

# **Bankruptcy of a reactionary idea**

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## **HOW THE ZIONISTS DECEIVE THE JEWISH MASSES**

Zionism is a reactionary ideology expressive of the interests of the big Jewish bourgeoisie which is closely connected with the monopoly elements of the imperialist powers.

In the Middle East, it is embodied in the expansionist and annexationist policy of the Israeli ruling circles against the Arab peoples and particularly against the Palestinian Arab people, and in their anti-Sovietism and anti-communism.

Zionism is being carried into practice by a ramified system of organizations, and serves as an important weapon of imperialism's global strategy, is active against the socialist community, the world Communist and working-class movement, against the national liberation struggle of the peoples.

Zionism is used as an ideological and political instrument to misguide and deceive Jewish working people, and to place them under the influence of the Jewish bourgeoisie. Naturally, Zionism has to be presented to the Jewish working people in a form covering up its pro-imperialist, bourgeois reactionary essence, and has to propagate theories that might be attractive to them. This was done mainly by the general thesis that 'Zionism would solve the Jewish question.'

In this article, I shall confine myself to just the glaring failures of the basic Zionist dogmas.

From the very beginning, it was the central thesis of Zionism that it would deliver Jews from discrimination and persecution. It will be recalled, that the full title of the pamphlet, 'The Jewish State,' by Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, published in 1896, contained the line: 'An attempt at a modern solution of the Jewish question.' The Jewish question, i.e., the existence of anti-Semitism, stems in Herzl's view from the minority status of Jews among the other peoples: 'The Jewish question exists wherever Jews live in perceptible numbers . . . When it does not exist, it is carried by Jews in the course of their migration. We naturally move to those places where we are not persecuted, and there our presence produces persecution.'<sup>1</sup>

Herzl's basic conception was that Jews and non-Jews cannot live together peacefully and that no historic development of human society is able to change this. The logical consequence of this conception is that Jews and non-Jews cannot and should not struggle together against anti-Semitism and racism, but should separate. The Jews should leave for some country of their own, preferably Palestine. Then, ostensibly, the Jewish question would at once disappear in the other countries. 'The outgoing current,' Herzl wrote, 'will be gradual, without any disturbances, and its initial movement will put an end to anti-Semitism.'

'If we only begin to carry out our plans,' he added, 'anti-Semitism would stop at once and for ever.'<sup>2</sup> These thoughts were summed up by Herzl at the First Zionist Congress in 1897: 'The Jewish problem could only be solved by large-scale migration and settlement of the country.'<sup>3</sup>

This line of thought became the dominant essence of Zionism,<sup>4</sup> clad in various high-flown formulations. The Zionist leader and later prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, stated in 1944: 'This is the doctrine of the Jewish revolution - not non-surrender to the Galut<sup>5</sup> but making an end to it . . . There are only two means to this end: the ingathering of the exiles and independence in the homeland.'<sup>6</sup> The most recent program of the World Zionist Organization, the amended Jerusalem Program, adopted at the 27th Zion-

ist Congress in 1968, has as its main demands 'the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in its life; the ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland Eretz-Israel.'<sup>7</sup>

What do Marxists counterpose to this 'theoretical line of thought' of the Zionists? They do not deny that a national, and therefore a Jewish, question exists in various capitalist countries. The Communist Party of Israel, in the resolutions of its 16th Congress (1969), after rejecting the existence of a worldwide 'Jewish question,' defines it in the case of some capitalist countries as 'the question of the discrimination, persecution and even annihilation (especially under Nazi rule) of Jews for being Jews.' The resolution goes on to say that 'the problem of the solution of the Jewish question is, therefore, the problem of the liberation of the Jewish masses from the anti-Semitism which appears in various forms in the society of class exploitation.'

Anti-Semitism exists not due to some inborn incompatibility of Jews and non-Jews. It has a social foundation. When the ruling bourgeoisie is faced with sharp class struggles of the working class and its allies, and particularly in periods of a revolutionary upsurge, it uses racism, including anti-Semitism, in order to divert the working people from the class struggle by setting them against other national, ethnic or religious groups. The way to fight anti-Semitism is, therefore, the united democratic struggle of the Jewish and non-Jewish working people against the reactionary bourgeois regimes. In order to eradicate racism, including anti-Semitism, where it exists, it is necessary to eradicate its social roots, to abolish class exploitation and build socialist society. Only socialism can fully solve national questions, including the Jewish question.

The Zionist thesis on the 'solution' of the Jewish question is that the Jews will live in Palestine in security and peace. History has disproved this.

Has the state of Israel brought security and peace to the Jews living here? There is, perhaps, no other country in the world where the Jewish population lives in such constant and high tension. Tension heightened after the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt in 1956, and reached the present high pitch after the Israeli aggression against the neighboring Arab countries in June 1967. Every hour the average Israeli switches on the radio to hear the news because 'maybe something has happened.'

In other words, it is the Zionist aggressive expansionist policy of the Israeli ruling circles that is responsible for the tension and insecurity. The Herzl dictum, 'dying peacefully in our own homes,'<sup>8</sup> sounds absurd today when mothers tremble with fear of their sons' dying in the occupied Kantara or Kuneitra.

And the other part of this dictum, 'living as free men,'<sup>9</sup> sounds no less absurd with the ever-increasing dependence of the Israeli government on U.S. imperialism, its global strategy, its Phantoms, its dollars, and its loans. In addition to the grave political subjection, this policy has brought to the working people of Israel grave

economic and social subjection. In 1971 military expenditures swallowed half of the state budget and more than 30 per cent of the gross national product. The policy of aggression led to a rapid development of the military sector of Israel industry, and to an increase in the control by foreign capital of essential positions, especially in electronics, metallurgy and chemicals. The inflationary process is accelerating, real wages are declining, and prices are going up. Prices rose 20-25 per cent in 1971. According to the official national insurance agency, 132,000 families in the towns, comprising nearly 520,000 people, that is, nearly one-quarter of the urban population lived on or under the 'poverty line.' Only 11 per cent of these families receive help from the Social Security Ministry. The 17th Congress of the CP of Israel said in its document: 'The main reason for the deepening of class exploitation, the decrease of real wages, and of widening poverty in Israel in the latest years, is connected with the policy of the government, the policy of going on in aggression and occupation, with the huge military expenses, and the deep connection with foreign capital.'

The failure of the Zionist doctrine is clearly admitted by some Zionists. In 'The Israelis,' the Zionist journalist and writer, Amos Eilon, writes: 'In Israel today, Jews, as Jews, live in greater danger of their lives than anywhere else in the world.'<sup>10</sup> And Professor Amnon Rubinstein said at a symposium in Tel-Aviv (October 1971): 'Zionism aimed at normalizing the Jewish situation . . . This found concrete expression in the work of the first Zionists. Their intention was to liquidate the Jewish-Gentile complex. The intention was so deep and so extreme that the Zionist leaders were seized by some—I hesitate to use the word, Zionist anti-Semitism, but by some retreat from traditional Judaism, and all that because of the tendency to bring about normalization. This tendency has not been realized . . . The hope of Zionism has not been realized for various reasons . . . In a certain way, we have returned to the traditional Jewish position.'<sup>11</sup>

That Zionist policy itself, pro-imperialist and expansionist as it is, is to be blamed for this state of affairs, will appear as paradoxical to the naive and uninitiated only. As long as the Zionist Israeli rulers are able to go on unhindered, supported by U.S. imperialism, ignoring the interests of the people, they follow the inner logic of their ideology and practice, tending towards aggression, colonization and service to imperialism. The Zionists hope that in exchange for increasing their services to U.S. and other imperialisms, they will get more help in realizing their plans of expansion. The tenuous international situation becomes, they hope, the more imperialism will require their services in the Middle East. Zionist groups, especially in the United States, are trying to exercise pressure on the policy of imperialist governments, hoping thereby to sharpen their relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and to fan anti-Sovietism. Rather than confining themselves to various means of ideological struggle against the social-

ist world, Zionists follow the directives of their organization in conducting subversive activity inside socialist states.

The Israeli ruling circles exploit the lack of security in Israel to bolster their claim that they have 'no alternative' to an aggressive policy, and to justify their intransigence towards a political solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict, their racist persecution of the Arab population, and their continued policy of expansion and annexation. Being ideologically not less adventurous than politically, the Zionist leaders are putting the new thesis of 'the state of Israel being in need of the Diaspora' alongside and before the classical thesis of 'the Jews of the Diaspora being in need of the state of Israel.' What this amounts to is that Israel requires the support of Jews living elsewhere. And this is not accidental. The dogma that it is the duty of all Jews of the Diaspora to help solve the 'Jewish question,' mainly by immigrating to Israel, has failed because it was rejected by the vast majority of Jews all over the world. By introducing and putting forward the new thesis, the Zionist leaders tried to 'compensate' for this ideological 'loss.' They expect that on this new formula, this new basis, a relationship can be forged between the state of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora.

The other thesis of the Zionist doctrine—the promise to eliminate anti-Semitism outside Israel—has not withstood the test of time either. In various capitalist countries anti-Semitism continues to exist. The Herzlian utopia of 'anti-Semitism stopping at once and for ever' failed to materialize any more than did the later improved version that the 'state of Israel would give security to the Jewish communities of the world.' This failure Zionist leaders and propagandists have been compelled to acknowledge. One of them, Avraham Shenkar, said at the Founding Convention of the Zionist Federation of the USA in 1970: 'Contrary to the classical conception, the establishment of Israel has not led to a restriction of anti-Semitism. . . . It sometimes appears that the opposite is the case.'<sup>12</sup>

The years since 1948 have proved that the establishment of the state of Israel has not made the situation of the Jews in capitalist countries any easier. On the contrary, it has become rather more complicated in consequence of the Zionist policy followed by the Israeli rulers and by many leaders of Jewish communities, who identified themselves with this policy. This identification has made many people in capitalist countries suspicious of these community leaders and their self-confessed 'split loyalties.' The facts show that in the conditions of today Zionism may, by artificially contrasting Jews and non-Jews, be a factor, like anti-Semitism, in creating a Jewish question in this or that capitalist country. Zionism may do so in two ways: it may help the reactionary circles in spreading anti-Semitic feeling, and, on the other hand, give impulse to chauvinistic feelings in Jewish circles. In any case, it places Jewish communities in capitalist countries outside Israel often in a rather uncomfortable position. Some people hold them responsible for the aggressive policy of the Israeli rulers, especially if they identify themselves with this policy. Also, the Israeli government and the

Zionists try to use Jewish circles in other capitalist countries as 'pressure groups' against the governments in those countries, and this again may give rise to anti-Semitism.

The national question cannot be solved by migration and national separation. The experience of Israel has proved this once again. The national question is not a geographical question, but a social and class question. While explaining this to the masses, the communists lay the main emphasis on fighting against the aggressive policy of the Israeli rulers, and at the same time differentiate between the Israeli ruling circles and the Jewish masses in Israel, whose interests are those of peace and socialism.

Today, it is the so-called 'socialist' wing of the Zionist organization that continues to hold up the slogan that Zionism will 'solve' the Jewish question. Expanding on the point of view of the Mapam, the main representative of this wing, Eliezer Shavid writes in his book *Jewish Nationalism*: '... The Zionist movement intended to make the Jewish people healthy economically, socially, politically and culturally, to guarantee it uninterrupted continuation of existence and creation of possibilities, and to put an end to the hatred engendered towards it, by ingathering it in its homeland and building an independent political-social foundation to all its enterprises.'<sup>13</sup>

At one time this Zionist wing tried to reach a 'synthesis' between 'socialism' and Zionism. Its forefather, N. Sirkin, wrote in 1898: 'It is necessary for the Jewish state, if established in the future, to be a socialist state. And it is necessary for Zionism, if it aims to be the ideal of the Jewish people, to get into marriage with socialism.'<sup>14</sup> However, his attempt at squaring the circle was bound to fail. Sirkin and his followers wanted to build socialism without any revolutionary transformation of the existing society. In practice, they accepted the tenets of Zionism, and spiced them with 'socialist' declarations, which in this context became meaningless and demagogic. The so-called Socialist-Zionists gave preference to Zionism over the socialist ideas. Meir Ya'ari, the Mapam leader, declared in Jerusalem in 1927: 'Our ideological program speaks about two stages: the pioneering and the revolutionary.' Adding that these stages should not be separated, he went on: 'We set two stages, *one after the other* (my italics - W.E.)'<sup>15</sup> From this it is obvious that according to this program the struggle for socialism is put off until the Zionist 'solution' of the Jewish question is accomplished.

Among the Jewish toilers there are many with socialist and progressive aspirations. Aware of this, Zionists also portray Zionism as a national liberation movement in an attempt to attract progressive Jewish groups and circles to Zionism and to gain influence over progressives in Israel and especially in other capitalist countries.

But Zionism has never been a national liberation movement, because its program and practice are based on cooperation with imperialism. Both in theory and practice, Zionist organizations have

always stood against socialism, have always acted hand in hand with imperialism.

The Zionist doctrine of 'solving' the Jewish question has failed the test of practice. History has disproved it completely. But this bankruptcy of Zionist theory does not mean that the grave harm done by Zionism is a matter of the past. Recent years have shown that many Jewish people in Israel and other capitalist countries are among the victims of Zionist ideology and practice. To bring the truth to the Israeli people and to the Jewish masses in capitalist countries, to struggle against the poison of Zionist ideology and the dangers of Zionist practice - this is in the genuine national interest of the Israeli people and in the interest of the Jewish working people wherever they are, as well as in the interest of the general cause of peace, national liberation and socialism.

<sup>1</sup>Theodor Herzl. *The Jewish State*, English ed., New York, 1946, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 83, 156.

<sup>3</sup>*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 16, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 1163.

<sup>4</sup>There were also minority voices in the Zionist camp. Ahad Haam, proponent of 'Spiritual Zionism,' was of the opinion that political Zionism was bound to fail; it would not put an end to the Jewish question, and would not help to reduce anti-Semitism. See his article, 'The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem,' written against the conclusions of the First Zionist Congress, quoted in the anthology, 'The Zionist Idea,' ed. by Arthur Hertzberg, New York, Atheneum, 1971, pp. 262, 59.

<sup>5</sup>Galut, or Diaspora - Zionist term for the Jewish communities outside Palestine.

<sup>6</sup>The Zionist Idea, pp. 609-610.

<sup>7</sup>*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 16, p. 1178.

<sup>8</sup>Herzl, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>Amos Eilon. *The Israelis*. London, 1971, p. 231.

<sup>11</sup>'Betfutsot Hagola,' Quarterly of the World Zionist Organization, Department for Organization and Propaganda, 60/61, Jerusalem, 1972, pp. 21, 24.

<sup>12</sup>'Betfutsot Hagola,' No. 54/55, 1970-71, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup>Eliezer Shavid. *Jewish Nationalism*, S. Zack and Co., Jerusalem, 1972, p. 7 (in Hebrew).

<sup>14</sup>The Zionist idea, p. 271.

<sup>15</sup>P. Mirhar. *The History of the Labor Movement in Palestine*. p. 106. (in Hebrew).