

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES: Jewish Alliance Against Zionism

We originally joined together in March 1978 out of shared feelings of outrage at the practices of Israel, particularly the invasion of Lebanon and the unjust treatment of the Palestinian people. In the course of our activities and discussions, we have developed the following set of principles. These should be seen as brief summaries of our discussions so far, to serve as guidelines for further debate and education.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION. While the specific form which this may take remains to be determined by Palestinians themselves, it is crystal clear that there cannot be peace in the Middle East until genuine Palestinian self-determination is a reality. Because of our stance on this central question, we denounce the Camp David accords, with their false promises of "autonomy," because the Palestinian people and their legitimately recognized representatives, the Palestine Liberation Organization, are excluded from participation.

AS JEWS, WE FEEL A DEEP RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICES OF ZIONISM. Although Zionism was originally one of many responses to rabid anti-Semitism, it became a racist and reactionary ideology. Historically, Zionism, the movement for a Jewish state, was a distinctly minority movement among the world Jewish population, with many different strands, from fervently religious to semi-socialistic. But the strand of Zionism which attained supremacy was very much part and parcel of the ideology of 19th century colonialism, and persuasive parallels have been drawn between the Zionist conquest of Palestine and settler-colonial states such as South Africa and Rhodesia. Zionist leaders were eventually successful in establishing the state of Israel in 1948 because from the beginning they had allied with powerful Western empires, first British and then US imperialism. The genocidal Holocaust gave tragic and compelling impetus to the Zionist movement, though it should not be overlooked that world imperialism closed its doors to Jewish refugees, and that Zionist collaboration with fascist authorities has been documented.

In Palestine itself, while alleging that there were "no such thing as Palestinians," Zionism was actually forcibly evicting those same Palestinians from their homeland. By establishing an exclusivist Jewish state (over the opposition of many Jewish leaders and intellectuals, including Albert Einstein and Judah Magnes) Zionism sentenced those Palestinians who remained inside ever-expanding Israeli borders to economic, political and social domination, racial subjugation, religious discrimination, as well as direct military occupation, arrests, and torture. The racist aspect of Zionist ideology and practice, manifest in the colonizing mentality, and directed against the Palestinians, is also evident when examination is made of the discrimination suffered by non-European Jews in Israel.

While our understanding, through study, of the history of Zionism, as well as the entire panorama of Jewish history, is **deepening**, we can nevertheless pinpoint certain key current-day practices of Zionism which we believe must be actively opposed. These include:

The continuing oppression of and repression against Palestinians, both inside the current borders of Israel and in the occupied areas;

The invasions and bombings of Lebanon, which can only be understood as an outright extermination campaign against Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese populace, which finds Israel as the supplier and paymaster for self-proclaimed fascist forces in Lebanon, and which is also a continuation of Israeli expansionism;

The Camp David accords, which are a betrayal of Palestinian rights to self-determination, and amount to an aggressive military pact between the US, Israel, and Egypt despite ~~its~~ ^{their} masquerade as a peace treaty;

The reactionary role played by Israel in its support for, arms supply of, and close collaboration with dictatorships around the world, especially its economic and military bond with South Africa, as with Somoza's regime in Nicaragua in the recent past.

WE AFFIRM OUR JEWISH IDENTITY AND MILITANTLY OPPOSE ALL FORMS OF ANTI-SEMITISM. In affirming our Jewish identity, we do so not in a "chosen people" chauvinistic sense, but with a sense of dignity, of being part of a long tradition of holding together and surviving under extremely adverse circumstances. We do so in a spirit of discovery and re-discovery of those parts of our Jewish heritage, religious, cultural, familial, which contain lessons and strengths for our lives in the present-day reality. We seek to deepen our understanding of Jewish history, to reach out to, learn from, exchange ideas, and debate with other parts of the Jewish community. We believe we are part of that continuous stream in Jewish life which has given birth to so many humanitarian social activists, worker's and trade union representatives, and dedicated revolutionaries. We seek to better understand the class structure and nature of the Jewish community, past and present. At the same time there are customs, traditions, and precepts within Judaism as a whole which must be criticized and repudiated. Most centrally, we hold that it is the best traditions of Jewish resistance to slavery, oppression, and persecution to denounce the conditions visited upon the Palestinians by Zionism.

In recent years the Zionist establishment has been successful in propagating the myth that all Jews are Zionists, and that to attack Israel in any way is to be anti-Semitic. WE SEEK TO HELP RE-ESTABLISH THE CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM. Anti-Zionism has a long and honorable tradition in the Jewish community. Furthermore, because Zionist ideology presupposes that anti-Semitism is an eternal phenomenon, and will always exist, Zionism tends to compromise with and sometimes collaborate with anti-Semitism, finding the alleged solution to all such problems in unthinking support for Israel, rather than in fighting anti-Semitism, and all other aspects of fascism, on the home front. In the United States, with the deepening economic crisis, the rightward political shift, and the resurgence of Ku-Klux Klan, Nazi, and other racist movements, we stand for the militant unity of all peoples and ethnic groups under attack by racist forces and institutions. We therefore repudiate the recent moves of the Zionist establishment against affirmative action programs, their defense of Israel's strong ties to apartheid South Africa, and their attacks on increasing Black understanding of the necessity to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization. We affirm instead the solidarity that has sometimes existed in the United States, the precious historical bond between Blacks and Jews, the large numbers of young Jews who worked in the civil rights and Black liberation movement, most movingly represented perhaps by the sacrifice of life of Andrew Goodman and Mickey Schwerner, along with James Chaney, in the early days of the civil rights struggle.

We also suggest that Israel, in its racist practice, and reactionary role in the world, itself contributes to anti-Semitism, and that by opposing Zionism, Jews therefore contribute to the struggle against anti-Semitism. WE URGE PEOPLE TO OPPOSE THE CURRENT AND VIRULENT ANTI-PALESTINIAN, ANTI-ARAB PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS. From the comic pages and commercials to the front pages and national news broadcasts, this campaign has taken on all the elements of racist hysteria that have so often been prelude to war and military intervention. The crisis in Iran is ~~so~~ very

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This anti-Arab campaign and the widespread anti-Arab prejudice is itself a form of anti-Semitism which, like the anti-Semitism against Jews, must be fought and defeated. We have stressed in our public statements and presentations the kinship and correspondence between Jews and Palestinians, for who after all are the victims of the modern Diaspora if not the Palestinians? We have also presented a program bringing together the resistance to fascism at the Warsaw Ghetto and the Palestinian resistance to Lebanese fascism at the Tal al Zaatar refugee camp. We will continue to point out the possibilities of solidarity between Jews and Palestinians, for therein lies the real solution to the crisis in the Middle East. It is the Palestinians who have affirmed this most dramatically in recent years, by making a careful distinction between the Jewish people and Zionism, and by proposing the eventual formation of a democratic secular state.

WE OPPOSE SEXISM AND MALE SUPREMACY, AND COMMIT OURSELVES TO STRUGGLING AGAINST THEM. We believe that the struggle of women against male supremacy is inextricably connected to the struggle against all forms of human oppression. While we understand that the true liberation of women necessarily involves a total transformation of human relations, we also know that until women have won the right to determine the course of their own destinies this transformation cannot occur. We condemn all forms of violence against and cultural suppression of women. We support the struggle of lesbians and gay men for basic human rights and full human dignity. We are committed as well to fighting sexism as it appears within our group. We reject the patriarchal and male supremacist heritage of Judaism. Within the Middle East, we see movements for women's liberation as a vital and central part of the struggle for social change, manifested with the overall Palestine national liberation movement, and, in quite different ways, within Israeli society as well.

WE OPPOSE THE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTINUING COMPLICITY OF US IMPERIALISM FOR THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. From the beginning, US imperialism has seen its massive military and economic support for Israel in highly strategic terms - relating to maintaining and expanding US interests in the region. In addition to Almighty Oil and other economic investments, the United States seeks, in its terms, the elimination of Soviet influence, which means that the United States seeks the repression and defeat of authentic national liberation movements, from Africa through the Persian Gulf. In Israel, the United States has found an almost always willing partner, agent and outpost for imperialist interests, first of all against the Palestinians, and now, with Sadat, against many other progressive movements in the Mideast-Africa region. As anti-imperialists, we oppose US policies and practices in the Mideast, and seek to deepen our analysis of current US policy. We stand firmly opposed to the very real threat and danger of direct US military intervention and war in the Middle East. We affirm our support for genuine national liberation, and our solidarity with all movements that take a stand for human emancipation, in the Middle East, and around the world.