning to question the validity of Zionism.

Zionism cannot claim to speak for the Jewish people as a whole. It has few supporters in the Soviet Union, and in this country most Jewish people are not Zionists but are motivated by a sympathy and concern for Israel as a country of fellow Jews and a desire to assist and support it as such. It is these sentiments which the Zionists seek to pervert for their own ends.

To recognize Zionism as a form of racism is not an expression of anti-Semitism. On the contrary, those countries which supported the UN resolution have performed a service to the struggle against racism in general and the Zionist poison in particular.

The right of the Israeli people to self-determination must be defended. But so must the rights of the Palestinian Arab people and all other peoples. Only by abandoning the reactionary, racist line of Zionism and by fighting side by side with all workers and oppressed peoples can the Jewish people truly serve their own best interests.

(A speech by Meir Vilner, Deputy of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset))

How did we arrive at such a situation (that UN General Assembly debates on the racist character of the Zionist ideology and practice)?

It is the direct result of Israel's occupation of Arab territories continuing now the ninth year already, which also is a constant danger to peace in the region and the world. It is the direct result of the absolute negation (from the side of Israel's rulers) of the national rights of the Arab Palestine people, its right to self-determination and to establish its own sovereign state alongside Israel.

It is the direct result of the brutal oppression practised against the Palestine inhabitants of the occupied territories, the suppression of freedom of speech and freedom of the press there, of mass arrests and imprisonment, of expulsion (of political leaders, among them many Communists) from their homeland and the destruction of homes as a "collective punishment," the massive infringements on international conventions and the Human Rights Charter; of brutal tortures and all kinds of persecution of the best sons of the Arab Palestine people, who long for peace with Israel on the basis of mutual respect of national rights.

Colonization intensified

The deliberations in the UN General Assembly are taking place precisely at a time when the (Israeli) colonization of the occupied areas in the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Rafah region (northern Sinai) and in Eastern Jerusalem is

intensified. (Official) statements are made every so often that there will never be a withdrawal (from occupied territories) even as a price for peace.

The deliberations at the UN General Assembly are taking place precisely at a time, when inside Israel herself the policy of discrimination and suppression of the national (Arab) minority is intensified. Plans are ready (and published) for the expropriation of the rest of landed property of the Arab citizens of Israel — and this after the Arab fellahen and bedouins are robbed of most of their landed property and expelled from it already long since.

The blueprint for the so-called (renewed on an intensified scale) 'Judaization of the Galilee' is ready. This is a plan of development of Jewish settlements and towns in this (northern) district and the establishment of new ones, while strangling Arab villages, towns and 'resettling' the Arabs by expulsion. The policy of confiscation of Arab soil and the absolute refusal to give any construction or building licenses in Arab towns and villages is aimed at restricting Arab population growth or even its reversal.

Shocking examples

These things—and they are only a small choice of examples—are shocking to all conscience-minded people in Israel and to people all over the world.

This policy is not only directed against the Arab people of Palestine, but it also engenders grave danger for Israel, her future as a state in the Middle East and for the Israeli people in a neighborhood of Arab peoples.

And such a policy is defined by you (the government) as zionism and its practical implementation.

Alas, what great wonder, that the policy of national discrimination and oppression, the policy of occupation and territorial annexations is defined as exactly what you yourself defined it?

We Jews especially who suffered so much in history at the hands of racists and anti-Semites, should avoid using a policy of national discrimination and suppression (against the national minority) in Israel and from a colonialist policy against the Arab Palestine people and the neighboring Arab states. Precisely because we, the Jews, have suffered so much from racism, the policy of the government (of the Jewish state), combined with that of the (right extremist 'opposition') Likud block, is a tenfold shame.

Fighting this policy, we, the Communists, not only defend justice in respect to the Arabs, but not less so, we defend the existence, the security and the future of Israel, and the prospects of peace. And there are now real possibilities to reach peace. If you would have given a hand to the efforts of really reaching peace instead of sabotaging them, while nourishing illusions, that with the support of Washington you may be able to annex (Arab) territories and to avoid the establishment of a Palestine state — then, many a thing would have appeared in another light.

Reactionary movement

Our opposition to zionist ideology and practice is well known. We do not look upon zionism as being a "national liberation movement," but as it is in fact, namely, as a bourgeois-nationalist and reactionary movement.

It is a gross perversity and a crude distortion of facts, if (as the zionist leadership and the Israeli government circles do) the concept 'zionism' is equalled with the concepts 'Jews,' 'Israel,' or 'Israeli people.' Therefore it is absurd to talk of the UN resolutions on zionism being resolutions 'against Jews,' or 'anti-Semitic' ones.

We are convinced that precisely the government policy—together with the one of Likud—is anti-Israeli, because it very gravely endangers Israel.

We, the Israeli Communists, view as the most important and most crucial task at the present, the struggle for peace and avoidance of a new sanguinary war conflagration, the saving of the lives of our youth from further slaughter. For these, our holy tasks, we call for a united front of all forces, circles and personalities with a realistic outlook, with a heart for national responsibility towards the fate of Israel and her people—notwithstanding their political affiliation or adherence to ideological outlooks, and among them also zionists. The decisive division of forces in present Israel should not be on an ideological basis, but on a definite political one: Who is for just, realistic and lasting peace—or, who is against it? The decision upon this is the one which will decide our future.

Therefore, we also think, that the deliberations in the Knesset on the ideological field, as put upon the agenda in relation to the UN resolution on zionism and its racial character, serves only to divert the mind from the most important matters, such as the struggle for just and lasting peace, for avoiding new bloodshed and from the workers' class struggles.

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