

**For a radical
left-wing
solidarity with
israel!**

”Why this hatred of
Israel? Doesn’t the
anti-Semitic bear
to have a self-confident,
strong Jew in front of
him?”

—SAMMY SPEIER¹

¹ <http://www.hagalil.com/2016/05/sammy-speier/>

Why this text.

In recent years, there has been a further increase in so-called criticism of Israel in left-wing circles. In Berlin, the supporters of left-wing anti-Zionism are, on the one hand, classical anti-imperialist structures such as the Stalinist “Jugendwiderstand”, parts of the Linkspartei, or the Leninist MLPD, which forms a list with the anti-Semitic terrorist group PFLP for the federal elections in 2017. On the other hand, new anti-Zionist structures have emerged, such as FOR Palestine, Berlin Against Pinkwashing, the Jewish Antifa Berlin and other groups such as the “Bündnis gegen Rassismus”. In addition, BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) has established itself as an international network in recent years and also maintains a group in Berlin. The latter groups operate largely under the sign of “Critical Whiteness” as well as in the queer scene. This “neo-Antizionism” can also be seen as a result of the 2001 Durban UN Conference, which established anti-Zionism as an anti-racist paradigm. Beyond individual shitstorms and Facebook discussions, there has been little criticism of the old and new anti-Zionists in the near past. Though in the left in Germany, one can look back on a long history of the dispute over Israel, from which much can be learned.

It is striking that even beyond the anti-Zionist milieu, large parts of the left-wing scene in Berlin do not take anti-Semitism – in whatever form – seriously or dismiss such conflicts as a “war of the scene”. Most of the left-wingers do not show either theoretical or practical solidarity with those affected by anti-Semitism. As an indication you can take a look at the absence of the left on the demonstration after the attack on a rabbi in Friedenau or the demonstration against the ban on circumcision in 2012, but also the lack of leftist reactions after an attack on a Jewish transman in 2013. Only a few months ago, the case of a Jew who had to leave his school (again in Friedenau) due to anti-Semitic attacks was widely received by the media – yet again, reactions from the left were not received at all. Large parts of the left-wing

scene in Berlin do not support Jewish struggles or struggles for the interests of survivors of extermination. For example, there was hardly any support for a petition launched in 2017 for the immediate payment of ghetto pensions to the elderly survivors of German extermination policy, a petition which in the end was signed by only 190 people. Apparently, many leftists in Berlin do not have a theoretical concept of anti-Semitism either. This problem is partly related to the current popular paradigm of intersectionality, in whose race-gender-class triad antisemitism cannot be easily integrated. Jews are either categorized as “white” and “privileged” – or anti-Semitism is defined as an element of racism and thus made invisible because the specifics of hatred against Jews are no longer thought of.

In particular, the widespread spread of anti-Zionism in Germany is currently hardly reflected in the left. Jews are not allowed to use their experiences and anti-Semitism as a basis for the power of definition, and are sometimes frankly denied, unless they act as anti-Zionists. The presence of Jewish persons and especially Israeli and non-anti-Zionist Jews is thus made difficult or even impossible. Jews are thus excluded from the left-wing scene in a similar way to those of the dominance society, or are silenced. With this text, therefore, we want to criticise anti-Zionism and explain why a left-wing Israeli solidarity is necessary.

unprecedented act of destruction. The Shoah is thus not only a particularly terrible massacre, but also the worst crime ever committed and has therefore a universal significance – after all, the attempt was made to kill all Jews worldwide, from child to elderly man. The extermination was first and foremost planned and carried out by Germans, but was also a European project: the Germans could rely on the active cooperation or at least anti-Semitic motivated passivity of many citizens of the collaborating and occupied states. The Shoah could also have been stopped earlier by targeted military intervention by the Allies of World War II. At least the number of victims would have been reduced if the Allies had opened their borders to the numerous Jewish refugees. But on the whole there was no help from outside: “The Jews had to learn painfully that the world was at war with Germany, but that the liberation of the Jews or at least the destruction of the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz did not have any priority” (sinistra!). The borders of the vast majority of states were closed, similar to the present day, where refugees are rejected by the Western states to which they flee because of their promises of happiness.

The interaction of the German-Capitalist annihilation and the Western capitalist resistance against refugees created a situation that was hopeless for most Jews. The preconditions for such a situation to be repeated nowadays are not off the world: capitalism has not been abolished, and even open anti-Semitism has only been curbed or given a communication taboo in some countries of the world. There is therefore a need for organised self-defence of all potential victims of anti-Semitism in order to prevent a possible repetition of the destruction. While the Zionist idea could not find a majority among Jews until World War II, this changed with the German crime. In a world of states, Zionism could only be realized in state form – with all the consequences that unfortunately entailed: authoritarian constitution, creation of national myths, exclusion of the “others” by demarcation, establishment of police and army to secure the territory with arms, original accumulation of a state population, etc. In short, Israel, founded in 1948, is characterized by a dual character: on the one hand, a common, repressive-dominant state, on the other hand, a place of political emancipation for the Jews and an instrument of their armed self-defence.

Israel was immediately shown how necessary such a state formation is: hardly founded, Israel was directly attacked by six Arab states – and could only continue to exist through the supply of weapons from socialist states. Besides the flight and expulsion of non-Jewish Arabs from the Israeli territory, several hundred thousand Jews were expelled from Arab and Muslim states – a fact that is widely neglected in the left. In recent years, many Jews have once again emigrated to Israel because they could no longer withstand anti-Semitism in European countries – several thousand of them from France alone have fled to Israel every year.

Why antizionism.

“Anti-Zionism” and “criticism of Israel”, the terms alone are remarkable: there is no comparable criticism of France, Sweden, Hungary or Argentina. This makes it clear that Israel is not criticised for certain actions like all other states, but is rather particularly strongly focused on and fundamentally rejected in its entirety. In contrast to other states, where the government is criticised once in a while, in the case of Israel boycott is immediately called for – a boycott that is not only directed against politics, but against the entire Israeli economy, culture and academy. In San Francisco, for example, the boycott of the visit of an LGQBT youth group was called for – simply because of the Israeli origin of the young people. Of course, no one would ever have the idea of boycotting a group of Czech brewers because in the Czech Republic Romnja are heavily discriminated against, or to call for a French croissant brand to be avoided because of the neglect of the Paris banlieues. On the other hand, the entire Israeli society – from the settler to the Radiohead-fan, from the right to the left, from the believer to the atheist – is being held hostage for the alleged or actual crimes of their government. And this with a very strong political energy, even though the Israeli state itself, with its territory approximately the size of Hesse and a population of a few million people, is geopolitically completely irrelevant, especially in comparison with huge nations such as China, India, Russia or Brazil.

In contrast to the old anti-Semitism, Israel is usually criticized today not in a racist, but apparently anti-racist manner. Human rights are put in place and Israel is regularly compared with Nazi Germany – this moral rhetoric enables anti-Zionism to address broad social classes. In the anti-Zionist argumentation, the old anti-Semitic stereotypes shine through again and again: Israel, for example, is described as an “artificial” state that has not grown “naturally” like other nations. Although all nations are man-made, the old lie that Jews

are not a real people is repeated, that they have something abstract and unnatural about them. Israel is also accused of poisoning the Palestinian people's water – Christian anti-Judaism used to say that “the Jews” would poison wells. Even the old stereotype of the special Jewish power is repeated when, for example, it is suggested that Israel has a particularly strong (Jewish) lobby in the USA, which secretly steers North American foreign policy.

With the constant reference to its moral deficit, Israel is being subjected to double standards which do not apply to other states, and Israel is being demonised and delegitimised. It is also noticeable that the assumption that human rights violations or militarism are special attributes of Israeli rule hinders insight into the generally violent character of statehood. Israel is often accused of a “dirty war” – implicitly, therefore, the phantasm of a clean, just war is presented. States in capitalism, however, do not improve the humanitarian situation, but serve the purpose of setting the appropriate framework conditions for the accumulation of capital – and use a sophisticated set of techniques of domination up to open warfare. The anti-Zionist projection draws the entire aggression potential of the wrong society into one point through the assumption that Israel is acting particularly criminal – the Israelis are portrayed as the only ones guilty. It is not for nothing that Israel is repeatedly cited in European surveys as the supposed greatest threat to world peace. At the same time, anti-Zionism makes it impossible to understand the destructive nature of the capitalist state, because anti-Zionists feel morally superior to the “criminal Israelis”.

With the means of the boycott the BDS-movement favours the use of a petty-bourgeois tactic. The boycott is not aimed at weakening the economy, but at radicalising the conflict and isolating Israel. Such a form of boycott diametrically opposes communist tactics of class war, such as strike and sabotage. It is the illusion of bringing about a change in society through ethically correct consumption and consumer avoidance. However, the production sphere as the place of exploitation and a fundamental domain of capitalism remains unaffected by the boycott. In addition, in the concrete case, action is also being taken against the realpolitical interests of many



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Palestinian workers who are employed by Israeli companies – often under poor conditions, of course. Anti-Zionism likes to present itself as rebellious, “critical” and moral, but through its bipolar distinction – evil Jewish state vs. good international community – it represents a reactionary reconciliation with the forms of state and capital.

Many unreflected leftists tend to anti-Zionism thanks to his rhetoric inspired by human rights. In the end, it embodies not only the opposite of a critique of power, but also the opposite of emancipation. Consciously or unconsciously, anti-Zionism pursues the same goal as old anti-Semitism, namely the death of Jews. As Jean-Paul Sartre said: “What the anti-Semit wants and prepares is the death of the Jew.” This is reflected worldwide in the appalling anti-Semitic violence in the name of anti-Zionism – not only in Palestinian suicide bombings, but also in attacks on synagogues in Europe, highly aggressive slogans on anti-Israeli “peace demonstrations” or in assaults on Israeli tourists in Berlin.

Why not in Germany?

In Germany, there is a reason of state, which likes to seem pro-Israeli – justified by the “special responsibility of the Germans” for the Jews. This already shows a paternalistic attitude – instead of blabbering about responsibility, the Germans should just shut up and dissolve their country. Unfortunately, however, Germany continues to exist and the existence of Israel reminds the Germans of the crimes committed by their ancestors. That is why there is a massive hatred of Israel in Germany, not only under “normal” Germans, but also in the German elite. A few years ago, for example, the Bundestag joined forces across all party boundaries to form a unanimous resolution against Israel – a very unusual process. The particular hatred of Israel is also regularly reflected in surveys: approval rates of 57% for statements such as “Israel is waging a war of annihilation against the Palestinians” and 38% for statements such as “In the policies that Israel is pursuing, I can well understand that one has something against Jews” (“Deutsche Zustände”, 2010) make it clear that anti-Zionism is a phenomenon that affects the whole of society. According to another survey, even 70% of Germans think that Israel “pursues its interests without regard for other peoples”, 59% consider Israel to be an “aggressive country”, and 58% of Germans “are alien to Israel”. At the same time, almost 60% of the population demanded 2015 “to finally draw a line under the persecution of the Jews”. Of course, the vast majority of these Germans have no objection to Germany pursuing its interests “without regard for other peoples”, for example in the Kosovo war or in the EU-Turkey deal against refugees. The violent formation of the German state is not criticized by the interviewees, but only the violence of the Jewish state.

In Germany, anti-Zionism and secondary anti-Semitism – hatred of the Jews because of Auschwitz – come together. This is true even if some factions of the new right are pretending to be pro-Israeli because they see Israel as a champion against Islam. It is therefore important that the Left takes anti-Semitism as a murderous ideology seriously and resolutely fights it. Since the Six-Day War in 1967, the left in Germany has been strongly anti-Israeli – German leftists have taken part in selections of Israelis and Jews involved in aircraft hijacking (Entebbe), a bomb thrown into a Jewish community centre (Berlin) or swaggered over the “Judenknacks” (Dieter Kunzelmann). The Israelis were portrayed as the “enemy of all humans” (Autonomous Middle East Group Hamburg 1989) or even as the new Nazis: “The Jews driven from fascism have even become fascists who, in collaboration with American capital, want to wipe out the Palestinian people” (Schwarze Ratten/Tupamaros West Berlin). The Berlin autonomous magazine “Interim”, which still exists today, brought the wish of many leftists to the simple formula: “Israel must go!”. In recent years, Israel has been repeatedly described by the left as a supposedly particularly racist state of colonial settlers and compared with the South African apartheid system. The fight against Israel was reinterpreted as anti-racist solidarity with the “oppressed” from the Palestinian territories, for example in the slogan “Black Lives Matter – From Ferguson to Palestine”. Though obviously there is racism in Israel, it is by no means emancipatory to relativise the victims of the murderous apartheid by comparing them with Israel, which is fundamentally democratic. Nor does it make sense in German-Europe, which is characterised by the murderous isolation of its borders and by raging racist mobs, to constantly refer to racism in a far-away region. In particular, it is noticeable that the Palestinian refugees are only supported in their fight against Israel – their fate in the Jordanian and Lebanese camps, where hundreds of thousands of them live without rights and impoverished, is of no interest to the anti-Zionists.

Left-wing for Israel!

Following the anti-Semitic terrorist act of 11 September 2001, a very broad debate on anti-Zionism was held in the left in Germany. In some cases, violent attacks by anti-Semitic activists, but also racial breakdowns and splits from the left have occurred. This debate is 15 years old, and many things have been forgotten. We would like to call for the discussion on anti-Zionism to be resumed in theory and practice. The left should oppose primary anti-Semitism – such as physical attacks on Jews in the public arena – such as secondary hatred of Jews – for example, the persistent refusal to pay money to the victims of National Socialism and the cries for a “final stroke”. In addition, we advocate an offensive, radical left-wing solidarity with Israel.

We are not looking for a new homeland in Israel – our solidarity is non-identitarian, because we are not Israeli citizens or fans of this country, but live as communists in and against Germany. At the same time, our solidarity with Israel is unconditional: neither do we glorify Israeli food and nightlife, nor do we praise the vibrant democracy or special tolerance of Israeli society. We also do not conduct any foreign policy simulations or want to hire as military advisors at the IDF. It is only about this point: that Auschwitz is never again, and Israel can defend itself against its anti-Semitic enemies for as long as it is necessary. We are trying to support this project by attacking German anti-Semitism in all its forms. The left should understand this struggle as a natural part of its fight against racism, capitalism and for a better world in which one as an individual “can be different without fear” (Theodor W. Adorno).

Long live Israel – deprive Germany of its right to exist!

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