

I. ISRAEL'S GENOCIDAL INVASION OF LEBANON: OPPOSITION NEEDED
AGAINST BUILDING OTHER HALF-WAY HOUSES

Nothing but horror and utter disgust characterizes the world's reaction to Israel's gruesome invasion of Lebanon. Each day of the endless string of Israel's lying excuses for the destruction of that land -- from the claim of securing a "25 mile security zone" for Israel and empty talk of the PLO as "terrorists" at a moment when, not the PLO, but Begin-Sharon's Israel was the one committing the atrocities; to the claim of being for Lebanon's "integrity" as a nation, freed of Syria's and the PLO's invasions -- only heightened and widened the world's opposition to Israel's ghoulisn attack. History will not forget such barbarism. Opposition, and even putting an end, to these uncivilized acts, cannot, however, be sufficient unto the day without, at one and the same time, showing how it had resulted from a transformation into opposite of what Israel was at birth in 1947-48, and what it is today, 1982-83.

It is necessary to begin with the present, to focus on the group that just extended its vote to the Likud government on July 25. That neo-fascist, Guela Cohen, who heads the extreme Right party, Teh'ya, thus expressed her confidence in Begin. Its three votes assured Begin's majority. In exchange for this vote, Tehiya got: 1) several thousand new homes in the occupied region; 2) seven new settlements on the West Bank; 3) General Sharon's sponsorship of the whole idea of settling the West Bank as if it were part of Israel. (See The Nation , August 7 - 14, 1982.)

As Flora Lewis rightly pointed out in "The Moral Void" (New York Times, Aug. 5, 1982), the so-called "Operation Peace in Galilee" has as its real objective making the West Bank part of Israel -- indeed, killing the very idea of Palestinian nationality.

How quickly forgotten (if, indeed, Begin or Irgun ever knew them) are the true origins of the idea of an "Israeli nationality." The Nazi holocaust, which they invoke today for reactionary purposes, is the fact of history that changed the position of Marxists who had always been for cultural assimilation to the point where nothing

deviated from straight socialist goals. (See Leon Trotsky's articles on why, though still fully opposed to Zionism, he now -- i.e. 1937 -- had to be for a "homeland for the Jews." That was the Marxist position on Israel, on the question of national self-determination.) The same was true for those who weren't Marxists. A good essay by a liberal, Alfred Friendly, describes the shock of today, even of those who still favored Israel in the war of 1967.

In "Israel: Paradise Lost" (Manchester Guardian, July 11, 1982), Alfred Friendly recalls the 1967 war, when he was for Israel and when the attitude was how temporary the occupation was: 1) As one Colonel put it, "There won't be any struggle getting Sinai back to Nasser quickly"; 2) A short while later, Israel enthusiastically accepted UN Resolution 242; 3) Israel categorically denied the Arab accusation that the Zionist objective was a so-called "Eretz Israel," as the Bible expressed it ("a realm extending from the Nile to the Euphrates"), insisting instead that only the "crazies" talked about "Eretz Israel" in that Biblical manner. But, in fact, says Friendly, we were soon to see the "Dayan Plan" which proposed "garrison settlements," which was followed by the "Allon Plan" which talked of Biblical Judea and Samaria, and now we have the "Likud-Sharon Plan" or "the triumph of the Eretz Israel boys." The result is the genocidal invasion of Lebanon.

This transformation of Israel into an imperialist state is a very different point of departure from what we have always used as proof of the transformation into opposite when we pointed to the first workers' state into a state-capitalist society. It is true that this, too, is a state-capitalist society. It is true, also, that, at its birth, it certainly wasn't anywhere as clear a social revolution as was 1917. Methodologically as well as practically, the point here is that we could -- and did -- express the contradictions at its birth. We refused to be silent even when we most enthusiastically supported the establishment of "a homeland for the Jews," by pointing sharply to the fact that the land contained the presence -- as a minority, it is true, but a presence, nevertheless--

of the reactionary Irgun, whose leader was the terrorist, Begin.*
What a transformation into opposite of the Israel of "Exodus," 1947-48, into the imperialistic state-capitalist Israel of 1982-83!

It is good that a peace movement has arisen in Israel, demanding an end to Israel's invasion of Lebanon at once. It is even better that some of that Left has raised the question of self-determination for Palestinians in Israel -- or, rather, the part Israel occupies illegally. (Indeed, what Israel is now trying to annex is Palestine.) But that, too, will hardly solve much if, at the same time, a new banner of genuine liberation is not unfolded.

The immediate, urgent question now is: What kind of regime in Lebanon? Does anyone doubt that Begin-Sharon wanted that small-time, neo-fascist, Bashir Gemayel to become its President? What is needed is to see to it that genuine national liberation is the predominant demand and that none will stand for any colonization anywhere -- be it by Britain in the Malvinas/Falklands or Israel in Lebanon and the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Let's keep in mind that precisely because Thatcher thought she could revive British chauvinistic patriotism -- especially when it had U.S. support and is so militarily dominant over technologically backward lands like Argentina -- she thought a military victory would assure her holding onto the Falklands/Malvinas. Nothing could be further from the truth. The reason that even militaristic neo-fascist Argentina could threaten Britain with transformation of her military victory into a defeat, and Argentina's military defeat into a victory, is the Third World's implacable opposition to neo-colonialism; it

* I was in Paris in 1947, where I met German refugees who had originally escaped to Palestine only to find that it was impossible to work there for a new society of Arabs and Jews. The main obstacle was the Irgun, headed by Begin. It became so impossible to work for a truly new society that they had left Palestine. The stories they told me of the Irgun showed that the greatest contradiction was already present in the fight for a Jewish homeland. I, in turn, cabled an objection to CLRJames and Grace Lee, who were then writing Invading Socialist Society, which had declared Palestine to be the "point of world revolution."

will not allow Britain to keep its war booty.*

Here, too, philosophy is no abstraction. Its concretization, as politicalization, warns the whole New Left not to stop at half-way houses, not even when that manifests deep sensitivity to Third World desires for freedom unless they are willing to transform that desire into an outright revolution. I'm referring to that part of the New Left which uncritically accepts the unfinished Latin American revolutions as if that is the answer -- i.e. what will destroy imperialist capitalism. There was a special issue of Contemporary Marxism (Winter, 1980), edited by Immanuel Wallerstein, in which Samir Amin, in an essay on Nicaragua, concluded that the primary task is "revitalization of the economy." No one needs a reminder that the counter-revolution in Poland, headed by General Jaruzelski, is using precisely that excuse for destroying Solidarity.