

Zionism Past & Present

Anti-Zionism Confused with Anti-Semitism

Liberation News Service

1976

This short account by Liberation News Service of Zionism's sordid history as a white settler, colonialist movement barely scratches the surface in terms of the magnitude of the injustices committed in the name of the Jewish people, but should not in any way imply support for any of the Palestinian Nationalist groups who claim to speak for the refugees.

Groups like the PLO are simply in a competition with the Israeli capitalist class for the right to exploit Arab and Jewish workers, chafing at the bit to set up a state which they control rather than the Zionists. As in Angola, the concern with national boundaries and racial origin only serves to keep the workers enslaved while factions of capital battle among themselves for the spoils.

NEW YORK (LNS)—The efforts by the U.S. press and government to equate Judaism with Zionism have obscured the real nature of Zionism. The two basic aspects of Zionist ideology that led the United Nations to brand it as racist are its definition of the land that is its country, and its definition of who its citizens are.

According to Tabitha Petran, an anti-Zionist American Jewish writer, "Israel has never accepted any frontiers other than those of the Zionist concept of Eretz Israel (Land of Israel)."

She notes that 19th Century Zionist theoretician Theodore Herzl defined this area as extending "from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates." More significantly, Herzl wrote "We will demand the land we need: the more immigrants, the more land."

Contemporary Zionism has remained true to this concept. In July 1965, Abba Eban, the Israeli Foreign Minister, stated: "It is not impossible to imagine Arab leaders in the future asking for a return to 1966 or 1967 boundaries, just as they now ask for the return to 1947 boundaries which they refused then."

This was said two years before the 1967 war in which Israel again expanded its territory.

Similarly, David Ben Gurion, the first president of Israel, stated in an interview in 1964 that "the boundaries of the Jewish State would have been larger had Moshe Dayan been our commander-in-chief in 1948." Clearly these men are continuing to define the borders of Israel militarily—frontiers are decided by the latest victory in battle.

Historically, the creation of the Zionist state of Israel is inextricably linked to imperialist designs on the Middle East. It was Britain in the early 20th Century which first helped plan the Zionist settler colony in Palestine; the Balfour Declaration in 1917 called for a British sponsorship of a "National Home for the Jews" in Palestine.

The British believed that such a settlement of European people, dependent upon Britain for defense against the people whose land they appropriated, would serve as an excellent defense at the gateway to the Suez Canal, the vital function of the land and sea routes to the East.

In 1917, according to Petran, the population of Palestine was 93% indigenous Arabs. Now Israel is 85% Jewish.

"Within world Jewry the Zionists remained a minority," writes Petran of the years after the Balfour Declaration. "Without the rise of Nazism in Europe, the Zionist Palestine venture would almost certainly have failed. The interaction of Zionism and Nazism played a crucial role in the establishment of the Jewish State."

Zionism and Anti-Semitism Equated

She quotes historian Arnold Toynbee as saying “Zionism and anti-Semitism are expressions of an identical point of view,” both expressing the concept of the alleged “indigestibility” of the Jews.

“Each country can absorb only a limited number of Jews if she does not want disorders in her stomach. Germany already has too many Jews.” This statement was not made by a Nazi, but by Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann to a German audience in 1912.

“There is more, however, to the Zionist-Nazi story than the identity of Nazi and Zionist propaganda about Jews,” explains Petran. “In the tradition of Herzl, who held anti-Semitic governments to be Zionism’s best ally, German Zionists welcomed the Nazi rise to power as the death blow to assimilationism.”

Zionists collaborated with Nazis by urging Jews to wear the Yellow Star six years before the Nazis ordered it, and by working to discredit non-Zionist Jews.

The price for this Zionist-Nazi collaboration was, according to author Hannah Arendt, “inevitably paid by non-Zionist Jews.” Official Nazi support for Zionism ended in 1939.

American Zionist leader Rabbi Abba Silver stated in 1946 that “the rescue of a certain number of refugees, however vital and urgent, is not Zionism and that the clear purpose of Zionism was to give the Jewish people the status of a nation.”

“In line with this policy,” states Petran, “the Zionists deliberately sabotaged all rescue efforts not directed to Palestine.”

Out of this campaign supported by the unwillingness of Western European countries and the U.S. to welcome thousands of displaced Jews after the war. Palestine became the only answer to the persecution of Jews in fascist Europe. The United Nations partitioned Palestine in 1947 and the State of Israel was created.

Israeli laws implemented after the creation of the state, directly discriminated against non-Jewish people. One is the Absent-Present Law which states that anyone who left their usual place of living between November 29, 1947 and September 1, 1948 to live any place not under Jewish rule is considered absent even if currently present in Israel. Essentially only Arabs who fled their homes during the 1948 war were effected by this law.

The entire property of the Absent-Present is seized by the State of Israel and given to a special administrator. A person is declared an Absent Present by a written declaration of the administrator.

Another law, the Salvation of the Land measure, stipulates that when the Jewish National Fund buys land from non-Jews, this land cannot be sold or rented to non-Jews. Jews who rent it are also forbidden to give work on this land to non-Jews.

Arab Land Confiscated

After the establishment of Israel, all the land confiscated by the government was given to the Jewish National Fund. This represents 92.5% of the land in 1948 Israel.

There are also many examples of the unequal treatment of the over 500,000 Arabs presently living in the original 1948 boundaries of Israel. Jewish settlements, for example, get the bulk of public money, according to information recently brought to light by Shulamit Aloni, a reform-minded Jewish member of the Israeli parliament.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Aloni cites Shetaram, an Arab community of 15,000 people which was budgeted \$30 per capita annually, while the Jewish town of Migdal Maemek, population 12,000, gets \$174 per capita per year.

Finally, the Law of Return, grants automatic citizenship to any Jew who immigrates to Israel. Arabs who were forced from Palestine in 1948—many of whom now live in extreme poverty in refugee camps in neighboring Arab countries—have no such automatic right to return to their homeland.

Black Jews from Ethiopia had to wait 27 years—until last April—before their claim of coverage under the Law of Return was recognized.

An Arab also may not marry a Jew in Israel, because there are no civil marriages, only religious. No moves have been made to reform the marriage laws because, according to the *L.A. Times*, “they are viewed as a way of preserving the integrity of the Jewish people.”

Information for this article came from “Palestine, the Arabs and Zionism,” by Tabitha Petran in *Tricontinental* No 13, July-August, 1969; Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) *Report*, and from *The Facts*, a monthly bulletin produced by the Arab Women’s Information Committee.

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Fifth Estate #269, February, 1976

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