

## **Conclusion of the pamphlet The Other Israel**

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**The Israeli Socialist Organization is working and struggling within Israel today. Its goal is the formation in the Arab East and in the whole world of a social order without exploitation, privilege or oppression in which the anachronism of national boundaries will disappear and the alienated, coercive power of the state will be progressively reduced; a society in which consciously co-operating human beings will be ever more able through the products of their work to satisfy their material and cultural needs, as they themselves consciously and collectively define these needs. Its goal, in short, is socialism. The strategies that point the way along the road to this goal are determined both by the goal itself and by the special conditions of the point of departure - Israel today, its internal social, economic and political relations, its relations to its immediate geographic and social environment - the Arab East - and its relations to the rest of the world.**

Israeli society and the Zionist state are the products of Zionist colonization of Palestine. This colonization process consisted of the organized immigration of Jews; the influx of capital under Zionist control; the formation of exclusively Jewish political, educational and cultural institutions; the construction of Jewish armed forces; the development of an exclusively Jewish economy through land purchases from absentee Palestine landlords, followed by the violent dispossession of the Palestinian peasantry; denying Arabs employment in industries working with capital under Zionist control; and a tightly enforced Jewish boycott of Arab-produced goods. In 1948, this process reached a climax in the establishment of the state of Israel - and in the physical expulsion of almost a million Palestinian Arabs from the territory occupied by the new state. The process is by no means at an end. While diplomats negotiate and politicians debate, Arabs in the territories occupied since the 1967 war are steadily being driven from their homes and land, while new Jewish settlements are being founded there. And, in fact, the tendency to colonize more and more territory is inseparable from Zionist ideology and the deepest economic and political dynamic of Israeli society. Every benefit, real or imagined, that the Israeli Jews today possess - a standard of living much higher than that of the other peoples in the region, a reasonably high degree of formal political democracy, a formally independent state, even some land of their own - is historically based on acts of violence against the Palestinian Arabs.

The Israeli Jews constitute a society of settler colonialists, and the Zionist state is the instrument that procures benefits for them based on the denial of these benefits to the Palestinians. This colonization could not be carried out by the Zionist movement alone. It has required the economic, military and diplomatic support of one or more imperialist powers. From the very beginning, a primary goal of Zionist leaders has been to cement the alliance with imperialism. There is nothing accidental or extrinsic about this alliance; contrary to what some left Zionists claim, it is not the result of mistaken policies or bad leadership within the Zionist movement or state. Without this support the settler community could not have been secured, and the state could neither have been established nor could it continue to exist in the face of the implacable hostility of the violently dispossessed Palestinians and the intensifying opposition of the other Arab peoples. And because of this, the alliance is by no means one of equals; on the contrary, the imperialist partner is

overwhelmingly dominant, and the Zionist state is utterly dependent on imperialism.

Zionist colonization began around the turn of the century, just when the national awakening of the Arab East was beginning to assume a definite political form directed primarily against the doddering Ottoman Empire. It reached significant proportions in the years following World War I, when the European powers were completing their colonial conquest of the Arab East and when, at the same time, the Arab masses were engaging in great struggles for political independence. The Zionist state was formed at precisely that moment when powerful social forces were gathering in the Arab East, tending not only toward formal political independence but toward combating the economic exploitation by and dependence on imperialism. These forces are part of the same rebellion of the Third World that has already abolished imperialist exploitation in China, North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba.

These coincidences point to the benefit that imperialism derives from the alliance with Zionism. Through Zionist colonization a society was established in the Arab East that because of its own profound conflict with the Palestinians would be relatively immune to the revolutionary struggle for political and economic independence and hence a reliable base for an armed force directed against these struggles in the interest of imperialism. And this is precisely the service that Israel renders. In return for this service the imperialist powers – today the United States in particular – have not only armed the Zionist state but have aided its economic development. Israel is the only country in the Middle East that not only is not economically exploited by imperialism but is actually subsidized by it. The Zionist state, in short, is a client state of imperialism, and Israeli-Jewish society as a whole has the aspect of a counter-revolutionary, military outpost of imperialism.

The specific character of Zionist colonization had another decisive effect on the formation of Israeli-Jewish society. Having driven the indigenous population from the land and broken down the indigenous economy, Zionist settlers – unlike other colonizing movements – did not reincorporate the expropriated population into the economy as a laboring class. Rather, the Palestinians, even though an overwhelming majority of the area's population, were excluded from the economy and later driven from the country. The settlers themselves then took over most of the functions at all levels of the social division of labor. Throughout the history of the Zionist enterprise the forces tending to want to reshape the colonization process in accordance with the normal capitalist goal of maximizing short-term profits – a goal that would best be achieved by using cheap Arab labor – have been defeated. "Conquest of the Land," "Conquest of Labor" and "Produce of the Land" have remained the primary guides of Zionist practice. But despite the containment of "normal" capitalist tendencies within the Zionist movement and despite the vaguely socialist goals of many Zionist leaders, Israeli-Jewish society developed – had to develop – in an increasingly capitalist fashion. This is the inevitable consequence of the political and military dependence on imperialism, the economic dependence on foreign capital, the complete integration into the capitalist world market, and the subordination by socialist and labor Zionist leaders of the needs of the working people to national development – that is, to the struggle against the Arab people and the performance of services paid for by imperialism.

As a result of this, social classes with antagonistic interests, characteristic of every capitalist society, have emerged among the Israeli Jews. There is a working class that is compelled, in order to live, to produce a surplus over the disposition of which it has no control and that is always forced to produce a greater surplus. And there is a ruling class, appropriating this surplus and disposing of it, that consists of two components – the labor bureaucracy, historically rooted in the Histadrut and the left Zionist parties and today dominant in the government, which controls the bulk of the surplus produced by Israeli workers as well as the bulk of the funds that flow into the country from abroad, and the private capitalists, who directly appropriate the surplus produced by Israeli workers in the private sector of the economy. Although the balance within the social coalition has been shifting

steadily in favor of private capitalists, the labor bureaucracy remains dominant in the economy and will remain dominant in the foreseeable future. The Israeli masses are afflicted with all the ills that befall the proletariat in any capitalist society – the erosion of real wages through inflation and wage controls, the periodic threat of unemployment, constant pressure to intensify their labor, lack of control over their own labor process and increasingly inadequate housing, educational facilities and social services. Moreover, in the case of Israeli Jews of Oriental origin, added to these ills are racial or ethnic discrimination, which greatly intensifies them all. Thus, the Israeli-Jewish workers and middle classes live and suffer all the contradictions of advanced capitalist societies, and like their counterparts elsewhere, they spontaneously struggle against these ills by strikes and demonstrations. And when the Zionist state through the police force and, more usually, through the Histadrut with its labor courts and its control over jobs and social insurance, strikes back against these strikers and demonstrators, it expresses what it really is – an instrument of coercion in the hands of the Israeli-Jewish ruling class which is directed against the Israeli-Jewish proletariat and, of course, that Arab minority which is incorporated as super-exploited workers into the Israeli economy. The result of all this is the maintenance and intensification of exploitation of the proletariat and the strengthening of the wealth and power of the social system that constantly reproduces both components of the Israeli-Jewish ruling class.

At the same time, under the specific conditions of unending struggle against the Arabs from whom the territory supporting this class-divided society was seized, there has developed a culture of Israeli Jews quite as distinct from the culture of East European Jewry that supplied its basic characteristics or from the culture of the Sephardic communities of the East, from which the majority of the population today has sprung – or for that matter, from any other Jewish culture in the world – as it is from the Arab culture that surrounds it. The most obvious external sign of the development of this culture is, of course, the development of the new Hebrew language, and the rapid assimilation of Hebrew is a precondition of any but the most marginal participation in Israeli life. Contrary, of course, to the Zionist myth, this culture is no harmonious blending of various ethnic elements brought by settlers of widely divergent backgrounds. On the contrary, it reflects all the real conflicts – ultimately of a class nature – of Israeli-Jewish society. The emphasis placed by the Israeli Black Panthers and other radical Oriental Jews on the struggle against cultural oppression – the powerful tendencies to strip off everything Eastern and conform to predominantly Western culture norms – shows that the issue of Israeli-Jewish culture will itself be an important battleground of any revolutionary movement in Israel.

In short, Israeli-Jewish society is in reality a new, bourgeois nation, with a fully developed capitalist class structure and a distinctive national culture based on a capitalist economy. As a national, capitalist state, the Zionist state is an instrument in the hands of the Israeli-Jewish ruling class to maintain and intensify the exploitation of the Israeli-Jewish workers and of the Arab minority, and to serve the class interests of that ruling class in its relations with the rest of the world.

These three aspects of Israeli-Jewish society and the Zionist state – the settler-colonial character, the imperialist client state offering the services of a counter-revolutionary army to imperialism and the bourgeois nation with its internally repressive state apparatus – are interrelated in an exceedingly complex fashion. One feature of this interaction in particular must be emphasized in order to understand the possibilities and dynamics of an Israeli revolution. As long as colonization can be carried out without intensifying resistance from the expropriated Arabs, and as long as imperialism can continue to rule in the Arab East primarily through the established Arab political structures, the internal contradictions of Israeli-Jewish society can be contained by the Israeli ruling class. In other words, the development of the objective conditions of a mass revolutionary movement in Israel depends on the development of a deepening revolutionary struggle by the Arab masses of the region.

What the Zionist state and the imperialist powers confront in the Arab East today is a process of

permanent revolution. The crucial feature of this process is that the urgently experienced needs and aspirations of the masses – above all, the unification of the Arab people in an independent Arab nation, the elimination of traditional privilege, the establishment of the conditions of balanced, rapid economic growth that can open the way to a continuous and rapid rise in mass consumption – cannot be satisfied within the framework of capitalist property relations and the integration of the region into the imperialist world economic system. These goals can be realized only by the destruction of the economic and social power of all the classes, whether feudal or bourgeois and whether traditional or newly crystalizing, that are tied by class interest to imperialism. This will mean the end of direct or indirect domination and exploitation by imperialism, the establishment of an economy based on collective ownership of the most important means of production and the progressive expansion of economic planning. This, in turn, requires the revolutionary overthrow of all the existing state institutions in the region and the establishment of a new kind of state – the workers' state – that directly reflects the interests of the working class and rests on the armed masses of workers and peasants.

Nowhere in the Arab East has such a state yet appeared. But although the Arab masses in their spontaneous revolutionary activity have suffered serious defeats – most recently in the catastrophe suffered by the Palestinian Resistance at the hands of King Hussein – they have not suffered a decisive defeat, one that would leave them passive and demoralized for a long period of time. Nor, given the world-wide anti-colonial revolution and the growing radicalization of masses of people, including important sections of the working class in the imperialist countries themselves, is there any likely prospect that they will suffer such a defeat. However, this makes the eventual establishment of the revolutionary Arab workers' state – and therewith the defeat of the settler-colonial, imperialist-agent Zionist state – a practical certainty.

The obstacles in the way of this revolutionary process are immense. The imperialist powers, especially the United States, have every bit as great a political and military strategic interest in the Arab East as they have in Southeast Asia and because of petroleum they have a far more direct economic interest there. Imperialism will try with the utmost tenacity to contain, divert and eventually crush this revolutionary process. In order to lead the struggle of the Arab masses against this formidable array of forces – the threat of direct imperialist military intervention, the Zionist state and the established Arab ruling classes – to final victory, a revolutionary party of the working class must be built that can conduct a persistent ideological struggle against all feudal and bourgeois influences among the masses and that can select the tactics appropriate at each step along the way to weld the Arab workers, the poor peasants and the revolutionary individuals drawn from the middle classes into a coherent army of the revolution. But this problem will be solved, because imperialism can neither crush and demoralize the Arab masses nor can any of the contradictions that drive them to revolt be resolved until it is.

For the Israeli Jews, four crucially important consequences flow from this state of affairs. First, they face a long-term intensification of all the contradictions characteristic of a capitalist society as a result of the long-term intensification of the Arab revolutionary struggle against the Zionist state. This means they face the prospect of increasing casualties and of more intense exploitation at the hands of the Israeli-Jewish ruling class in its efforts to support the counter-revolutionary struggle. Second, the fact that the Arab revolution has an objectively socialist tendency, that to succeed it must destroy all the existing oppressive and exploitative structures in the Arab East means that its objective tendency is to destroy the basis of any possible future national oppression. Third, regardless of what the Israeli Jews do or do not do, the Zionist state will be defeated. The only question confronting the Israeli-Jewish masses is whether they will ultimately recognize the Zionist state as their own oppressor and join the Arab masses in the struggle to overthrow it, thereby becoming active participants in shaping the new order. The alternative, of course, is that they will

permit themselves to remain a counter-revolutionary force that must be crushed by the Arab revolution.

The fourth consequence that follows from this state of affairs is that any possible Israeli revolution can be conceived only as an aspect of the Arab revolution; the development of a mass revolutionary movement is wholly dependent on the progress of the Arab revolution. But the Arab revolution and the intensification of the internal conflicts within Israeli-Jewish society will not automatically generate a mass revolutionary movement. Whether or not such a movement develops will depend on whether or not ever larger sectors of the Israeli-Jewish masses come to perceive these relationships - between the Israeli-Jewish nation and the Palestinians and the other Arabs, and between the Israeli-Jewish nation and imperialism. Under the sway of Zionist ideology, every element of this reality appears the opposite of what it really is.

What is in reality a new nation produced by a specific historical process appears as the victorious restoration to its natural (or divine) rights of an ancient nation deprived of them for thousands of years as a result of the natural anti-Semitism of the Gentiles. What are in reality privileges maintained at the expense of the Palestinians appear as the natural rights of Jews. What is in reality a repressive apparatus directed against the masses of the Israeli Jews to maintain and intensify the exploitation of the Israeli-Jewish workers appears as the defender of these natural rights. What is in reality a counter-revolutionary mercenary army of imperialism appears as an army of the mythical Jewish nation fighting for survival and dependent in order to survive on support from the Western nations. What is in reality a struggle by the Palestinians to end the privileges of the Israeli Jews maintained at their expense, and a struggle by all the Arab people both to contain Israeli expansion and to destroy the chief military instrument of their continued exploitation appears as one more Gentile effort to oppress and kill Jews.

As long as this system of ideas retains its unbroken hold over the Israeli-Jewish masses, no mass revolutionary movement can possibly develop. For to minds shaped by this ideology, every sacrifice appears necessary to the survival of the nation. Nor can this ideology ever be undermined purely as a consequence of social struggles around particular issues, no matter how militant these struggles may become. For long before such struggles reach the pitch at which the state and its institutions stand revealed as crude instruments of violence directed against the aspirations of the masses, these struggles are broken by the simple expedient of identifying those in the forefront of them as "traitors to the nation". This has happened again and again in the history of the Zionist settlement and state. Never has the question of the fundamental character of the Zionist state or the role of Zionist ideology spontaneously arisen in the course of such social struggles, no matter how militant.

It might appear, therefore, that the possibility of developing a revolutionary movement among the Israeli-Jewish masses is hopeless. This, however, is not the case due to some crass contradictions between the prevailing ideology and the immediately perceptible reality, and within the reality itself. For one thing, there is a certain democratic, humanistic strain in Israeli-Jewish culture that is in conflict with the reality of the injustices done to the Palestinians in the name of Zionism. Alone this is not likely to provide the basis for a mass, anti-Zionist movement; if this were the only challenge to Zionist ideological hegemony the anti-Zionist, revolutionary message would be reduced to empty moralizing. In the context, however, of other, more fundamental challenges to Zionist ideology, this can become a powerful factor in mobilizing the Israeli-Jewish masses against the oppression of the Palestinians.

The most fundamental break in Zionist ideological hegemony will derive from the overwhelming fact that under the conditions of the long-term intensification of the Arab revolution, the Zionist project, judged by its own standards, is and will remain an utter failure and that different basic goals of this Zionist project will continue to contradict each other. Zionism promised national awakening and

fraternal solidarity; it has produced a society of increasing economic inequality and of racist discrimination and cultural oppression. Zionism promised independence; it has produced a society in which the Prime Minister must periodically affirm to the people that the existence of the nation depends on the delivery of fifty or a hundred Phantom jets from the United States. Zionism promised the Jews the dignity of a nation taking its place among the nations of the world; it has not been able to compel formal recognition by even the weakest and most reactionary Arab state, and it has not gained the slightest hint of legitimacy in the eyes of the Arab masses. Zionism promised physical security to the Jews; Israel is the most dangerous place on earth today for a Jew, and it will remain so as long as Israeli-Jewish society retains its colonial character and its function as an instrument of imperialism.

Real life is demonstrating with ever greater clarity that the two basic goals of the Zionist movement - the "ingathering of the exiles" and the integration of the nation - are mutually contradictory and that this contradiction is resolved by sacrificing the welfare of the masses of the Israeli Jews to continued immigration. It is this contradiction that is at the base of militant demonstrations staged by Oriental Jews to demand the end of privileges granted to new immigrants at their expense. Moreover, every social ill suffered by the masses of Israeli Jews can easily be shown to be the immediate result of the basic Zionist political goal - the building of an exclusively Jewish society in the Arab East. This is true not only of threatening or present military casualties. It is also true of the pressure on living standards, speed-up, the tendency to erosion of democratic rights, the power of the narrow-minded religious establishment over everyday personal life, and the endemic racism of which the Oriental majority is the victim.

In short, while ideologically Zionism is the greatest power working to maintain the established order in Israel, in its real political and institutional embodiment it is the most vulnerable feature of the status quo. A would-be revolutionary strategy - Wee that of the Israeli Communist Party - which fails to place the anti-Zionist struggle at its very center is doomed to failure. For it not only refrains from attacking the real system of illusions that prevents Hebrew workers from recognizing what is being done with and to them and hence makes impossible the intensification of struggles around particular issues. It also fails to pose the immediate, concrete political question implied by every struggle. To try to explain to the Israeli-Jewish masses the political meaning of their struggles by talking about the contradictions of capitalism and the exploitation of labor without talking about Zionism is to deal in pure abstractions. The concrete political form of the contradictions of capitalism in Israel is Zionism.

Thus, at the very center of the ISO's program stands the demand for the de-Zionization of Israel. This demand, its specification in other demands and its concretization in slogans, is able to meet the masses of people in their more or less spontaneous struggles around particular issues and to lead them toward a general political struggle against the Zionist state. The de-Zionization program thus takes on a transitional character. It starts from the issues of the struggle as the masses understand them and relates these issues to a goal that cannot be achieved without the overthrow of the Zionist state and the total transformation of Israeli society.

One point of the de-Zionization program is the call for the formation of an independent, militant, trade-union organization based on committees democratically elected in the work places. This corresponds to one of the major needs of the workers in their economic struggles. Because of the fundamentally anti-working-class character of the Histadrut, because it is in reality not a trade union in any sense whatever, every militant struggle takes place against the Histadrut leadership and is organized by rank-and-file shop committees. The struggle to maintain the independence of these committees and to move toward their coalescence into a real trade-union organization in the face of the violent opposition of the Histadrut bureaucracy will not only progressively expose to the masses of the workers the generally oppressive nature of this central Zionist institution. The actual

achievement of such a union will in fact mean the destruction of this pillar of the Zionist state.

Another demand of the de-Zionization program calls for the separation of religion and state. This is an elementary demand long ago achieved in most capitalist democracies that immediately appeals to democratic sentiment and can win broad support because of the oppressive intervention of the reactionary religious establishment in the everyday life of every Israeli. But it is a measure that cannot be carried out by the Zionist state, for the entire claim to legitimacy of that state depends on a religious conception. The state claims to be the national territory of the "Jewish nation." But the Jewish nation - a nation purportedly comprising all the world's Jews, as opposed to the real Israeli-Jewish nation - is a myth, so the definition of a member of that "nation" can only be a mythical, religious one. And, in fact, the most rabbi-baiting, atheistic "socialist" Zionist cannot offer any non-arbitrary answer to the question "Who is a Jew?" except the religious one: A Jew is the child of a Jewish mother or someone who has been converted to the Jewish religion.

An immediate logical consequence of the demand for secularization is the demand for the abrogation of the Law of Return, which depends on the religious definition of "Jew." The immediate expression of this is the call for the end to all privileges enjoyed by Jews in Israel and for consistent democratization of relations between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians and other Arabs. This in turn implies a measure that strikes at the very foundation of the exclusive Jewish state - the invitation to all Palestinians who desire repatriation to return to the land from which they were driven, and the offer of unconditional compensation for their losses to all those who do not want repatriation. The fulfillment of this demand will end one of the fundamental antagonisms between the Israeli Jews and the Arabs; the status of Israeli-Jewish society as a settler colony oppressing the Palestinian people.

Finally, de-Zionization requires the end of all relations of economic, military and political dependence on imperialism, including the financial and political ties between Israel and the Jewish community in the United States. The rupture of these ties will eliminate the other basic antagonism between the Israeli Jews and the Arab nation, the antagonism resulting from the counterrevolutionary services the Zionist state offers imperialism.

Together these demands correspond to the real, felt needs of the Israeli masses; the struggles on issues defined by them can progressively break the domination of Zionist ideology. Their full accomplishment - which can come only through socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers' state - will not only free the Palestinians of their oppression by the Zionist state and significantly aid the entire Arab nation in its struggle for independence from imperialism, but it will also free the Israeli Jews for the task of finding their secure place as one of the non-Arab nationalities within the Arab East.

The mobilization of the Israeli-Jewish masses around this program will certainly not happen quickly or automatically. It will require the most patient, persistent and conscious work. It requires the organization of the most politically advanced elements of Israeli society on a clear revolutionary socialist program - the building of a mass revolutionary vanguard party of the working class. The ISO is today in the very early stages of the development of such a party. In it are gathering the initial cadres of this party. They are being educated both theoretically and practically, and they are being tested in the experience of actual social struggles as they exist today. They are gaining the experience and the numbers that will make it possible for them to lead the great mass struggles of the future, struggles that will bring about the break with Zionism, the development of mass revolutionary socialist consciousness and the eventual achievement of state power through the victory of socialist revolution in Israel.

But just as the socialist revolution in Israel is only possible as an integral part of the process of

permanent revolution in the whole Arab East, so, too, the revolutionary party in Israel can only be built as a part of the broader, multinational revolutionary party of the entire region. This party, through its centralized organization and its ability to develop the correct tactical orientation in each concrete situation of struggle, will lead the masses of the whole region to the successful socialist revolution. Its basic program will aim at the establishment of a workers' state in the Arab East, a state governed on the basis of the broadest possible democracy. For the success of the party in leading the Israeli-Jewish masses away from Zionism and toward united struggle with the Arab masses, the perspective of the broadest possible democracy in the national question will be especially important. Democracy in the national question implies the right of national self-determination for non-Arab nationalities in the region-including the Israeli Jews - so far as the exercise of this right is consistent with defense of the socialist revolution in the Arab East.

February 10, 1972

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