

West Germany ushers 'Israel' into the EEC

After 1960, West Germany became one of the Israelis' major trading partners. The Israeli-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tel Aviv is one of the largest in the Zionist state. In 1977, the West German government sponsored the Israel Trade Centre's establishment in Dusseldorf. Along with the Netherlands, West Germany sponsored the Zionist state's association with the European Economic Community, leading to a series of special status agreements which give Israeli products significant tariff reductions. The latest of these, concluded in 1975, provides for completely free trade between 'Israel' and the EEC in industrial goods by 1985-9, and significant tariff reductions for Israeli agricultural exports.

Military cooperation

Military cooperation between the Zionist and West German states also preceded diplomatic relations. It was crucial for 'Israel' in the years 1957-66. (West Germany was then replaced by France and later the US as the Zionists' major arms supplier.) The preferential treatment accorded the Zionist state can be seen in the following:

1. Due to Germany's past and efforts not to appear as a militaristic power, its military aid policy has always been restrictive. The very fact that 'Israel' received such aid was unusual.
2. 'Israel' was at this time the only state in the Middle East to receive such aid, which occurred despite the absence of diplomatic relations and written agreements.
3. The military aid granted to 'Israel' was qualitatively different from that granted to other countries. The Zionist state received at least 30% of all West German military aid to non-NATO countries. Most other countries received only software. Only 'Israel', Sudan, Nigeria and Tanzania received aircraft. Only

'Israel' received fighter planes, as well as about 200 M28 Patton battle tanks, submarines, helicopters, anti-tank and anti-aircraft equipment without having to pay for them.

4. The value of the military aid granted to 'Israel' far exceeds that to any other country — 20-800% more than to Somalia, the second most costly recipient.

5. The West German Defense Ministry showed a preference for buying Israeli weapons, purchasing ammunition, grenade throwers, uniforms and Uzi submachine guns. The declared aim of these purchases was to stimulate the infant Israeli arms industry. 'Israel' viewed the sale of Uzis as a step towards entering the NATO market.

The main initiator of this aspect of the special relationship was the ultraright politician, Franz-Joseph Strauss. Shimon Peres, then Defense Ministry director-general, was the arms negotiator. Though military cooperation was justified with phrases such as «contributing to peace in the Middle East» and «reparation for Nazi Germany's crimes», the West German government actually sought to contribute to the Zionist state's build-up as an anti-communist stronghold in the Middle East. Feldman puts it this way: «Israel seemed to be conjured by German leaders as a Middle East Berlin standing against communist expansion» (p.133).

In return, the Zionist leadership helped to whitewash German officials of their Nazi past. In February 1965, Stern magazine claimed that Strauss had agreed with Israeli envoys that Hans Globke, a close aide to Chancellor Adenauer, would not be summoned to witness in the trial of Nazi war criminal Eichmann, in return for German arms supplies. The Israeli mission in Cologne denied this, but in fact Globke never had to testify.

Although there is no concrete evidence that the US instigated German military aid to the Zionist state, it is obvious that West Germany was generally following US policy. Feldman says, «It seems clear...that the initial contacts and the first agreement were probably related to an American initiative...The arms in question were often American, now obsolete, and there were strict rules about the transfer of such obsolete weapons» (p.135).

The military relationship was officially suspended with the establishment of diplomatic relationship between 'Israel' and West Germany in 1965, but Feldman's book records a number of indications that arms deals continue. Since 1975, the Israeli embassy staff in Bonn has included a military attache whom the Israelis call a «purchasing officer», although West German law prohibits arms sales to areas of tension, and the Middle East is classified as such an area. Exchange of technological, strategic and defense information is ongoing. One can surmise that military-related cooperation goes on in the name of scientific and technical cooperation which Feldman describes as perhaps the most important aspect of current West German-Israeli relations.

Zionist lobby

Feldman's book also covers cooperation in cultural and academic fields, including youth exchange programs. The book details how the special relationship has been reinforced by personal friendship between Israeli and West German officials and other influential persons, including publishers, trade union and political party leaders. These relations span the entire bourgeois political spectrum of both countries. Especially enduring are the relations between the Israeli Labor Party and the SPD (West Germany's Social Democrats). Pro-Israeli viewpoints are promoted through a diversity of political

Another Angle

There is another recent book covering the special relations between Israel and West Germany. Written in German by Kenneth M. Lewan, it is entitled *Suhne Oder Neue Schuld?* (*Repentance or New Guilt?*), published in 1984, and distributed by Das Arabische Buch, Wundstr. 21, West Berlin 19.

While covering basically the same facts as noted in this article, Professor Lewan's book injects another angle, pointing out that it is the Palestinian people who have suffered most from the special relationship. The book includes a survey of the Middle East conflict and an analysis of Zionism's strivings for a pure Jewish state. Lewan points out that because West German support was channeled strictly to the Jewish sector, it served to widen the structural gap between the standard of living for Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

Professor Lewan did a bit of research on his own to see if military support had stopped to 'Israel' as purported. In 1973, he wrote the Minister of Economic Cooperation, requesting information on forms of support to Israel. He got the answer that the ministry could not give any information on aid to 'Israel' — «as the special relations between Israel and West Germany do not allow for any comparison...»

Lewan argues that it was US strategy motivating West German support to 'Israel', not guilt feelings for Nazi atrocities. He points out that the Gypsies were never compensated, nor were Jews living in countries with whom Germany had no relations, not to mention compensation for the 20 million Soviet citizens who died. We recommend this book to our German readers.