



National Jericho Movement

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Palestine Solidarity Principles of Unity

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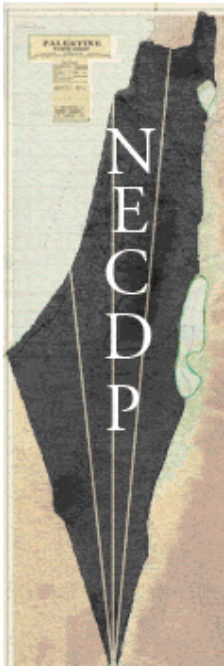
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*R: Confront Racism and Colonialism! : Zionism is a form of white supremacy and European colonialism. "Israel" was founded on Zionism and is therefore an unjust and illegitimate state.

*R: Right to Return and Reclaim Land: Palestinians have a right to return and reclaim all of their historic land. All of historic Palestine should be decolonized.

*R: Right to Resist: Palestinians have the right to resist colonization and genocide and the theft of their land and resources. This includes the right to resist settlers (the primary genocidal force in Palestine) and the military. The struggle of the Palestinian people is part of a regional struggle against US, European, and Zionist imperialism.

In April of 2008, NECDP held a conference entitled "Struggle for the Land: Zionism and the Repression of Anti-Colonial Movements." The following document is a

product of the workshops and the series of discussions that followed. It includes a section entitled "11 Methods of Zionist Disruption and Strategies for Addressing Disruption." We send it out as a call to organizers in movements for social and political change to adopt anti-Zionist principles as part of their work.

Fighting Zionism

Why should movements for social and political change adopt anti-Zionist principles as part of their work?

Decades ago, organizers had to mount a struggle to get people to acknowledge that racism needed to be confronted as a specific issue, and could not simply be addressed under the category of class--that it was not enough to have a class-based struggle in the absence of an analysis of racism. These organizers demonstrated that racism is a pervasive force within society and shows itself inside movements for social and political change; it must therefore be fought inside these movements as well.

This is the situation now with regard to Zionism. Zionism must be confronted as a form of white supremacy that exists within our movements for liberation and social change. Zionism has its main base of political, economic and military support in the "United States." While the vast majority of the world's people recognize that the Palestinian struggle is a legitimate struggle against genocidal colonial violence, no movement in the US has yet emerged capable of challenging this base of support. One reason for this is the pervasive influence of Zionism across the entire spectrum of US politics.

The oppression of Palestinian people should be enough reason for radical organizers to take up the call to confront Zionism in the movement. This confrontation is crucial for

other reasons as well.

We understand Zionism to be a central pillar of US imperialism that has integrated itself into US projects globally--not just in the Arab world, but in Africa, Central and South America, and Asia. For example, Zionists have supplied, trained and advised repressive regimes and right-wing paramilitary groups in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela since the 1950's.

Since the base of Zionist power continues to be in the "United States," Zionism has been the enemy of anti-colonial struggles here where we live. Zionists have recognized radical anti-colonial movements on this continent as a threat to their power and have actively worked to repress them. They have been a central force in the development of the national security state, the quasi-legalization of torture, and the so-called "war on terror."

Zionist involvement in police-state "security" --the protection of power for settler elites here on this continent--includes everything from policy development to intelligence gathering, mercenary work, and the development of highly repressive forms of technology. Organizations like the Anti-Defamation League have an extensive history of spying on oppositional groups and providing information to both domestic and foreign intelligence services. (In one documented instance from the 1980s, an ADL spy gave information on South African anti-Apartheid activist Chris Hani to the South African intelligence services; he was later assassinated on his return home.) The ADL now sponsors collaborative training programs for US "Homeland Security" police and their "Israeli" counterparts. "Israeli" private security companies like Instinctive Shooting International offer "security" to US corporations as well as training programs for US police forces. The military and surveillance technology company Elbit Systems, which was central in engineering the wall that now divides and imprisons communities in Palestine, contracted itself to the US

government to build the "border" wall with Mexico.

Above all, maintaining a Zionist base of power in the US means creating a political context on this continent in which Zionism can thrive, and that means suppressing anti-colonial consciousness. Zionist organizations like the American Jewish Committee threw their active support behind black "civil rights" leaders who were willing to confine their struggle to a limited agenda of representative rights on paper, while at the same time opposing nationalist currents within the black liberation movement who saw their struggle as a struggle for self-determination on their own land. Zionist organizations have used the Holocaust as a way of creating support for the Zionist project in Palestine by portraying it as a unique and unparalleled evil in human history, thus denying the magnitude of colonialism as a form of genocide against Africans, First Nations peoples, and Arab peoples.

For all of these reasons, we think that the fight against Zionism must become a common theme in serious movements for social and political change. Adopting anti-Zionist principles is one necessary step in the struggle to combat Zionism within our movements. To help organizers achieve this, we thought it useful to clarify the meaning of anti-Zionist principles, and then examine how Zionists--especially Zionists within our movements--work to disrupt serious anti-colonial solidarity.

What are anti-Zionist principles?

In discussing Zionism as a form of racism, we understand racism to be an expression of European colonialism. As such, it is not just the set of beliefs or world-view shared by members of colonial oppressor societies, but also the system of laws and institutions by which those societies enforce their power. Racism is the expression of a material and social relationship: the relationship of the colonizer to the colonized.

The struggle for liberation is not a struggle against some ideas in people's minds ("prejudice") or against inequality before the law ("discrimination"), but a struggle to overthrow colonial oppression in its most material forms.

Zionist colonialism in Palestine takes the form of colonial settlement. As in the case of Anglo-European colonialism on this continent, Zionist colonization aims at eradicating the indigenous population and replacing it with a settler population. This settler population is the main force of occupation and genocide against the indigenous people. Internal political currents that conflict with each other over the organization of power within the settler society--"left," "right," "center," "progressive," "conservative," "Marxist," "anarchist," etc.--overlap so completely with regard to the settler project itself as to be objectively the same for indigenous people.

In this context, we view proposed solutions which address the manifestations of colonialism (the Apartheid system, inequalities in legislation and voting rights, etc) but never the underlying reality of colonization--who controls the land and resources of the region--as false solutions. The struggle against racism is ultimately the struggle against colonialism--the struggle to liberate land.

As Malcolm X said, "Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality." True anti-Zionist principles must support the right of the Palestinian people to liberate their historic land by any means necessary.

How do Zionists disrupt our work and how can we stop them?

In Palestine solidarity work, there are three basic types of opposition to the Palestinians' struggle for their rights. The first is made by people who are ideologically committed to Zionism; the second, by well-intentioned people who are

persuaded that they must maintain an alliance with Zionists in the Left (or at the bare minimum not offend them) for the sake of credibility or other strategic gains, and the third by people who claim to oppose Zionism on principle but are reluctant to advocate for change in colonial practice that would result in material gains for the Palestinians: that is to say, resistance to settlers and liberation of land.

Here are some methods that are used by Zionists to disrupt solidarity work on Palestine and some strategies for fighting these disruptions. We have also noted some examples of methods used by people who are not Zionist in principle but who at the same time do not oppose Zionism in practice. It is important to note that the methods outlined below are often used by well-intentioned people on the "tactical left." Though we do not feel that it is ever "tactical" to capitulate to Zionism, certainly the tone with which one might respond to someone who is acting in good faith as opposed to someone who is attempting to disrupt organizing work should be different. It is also important to bear in mind that one must confront Zionism in those who are well-intentioned, just as one would confront any other form of racism in the well-intentioned.

11 Methods of Zionist Disruption and Strategies for Addressing Disruption

1. Deflecting to "strategy" in the absence of common goals

This is probably the most common method of disruption used by those ideologically committed to Zionism. Let's say a proposal is being discussed that is anti-Zionist. The Zionist in a group will suggest that advocating for Palestinian rights in this particular way is not "strategic" for a variety of

reasons -- "the American public will be frightened," "the American public is not informed enough to understand," "this approach will destroy previous work", or "this will harm Palestinians."

The best way to confront this particular method of disruption is to make a case to the group that it cannot move forward on strategy until it has agreed on what the basic political goals are. This is a good time to introduce the above principles of unity on Palestine solidarity. If the Zionist continues to be disruptive, it is time to go around the room and ask people some basic questions, "Do we all agree that Zionism is a form of racism and colonialism that we oppose?", "Do we all agree that Palestinians have the right to all their land back?" etc. This is a way of calling out racism. It is also important to note that the only people who tend to be really frightened by an anti-Zionist analysis of the situation in Palestine are Zionists, not the general public.

2. Opposition to the "cycle of violence" -- denouncing "the violence on both sides"

Zionists will often use the "non-violence" argument as a way to denounce Palestinian resistance. This method usually involves equating state violence with indigenous resistance to state violence-- an equation that is ludicrous. Also ludicrous is the idea that as funders of colonization and genocide in Palestine, people in this country would be in any position to dictate tactics or strategy to people who are resisting the violence that comes from here. People of occupied lands have the right to resist -- period.

3. Supporting the "right to self-determination" of "both peoples" in "Palestine/Israel" ; "ordinary people on both sides want peace."

Zionists in this instance are asserting the Zionist narrative:

that settlers have a right to self-determination on land they have stolen and now occupy by military force, and this right is somehow compatible with or equal to the right of native people to reclaim their own land. In such situations, it should be stressed that Zionism is a European colonial ideology, not a national liberation struggle.

This manifests itself in the use of terms like "Israel/Palestine" (sometimes used by Palestinians themselves who feel that these are necessary strategic concessions to gain popular support here.)

When confronted, Zionists will often respond that they have "partners in Palestine" who support this analysis. It is important to note when this argument is used that the role of solidarity activity is not to impose limitations on the struggle of indigenous people by singling out for support, cultivating, or strengthening currents that are willing to make concessions. It is the job of solidarity activists to support the full range of indigenous demands and not interfere with the process by which the indigenous movement makes its own collective decisions about demands and strategy.

4. Arguing the "complexity" of the situation

The Hasbara Handbook on "Promoting Israel on Campus" states the following:

"If a Jewish activist genuinely disagrees with some action it is legitimate to say so provided this is done in a way that defends and supports Israel as a country and attempts to place the action in the context of a complex situation."

The response to this should be direct. There is nothing complicated about the fundamental issues of justice in Palestine: racism, colonialism, and genocide are wrong and should be opposed.

5. Deflecting to "process"

In the absence of achieving their political goals through discussion, Zionists can both exhaust and destroy groups by rerouting political discussions to endless discussions of group "process." This is when a member of the group attempts to delay the beginning or completion of work that they don't agree with for an extended period of time by accusations that certain group procedures have not been followed. It is best to point out in these instances that the group process is being misused to achieve a certain political goal and refocus the discussion on political work.

6. Name calling

In the absence of achieving their political goals through one of the methods above, Zionists will sometimes engage in name calling – it can range from "impractical" to "sectarian" to "terrorist." This sometimes happens publicly in group discussion, but will more often happen outside of the group discussion. In this case, it is a good idea to draw attention to name calling as a method commonly used to discredit people who are confronting racism, class oppression, sexism, homophobia, etc. It is also a good idea to discourage name calling and instead, encourage the political discussion which will clarify what political conflicts lie at the heart of the name calling.

7. "Dialogue" between Israelis and Palestinians as a "bridge to peace," or "interfaith dialogue" that is used as an opportunity to promote advocacy for "Israel."

Subjects of Interfaith Dialogue discussion can be as obvious as "Why Christians Should Support Israel," to less obvious means of advocacy as in the example of the Boston Interfaith Dialogue Group below (taken from their website):

"Trinity was also forming a relationship with Temple Israel to address concerns among the Jewish community in Boston after one of the Anglican bishops of Massachusetts and number of other clergy had stood outside the Israeli consulate in Boston to express their concern for the situation of the Palestinian people. Fallon said the Jewish community perceived this as a "sharp criticism," and Trinity's ministerial staff sought out connections with the Jewish community in order to address this issue"

Hillel on advocacy:

"It might seem paradoxical, but perhaps the best way of strengthening the connection between Jewish students and Israel in the long run is to allow it to be challenged, re-examined and questioned in the short term. By introducing elements of self-critique, debate, dialogue and reflection into our Israel content we are not only sending a more engaging picture of a vigorous society in Israel but also doing more to engage students who are suspicious of talking points, simple messages and being drafted to the cause."

In confronting Zionism, it is important to reiterate that equalizing the oppressor and the oppressed is completely inappropriate and that such "dialogue" takes place in the context of very real material circumstances of injustice and racist oppression. Would we suggest "dialogue groups" between the oppressed and the oppressor in any of our other organizing work on social justice?

8. Using Western feminist stereotypes of Arab women as "super-oppressed" to argue that colonization is "good" for Arab women.

It is worth pointing out that there are many prevailing stereotypes in the West about Palestinian women, Muslim women, and Arab women as being "super-oppressed." These stereotypes have been conveniently used to justify the theft of Palestinian land and resources by Zionists as well as

American imperialism. Just like settlers throughout history here on this continent, in Africa, Central and South America, and the Caribbean have done, Zionists have claimed to bring "progress" to the people against whom they are committing genocide.

Palestinian women have strong forms of collective organization within their own communities. They also have played a central role in resistance movements throughout Palestinian history. They are in the best position to determine their own priorities, goals, and interests.

It can be said in general that women of colonized societies do not believe that they are being liberated by having bombs dropped on them, being imprisoned and tortured, being starved of their resources, or having their families murdered. Colonialism has never brought liberation to any sector of society among colonized people.

9. Using historical acknowledgement of the crimes of colonization to reroute action toward "Truth and Reconciliation" that preserves the status quo rather than actions that support the liberation of land

This functions in the same way as dialogue groups. The mere acknowledgement of the history of colonization is expected to lead to reconciliation, in the absence of any liberation of land or resources. In this case, reconciliation precedes any material undoing of injustice.

For example, there has been a very recent current trend of "acknowledging the Nakba" in "Israel".

Case in point: Zochrot, an organization that "works to make the history of the Nakba accessible to the Israeli public so as to engage Jews and Palestinians in an open recounting of our painful common history." (Emphasis ours.)

More quotes from Zochrot:

"We have also organized encounters between Palestinian refugees and the Israelis who live on their lands. During the encounters, the different narratives of 1948 are shared and there is an attempt to discuss opportunities for creating a space that would enable the needs of both sides to be met...."

From a Zochrot statement May, 2007:

"..An injustice cannot be corrected by another injustice, and the right of return, like any other right, must be implemented with care to ensure that other rights are protected"

"Other rights" in this case are presumably the "rights" of settlers.

10. Making it personal

This often takes the form of expressing one's "discomfort" with how the discussion is taking place. When racism is called out, Zionists will often personalize the political discussion, by saying they feel "attacked" and "unsupported" in the group.

It is best in these instances not to devote time to explaining yourself in ways that are more palatable to someone who is espousing racism. Be firm and clear in your analysis. Keep it brief: "Confronting racism can be uncomfortable for people," and move on. Do not allow political work to be derailed by these types of disruptions.

11. Propagating stereotypes and myths about Islamic resistance in an effort to discredit resistance and decrease solidarity for it here.

The Islamic resistance in Palestine and Lebanon is a homegrown resistance movement that enjoys wide support

from all walks of life, but in particular the poorest and most disenfranchised section of the society. Many in the Arab World have labeled these organizations as "the true Left," as they provide a wide variety of social services for the population that has been ignored by governments, semi-authorities and international organizations. While ideological disagreements are significant between the Islamic resistance movements and the anti-imperialist left, the Islamic resistance does not fall in the right wing of the spectrum of thought and enjoys many commonalities with the remnants of the anti-imperialist left on many social issues of concern to the general masses.

It is important to note that Islam with its many schools of thought does not function as an organized church. Thus, the secular Western argument is less relevant, as there is no church power to control. However, the Islamic resistance movements proved by practice that they are not interested in imposing new social norms on the population. Simply, they see themselves as a liberation movement with the main goal of liberating people and land from the grip of colonization and imperialism. It is unfortunate to see leftists joining the bandwagon of anti-Islamic propaganda in an attempt to discredit the Islamic resistance movements. It is a reactionary move from people of privilege with little knowledge of the nature of the resistance and its revolutionary ideology derived from the experience of the prophet of Islam. Women enjoy high positions in the Islamic resistance movement and exclusively run the network of social support organizations. They are involved in resistance activities, hold council seats and share in the decision-making while proudly wearing their head scarves.

The Islamic resistance movement values the contributions of previous anti-imperialist, nationalist and leftist organizations. In a recent prisoner exchange deal, the Islamic resistance insisted on the return of the remains of all fighters regardless of political affiliation. The celebration that ensued united the flags of the current Islamic resistance and the flags of the leftist resistance. The Islamic resistance is a continuation of the same struggle!

New England Committee to Defend Palestine

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