

Palestine--stands at the cutting edge of the Arab national liberation struggle as a whole.

Support for Israel within the U.S.

Given what is at stake, it is not surprising that the U.S. ruling class has spared no effort to promote support for Israel and Zionism within the U.S. The primary domestic effect is the continuing ideological stranglehold of Zionism among Americans, including the working class and even, to an unfortunate degree, the progressive movements.

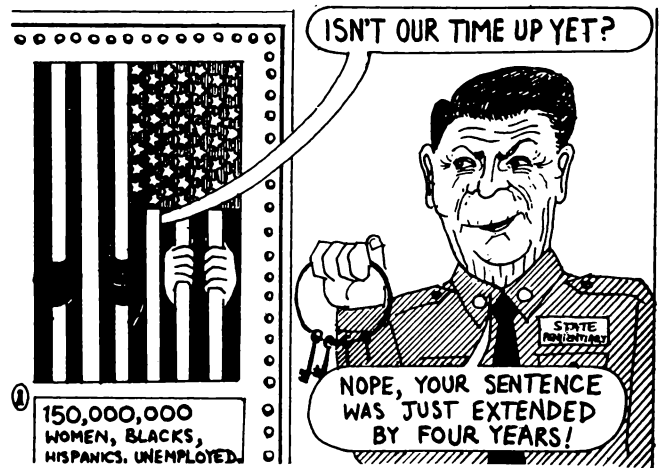
This ideological fetter is not shared by the vast majority of the world's peoples. In virtually every other country, the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly that Zionism is racism is broadly understood and supported as an accurate depiction of the Jewish exclusivity, anti-Palestinian terrorism, and attempted destruction of the national existence of the Palestinian people. Almost three times as many nations recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people than maintain normal diplomatic relations with the state of Israel.

Yet broad support and sympathy for Israel flourishes in the U.S. Zionism is here most concentrated at its sharpest in the Jewish community. Within that community today, the perceived merger between Jewish interests and those of the Israeli state is virtually complete. With the emergence of Israel, Jewish nationalism was transformed from a response to anti-Semitism to support for an oppressor, racist state. Simultaneously American Jews in the post-World War II period have been socio-economically integrated into the white majority sector of the U.S. society. And like most other white people, they have acted in most cases to maintain the privileges they derive from racism at home and super-exploitation abroad--including the Middle East.

But Zionism is by no means limited to monopoly capital, the liberal petit bourgeoisie, or the Jewish community. The leaders of organized labor--and much of its base--also pride themselves on an unflinching commitment to Israel. Politically representing only the most privileged sectors of the workforce, the AFL-CIO consistently supports imperialist ventures around the world that promise to enhance the «American Way of Life» enjoyed by its narrow constituency. It supported the war in Vietnam to the bitter end, manifests implacable hostility to the socialist camp up to and including sabotage of arms control talks, and has been a staunch friend of Israel since 1948. Just days after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the AFL-CIO executive board placed a full page ad in the New York Times proclaiming its full support for Zionist expansionism and viciously attacked critics of the invasion.

The reactionary AFL-CIO alliance with U.S. Zionism is further cemented by their joint hostility to the new thrust of the anti-racist movement. In defense of white privilege, these forces play a major role in opposing the struggle for affirmative action, for full enforcement of Voting Rights, for minority participation in the Democratic Party, etc.

To such forces, the racist parallels between Israeli and U.S. society are unmistakable. Both originated as white European settler states, founded on the decimation by any means necessary of the indigenous Indian and Palestinian populations, and both proclaimed «Manifest Destiny» over all surrounding territories to justify their unbridled expansionism. Both have erected impenetrable racial-national barriers which ensure privilege for whites and special oppression for non-whites. And both are champions of imperialism, white supremacy and anti-communism in a world increasingly dominated



by non-white peoples fighting for their liberation in conjunction with the socialist camp. In the Middle East they see themselves jointly defending «our oil» from «Arab terrorists,» «stopping the spread of communism» and defending «Western Civilization» from the «barbarians.»

Unfortunately, Zionism also penetrates deeply into the peace and other progressive movements. In the work of building a broad and multi-faceted movement against U.S.-backed dictatorships around the world, Israel is almost always exempted. The everpresent liberal Zionist threat that to challenge Israeli aggression would «split» the peace movement still serves to isolate and intimidate even fairly staunch anti-imperialists. During the Vietnam War, such forces used their positioning at the center of the anti-War movement to successfully isolate those forces who had adopted an anti-Zionist position, and to discourage others from ever seriously addressing the question. Given the strategic importance of the Middle East, the failure to challenge the U.S. role there is a major brake on the development of the peace and anti-imperialist movements within the U.S.

The Zionists have also, less successfully, worked to split the anti-racist movement. As in the Jesse Jackson campaign, they actively attempted to brand the left wing of this movement as anti-Semitic, both over the issues of Israel and over affirmative action, which they claim discriminates against Jews (and other whites).

In short, Zionism is a fundamental component of bourgeois ideology in the U.S. that serves to promote war mongering, racism and anti-communism. It is particularly insidious, though, because this version of racism and national chauvinism finds a «progressive» justification in the «defense of the national rights of the Jews.» By constantly invoking the image of the Holocaust, the Zionists seek to intimidate all critics of its rabidly imperialist, genocidal, and racist policies and to divert the progressive movement from its central anti-war and anti-racist tasks.

The fight against Zionism

Given the breadth of the pro-Zionist consensus in the U.S., who can be counted upon to take up the fight against it?

Here it is instructive to see the degree to which those who do or do not support Israel parallel almost exactly those who do and do not maintain class and racial privileges within the U.S. itself. As the Jesse Jackson campaign showed, the «disfranchised and dispossessed», based in the minority communities and encompassing the breadth of the unprivileged, basic mass of the U.S. proletariat must be viewed as the most