



International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network-Labor, and Labor for Palestine (U.S.), April 13, 2010

Briefing: Labor Zionism and the Histadrut

We are thus asking the international trade unions to boycott the Histadrut to pressure it to guarantee rights for our workers and to pressure the government to end the occupation and to recognize the full rights of the Palestinian people.

—“Palestinian Unions call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions,” February 11, 2007.¹

We must call for the isolation of Histadrut, Israel’s racist trade union, which supports unconditionally the occupation of Palestine and the inhumane treatment of the Arab workers in Israel.

—COSATU, June 24-26, 2009.²

•**Overview.** In their call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Apartheid Israel, all Palestinian trade union bodies have specifically targeted the Histadrut, the Zionist labor federation. As discussed below, this is because the Histadrut has used its image as a “progressive” institution to spearhead—and whitewash—racism, apartheid, dispossession and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians since the 1920s. In this, it has been the cornerstone of Labor Zionism, which began in the early 1900s.

•**Colonial Project.** From its inception in the late 1800s, Zionism was designed as an openly colonial project. It promised prospective imperial sponsors to remove Jews en masse from Europe;³ in the words of Theodor Herzl, to “form . . . an outpost of civilization against barbarism”⁴ in a key strategic region; and to undermine Jewish working class support for radical socialism in Europe and the United States. As Herzl recounted, “I explained that we were taking the Jews away from the revolutionary parties.”⁵

•**Little Working Class Support.** At a time when most Jews were still working class, Labor Zionism had a key role to play in delivering on these promises. In the short term, however, none of these promises was fulfilled, since “Labour Zionism was never able to win over any significant section of the Jewish working class in any country of the Diaspora.”⁶

The socialist movement in Russia, where most Jews lived, was implacably opposed to Zionism, which pandered to the very Tsarist officials who sponsored anti-Semitic pogroms. Similarly, in the United States, “[p]overty pushed [Jewish] workers into unions organized by the revolutionary minority,” and “[a]t its

prime, the Jewish labor movement loathed Zionism,”⁷ which conspicuously abstained from fighting for immigrant workers’ rights.

•**Anti-Bolshevism.** It was partly to reverse this Jewish working class hostility to Zionism that, on 2 November 1917, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, which promised a “Jewish National Home” in Palestine.

The British government was particularly anxious to weaken Jewish support for the Bolsheviks, who vowed to take Russia, a key British ally, out of the war. When the revolution took place just five days later, Britain enlisted Zionists to undermine the radical Jews it blamed for Bolshevism.

As then-War Secretary Winston Churchill declared in February 1920, “Trotsky[’s] . . . schemes of a world-wide communist state under Jewish domination” would be “directly thwarted and hindered by this new ideal [Zionism]. . . . The struggle which is now beginning between the Zionist and Bolshevik Jews is little less than a struggle for the soul of the Jewish people.”⁸

•**Colonial “State-in-Waiting.”** It was in this context that the Histadrut was founded in 1920. Advertising itself as a trade union, but actually a Jewish “state-in-waiting,” it stood in for a weak Jewish bourgeoisie⁹ by “controlling the mainstream of Zionist colonization efforts, economic production and marketing, labor employment and defense (the Haganah).”¹⁰ In 1930, the Histadrut founded the Mapai, which later became the Israeli Labor Party.

As a result, “support for the Histadrut represented more than assisting a fellow labor movement in another country. It explicitly translated into open support for the colonizing efforts of Jewish laborers in Palestine.”¹¹ Indeed, “the central thrust of Zionist discourse and practice, especially of the increasingly influential Labor Zionist movement, was to deny the existence of a distinct Palestinian Arab people with a legitimate claim to the country.”¹²

¹ Lenni Brenner, “The Forward Is Backward: New York’s Unclassifiable Jewish Weekly,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, June/July 1997, pgs. 79-80, <http://www.wrmea.com/backissues/0697/9706079.htm>; See also, Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948* (Hanover and London: Brandeis, 2003) (“Jewish labor, the powerful Jewish unions . . . were committed to the universalist ideal of socialism and scorned the [Zionist] movement,” p. 5); Donald Neff, “Fallen Pillars: U.S. Policy towards Palestine and Israel since 1945,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/fallenpillars.htm> (“Opposition to Zionism in America extended to Jewish socialists and workers, who disdained it as a form of bourgeois nationalism.”); “Jews and the Left,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Spring 1975), p. 157 (“Zionism had little support either in the cafes of the Lower East Side where Yiddish intellectual culture reigned or from Jewish workers in the sweatshops where almost totally Jewish unions were being organized.”)

² Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship* (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1997), p. 42.

³ Jason Schulman, “The Life and Death of Socialist Zionism,” *New Politics*, vol. 9, no. 3 (new series), whole no. 35, Summer 2003, <http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol/issue35/schulman35.htm>.

⁴ Lance Selfa (ed.), *The Struggle for Palestine* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2002), p. 10.

⁵ Howard.

⁶ Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 64.

⁷ “Statement in Occasion of the Workers’ Boycott Call,” February 11, 2007, <http://www.labournet.net/world/0702/sanctions1.html>.

⁸ COSATU: Working-class internationalism in the era of deepening global economic crisis,” June 24-26, 2009, <http://links.org.au/node/1149>.

⁹ Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (London: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1983), <http://marxists.kgprog.com/history/etol/document/mideast/agedict/ch01.htm>.

¹⁰ Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (Filiquarian Publishing, 2006), p. 24.

¹¹ Raphael Patai (ed.), *Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. III, p.729, cited in Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, <http://marxists.kgprog.com/history/etol/document/mideast/agedict/ch01.htm>.

¹² Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, <http://marxists.kgprog.com/history/etol/document/mideast/agedict/ch02.htm>.

•**Colonial Color Bar.** Over the next three decades, this premise would consistently subordinate, and ultimately destroy, early efforts by groups of Palestinian and Jewish workers for joint trade unionism based on true equality.¹³

The Histadrut's role was immediately apparent. In 1921, Labor Zionist leader Yitzhak Ben-Tzvi declared that Palestinian Arabs were not oppressed by British colonialism, and actually benefited from Jewish immigration and settlement. Arab nationalism, he claimed, had no popular roots, but was foisted on ignorant Palestinians by reactionary Arab landlords and "outside agitators"—including Jewish communists.¹⁴

Another Histadrut leader was David Ben-Gurion, who during the Nakba of 1947/48 would implement the systematic ethnic cleansing of a majority of Palestine's indigenous population, and who subsequently become Israel's first prime minister.

Ben-Gurion called for the Histadrut to organize Arab workers into separate unions, so that, "the conscious and cultured Jewish worker, whose historic mission is the building of a free community of labor in Eretz Yisra'el" could "educate the Arab worker to live an orderly and cooperative life of labor, discipline, and mutual responsibility."¹⁵

In 1927, Haim Aslosoroff, another leading Labor Zionist, argued that Zionism should emulate South Africa's color bar, which excluded Black workers from skilled, unionized, employment.¹⁶ In 1932, to control the unionization of Arab workers, the Histadrut set up the Palestine Labor League (PLL).¹⁷

•**"Conquest of Land and Labor."** But the primary Labor Zionist focus was the dual "conquest of land" and "conquest of labor" campaigns to evict Arab peasants from the land and to boycott Arab labor and products.¹⁸

Almost immediately, these Histadrut campaigns generated Arab working class resistance. In 1925, railway workers in Haifa established the Palestinian Arab Workers' Society (PAWS). In 1934, Palestinian dockworkers in Jaffa founded the Arab Workers' Society (AWS).¹⁹

In 1936, British facilitation of Zionist settlement and land seizure provoked a six-month Palestinian general strike, one of the longest ever held anywhere. The Histadrut took the opportunity to supply Jewish labor to replace striking Palestinian railway and port workers.²⁰

This, in turn, sparked an armed anti-colonial revolt, to which the British responded with its largest military campaign of the interwar years, complete with aerial and artillery bombardment of Arab villages. When even this was not enough, the British armed the Labor Zionist Haganah and other Jewish militias to terrorize the Arab population. The revolt was crushed in 1939, but only after 20,000 Palestinian casualties and many others jailed or deported.²¹

•**Plans for Ethnic Cleansing.** This tenacious Palestinian resistance convinced Histadrut leaders to launch a more ambitious

campaign to fulfill the goal of making Palestine "a land without a people." As Yosef Weitz, director of Jewish National Fund's Land Department, explained in 1940:

Among ourselves, it must be clear that there is no place in the country for both peoples together. . . . [T]here is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries. Transfer all of them, not one village or tribe should remain.²²

Israeli historian Benny Morris later observed that Ben-Gurion "understood that there could be no Jewish state with a large and hostile Arab minority in its midst."²³

•**Collaboration with the Nazis.** To achieve this demographic balance, Labor Zionists needed to simultaneously increase the supply of Jewish settlers. Toward that end, they negotiated the "Ha'avara" of August 25, 1933,²⁴ a transfer agreement under which the Nazis permitted wealthy Jews to emigrate from Germany, along with their capital, to Palestine. In exchange, Labor Zionists actively sabotaged an international boycott and other anti-Nazi resistance.²⁵

Seeking further Nazi support for the colonization of Palestine, Labor Zionists in October 1937 hosted SS representative Adolf Eichmann, who later organized the Holocaust, at a kibbutz in Palestine; offered to spy for the Nazis; and—even after Kristallnacht in 1938—adamantly sought to prevent German Jewish refugees from finding refuge in countries other than Palestine.²⁶

As late as 1944, Labor Zionist Reszo Kasztner agreed with Eichmann to save prominent Zionists, in exchange for which Zionists concealed from 750,000 Hungarian Jews their imminent deportation to Auschwitz.²⁷

Although largely unknown today, this Zionist-Nazi collaboration was no secret at the time. Ben-Gurion openly explained in 1938:

If I knew that it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them over to England, and only half of them by transporting them to Eretz Yisrael [Palestine], then I would opt for the second alternative. For we must weigh not only the life of these children, but also the history of the People of Israel.²⁸

•**Overseeing the Nakba.** By the 1940s, the Histadrut leadership dominated the international Zionist movement, and was directly responsible for winning both U.S. and Soviet support for partition and recognition of a "Jewish state."²⁹ During the resulting Nakba of 1947-1948, it carried out Plan Dalet, a set of de-

²² Uri Davis, *Apartheid Israel: Possibilities for the Struggle Within* (London: Zed Books, 2004), p. 20.

²³ Ari Shavit, "Survival of the fittest," *Haaretz*, January 8, 2004, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=380986>.

²⁴ Jack Fischel, *The A to Z of the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), p. xvii.

²⁵ Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, <http://marxists.kgprog.com/history/etol/document/mideast/agedict/ch06.htm>.

²⁶ Brenner, <http://www.marxists.de/middleast/brenner/ch08.htm>. The Nazis struck a medal commemorating Nazi-Zionist collaboration in the 1930s. Lenni Brenner, "A Nazi Travels to Palestine and Tells About it in the Assault," May 3, 2007, <http://cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/articles/article0062443.html>.

²⁷ Lenni Brenner, "Book Review: 'Becoming Eichmann' by David Cesarani," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Spring 2007, http://www.aldeilis.net/english/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=2247.

²⁸ Yoav Gelber, "Zionist Policy and the Fate of European Jewry (1939-1942)," *Yad Vashem Studies* 13 (1979), p. 199.

²⁹ Gerd Korman, *New Jewish Politics for an American Labor Leader: Sidney Hillman, 1942-1946* (Cornell University ILR School Year 1994), <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=articles>.

¹³ Most notably, these efforts were amongst railway workers in Haifa in the 1920s and 1930s, and petroleum, postal, telephone and telegraph workers in 1946. Lockman.

¹⁴ Lockman.

¹⁵ Lockman.

¹⁶ Lockman.

¹⁷ Lockman.

¹⁸ Lockman.

¹⁹ Lockman; *Separate and Unequal: The History of Arab Labour in pre-1948 Palestine and Israel*, Sawt el-Amel: The Laborer's Voice, December 2006, <http://laborers-voice.org/files/ArabLabour.pdf>.

²⁰ Lockman.

²¹ Reeva Simon, *The Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 129; John Rose, *Israel: The Hijack State, America's Watchdog in the Middle East* (London: Bookmarks, 1986), <http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/mideast/hijack/index.htm>.

tailed dossiers with which it terrorized and eliminated at least eighty percent of the indigenous Palestinian population.”³⁰

Directed by Ben-Gurion,³¹ this cleansing was largely camouflaged by the Histadrut’s “progressive” reputation and Soviet backing. As Jonathan Cook explains:

In physically expelling the Palestinian population, Ben-Gurion responded to the political opportunities of the day and recalibrated the Labor Zionism of Herzl. In particular, he achieved the goal of displacement desired by Herzl while also largely persuading the world through a campaign of propaganda that the exodus of the refugees was mostly voluntary.³²

•**The Histadrut State.** The Labor Zionist forces who carried out the above events seamlessly took command of the new Israeli state, with Ben-Gurion as its first prime minister. Labor Zionist armies, the Haganah and Palmach, became the new “Israeli Defense Force.”³³

The Histadrut itself was incorporated into the state, in which capacity it has played a key role in continuing—and legitimizing—ethnic cleansing and apartheid against the Palestinians. Although presenting itself to world labor as a trade union, in fact, it dominated through Labor Party governments that ruled Israel from 1948-1977, during which time it also became Israel’s second largest employer.³⁴ Indeed, the largest growth of Israeli settlements has taken place under Labor Party governments.

•**CIA Front.** In the early 1960s, the Histadrut was a conduit for CIA and Mossad operations in Africa.³⁵ It later cooperated with the AFL-CIO’s AIFLD program and the CIA to undermine rural cooperatives in El Salvador.³⁶

•**Partnership with Apartheid South Africa.** The Histadrut had a “near monopoly” over Israeli trade with Apartheid South Africa,³⁷ and eagerly collaborated its Bantustan policies.³⁸ Iskoor, a joint South African-Histadrut company, produced tank armor.³⁹ Companies wholly or partly owned by the Histadrut helped build an electronic wall to obstruct anti-apartheid guerillas.⁴⁰

•**War on Lebanon and Gaza.** Regardless of which party was in office, the Histadrut has supported each and every Israeli war and occupation.

In 2006, for example, Histadrut general secretary Amir Peretz became Labor Party defense minister, and carried out the brutal 2006 war on Lebanon.⁴¹ As part of the Sharon government, he

helped expand West Bank settlements and build the Apartheid Wall—about which the Histadrut has remained silent.⁴²

Ehud Barak, another Labor Party defense minister, conducted the infamous 2008/2009 war on Gaza, which killed at least 1400 people, 400 of them children; he retains that position in the explicitly racist Netanyahu regime.

The Histadrut itself endorsed the war on Gaza, stating that it “recognizes the urgent need for the State of Israel to operate against the command and control centers of the organizational terror network.”⁴³

•**Mistreatment of Palestinian Workers.** For Palestinians, meanwhile, the Histadrut never been a genuine trade union. Rather, as Jonathan Cook observes:

Enforcing this segregated employment structure are official public institutions, state monopolies, and the government itself. The most important is the Histadrut, the trade union federation and, peculiarly, also one of the country’s biggest employers. In the tradition of “Hebrew labor,” it has worked relentlessly to exclude the Palestinian minority from a voice in workers’ issues over many decades.⁴⁴

•**Workers in the 1948 Areas.** After the Nakba, Palestinian workers who managed to remain in the 1948 areas were subject to military rule until 1966;⁴⁵ excluded from supposedly “socialist” Kibbutzes; ineligible (until 1959) for Histadrut membership;⁴⁶ and subject to a lower wage tier engineered by the Histadrut.⁴⁷

In 1976, the Histadrut collaborated with employers to take reprisals against Palestinian workers in Israel who participated in Land Day, when the Labor Zionist government shot and killed six Palestinian strikers.⁴⁸

A 1989 report found that Histadrut-owned companies had the worst record of systematically excluding Palestinian workers.⁴⁹ Today, reports Yonatan Preminger, “[m]igrant workers are legally subject to the collective agreements negotiated by the Histadrut, but law enforcement is minimal, and the state’s representatives almost invariably take the employers’ side in any dispute.”⁵⁰

The Histadrut has endorsed the Wisconsin Plan in Nazareth, launched in August 2005, which transferred the treatment of 17,000 workers and unemployed to profit-making Israeli and foreign companies.⁵¹

Economists recently reported that, since 1970, Israel had defrauded Palestinian workers of \$2 billion in welfare benefits. Most of these deductions were used to fund Israeli colonies in the OPT, while others were paid to the Histadrut—from which the workers were excluded. Despite promises of restitution, the

³⁰ Jonathan Cook, “Zionism’s dead end,” *Electronic Intifada*, 27 June 2008, <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9653.shtml>.

³¹ In July, for example, Ben-Gurion’s subordinates asked him, “‘What is to be done with the population [of Lod and Ramle]?’ B.G. waived his hand in a gesture which said, ‘Drive them out.’” Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 383.

³² Cook.

³³ “Labor Zionism and Socialist Zionism,” http://www.mideastweb.org/labor_zionism.htm.

³⁴ Uri Davis, *Apartheid Israel: Possibilities for the Struggle Within* (Pretoria: Zed Books, 2003), p. 109.

³⁵ Yossi Melman, “Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman’s entourage to Africa,” *Haaretz*, August 6, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1105679.html>.

³⁶ “Israel and El Salvador,”

http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Middle_East/Israel_ElSalvador.html.

³⁷ Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *The Israeli Connection: Whom Israel Arms and Why* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), p. 138.

³⁸ Jane Haapiseva-Hunter, *Israeli Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), p. 77.

³⁹ Haapiseva-Hunter, pp. 61-62.

⁴⁰ Uri Davies, *Israel: Utopia Incorporated* (London: Zed Press, 1973), p. 97, cited in Tony Greenstein, “Histadrut: Israel’s racist ‘trade union,’” *Electronic Intifada*, March 10, 2009, <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10379.shtml>.

⁴¹ Yagil Levy, *Israel’s Materialist Militarism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), p. 214.

⁴² “Labor for Palestine, US Unions and Boycotting Israel. A reply to US labor leaders, from Canada,” *ZNet*, August 28, 2007.

<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=107&ItemID=13648>.

⁴³ “Histadrut Statement on the Situation in Southern Israel and Gaza,” January 13, 2008 [2009], http://www.labourstart.org/israel/Histadrut_on_Gaza.pdf.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Cook, “Israeli Palestinians: The Unwanted Who Stayed,” *The Link*, Volume 41, Issue 4, October-November 2008, <http://www.jkcook.net/Articles/20331.htm#Top>.

⁴⁵ Levy, p. 33.

⁴⁶ Nava EtShalom and Matthew N. Lyons, “Bring on the bulldozers and let’s plant trees”: The Problems of Labour Zionism,” <http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/~lyonsm/bulldozers.html>.

⁴⁷ Wehbe Badarne, “Sawt el-Amel’s Assessment of the Histadrut,” June 2008,

<http://www.palestina-komitee.nl/public/Artikel/65/download1/Sawt-el-Amel-Assessment-of-Histadrut-Jun-2008.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Badarne.

⁴⁹ Ahmad H. Sa’idi, “Incorporation without integration: Palestinian citizens in Israel’s labour market,” *History of the Human Sciences*, August 1995.

⁵⁰ Yonatan Preminger, “The Strategy Behind Israel’s Migrant Labor Policies,” *Counterpunch*, August 20, 2009, <http://counterpunch.org/preminger08202009.html>.

⁵¹ Badarne.

Histadrut has retained more than 80 percent (\$30 million) of these funds.⁵²

Moreover, in 1990, the Histadrut signed off on construction industry demands that Palestinian workers pay an additional two percent tax to train Jewish immigrants, most of them from the former Soviet Union, thereby forcing them to “subsidise the training of workers meant to replace them.” Even worse, some of these funds were diverted to buy portable stoves for Israeli troops who attacked Gaza in 2008/2009.⁵³

•***The 1967 Occupied Palestinian Territories.*** Even worse is the Histadrut’s treatment of Palestinian workers in the OPT. Following the Labor government’s 1967 war, it played a central role in cementing the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza. As Dani Ben Simhon observes:

Instead of acting like a labor union in the workers’ defense, the Histadrut accepted the army’s criteria for distributing work permits. The availability of Palestinians assured profits to its own manufacturing and agricultural concerns, while as a labor union it could pocket Palestinian payments to its pension funds, the health fund, and its administrative apparatus.⁵⁴

In 1968, the Histadrut reaffirmed its role of instilling Labor Zionism throughout the population.⁵⁵ In the 1970s, it collaborated in the widespread repression, interrogation and torture of Palestinian labor activists, and “used its prestige abroad to keep the Palestinian unions from gaining international recognition.”⁵⁶ In June 2001, Histadrut Chair Amir Peretz condemned a special ILO meeting on “The Situation of Workers in the Occupied Arab Territories.”⁵⁷

Today, some 50,000 Palestinian workers receiving low pay for hazardous work in “industrial zones” attached to Israeli colonies in the West Bank must pay dues to the Histadrut, in they cannot be members, and which does not represent them.⁵⁸

It also refuses to pay disability and pension payments due to workers in Gaza.⁵⁹

In all, according to South Africa’s Democracy and Governance Programme Middle East Project of the Human Rights Research Council:

Palestinian trade unions exist but are not recognised by the Israeli government or by the Histadrut (the main Israeli trade union) and cannot effectively represent Palestinians working for Israeli employers and businesses. Although these workers are required to pay dues to the Histadrut, it does not represent their interests and concerns, and Palestinians have no voice in formulating Histadrut policies. Palestinian unions are also prohibited from functioning in Israeli settlements in the OPT where Palestinians work in construction and other sectors.⁶⁰

⁵² Jonathan Cook, “Israeli report claims \$2bn stolen from Palestinians,” *The National*, February 03, 2010, <http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100204/FOREIGN/702039826/1002>.

⁵³ Cook.

⁵⁴ Dani Ben Simhon, “The Unmaking of the Histadrut,” *Challenge* # 88, November-December 2004, <http://www.workersadvicecenter.org/Challenge88-Histadrut.htm>.

⁵⁵ Badarne.

⁵⁶ Ben Simhon.

⁵⁷ “89th International Labor Conference, Special Sitting, ‘The Situation of Workers in the Occupied Arab Territories,’” *Jewish Frontier*, Summer/Fall 2001, pp. 14-19, http://www.ameinu.net/publicationfiles/1_Summer-Fall2001.pdf.

⁵⁸ “Occupation, Colonialism, Apartheid? A re-assessment of Israel’s practices in the occupied Palestinian territories under international law,” Democracy and Governance Programme, Middle East Project, May 2009, <http://www.hsra.ac.za/Document-3202.phtml>.

⁵⁹ Rami Almeghari, “Gaza laborers injured in Israel left to dry,” *Electronic Intifada*, May 5, 2009, <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10507.shtml>.

⁶⁰ Occupation, Colonialism, Apartheid?

•***Sabotaging Trade Union BDS.*** Abroad, notwithstanding this shameful record, the Histadrut has masqueraded as a progressive trade union body to deny the existence of Israeli apartheid and sabotage attempts to end it.

On June 1, 2007, Histadrut Chairman Ofer Eini attacked the University and College Union (UCU) in the UK, for having adopted a Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) resolution. According to Eini, “[d]espite the end of the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, the Palestinians have decided to continue the path of bloodshed and violence.”⁶¹

In November 2007, Irish Confederation of Trade Unions delegates reported that the Histadrut, along with Israeli business and government, had falsely denied “the conditions being endured by Palestinians under armed occupation,” the pervasive “discrimination against Arabs and Palestinians” in the 1948 areas, and the PGFTU’s support for BDS.⁶²

In February 2009, when South African dockers responded to the Gaza massacres by refusing to handle Israeli cargo, the Histadrut disingenuously declared: “It’s unacceptable that trades unions should intervene in a political matter, especially when those Israeli businesses suffering from the boycott employ Palestinian workers too.”⁶³

In June 2009, it secured support of from the German trade union federation DGB for “TULIP,” whose express purpose is to derail growing international trade union support for BDS.⁶⁴ Yet, when the Turkish government subsequently criticized the Gaza war, the Histadrut retaliated with a boycott of Turkey by vacationing Israeli union members.⁶⁵

In August 2009, a Scottish TUC delegation to Palestine reported: “At no time did Histadrut acknowledge that the West Bank is occupied.”⁶⁶ In 2009, as part of their endorsement of BDS, the Scottish⁶⁷ and British⁶⁸ TUCs have specifically vowed to review their relationship with the Histadrut.

In late 2009, the Reut Institute, a leading Zionist think-tank, urged the Histadrut to step up its opposition to growing international trade union support for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel.⁶⁹

International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network-Labor: <http://www.ijns.net/C91>
Labor for Palestine: <http://www.laborforpalestine.net/wp/>

Union labor donated.

⁶¹ Assaf Uni and Haim Bior, “U.K. public services union to consider boycott of Israel,”

Haaretz, June 1, 2006, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/865601.html>.

⁶² “Israel and Palestine ICTU Delegation Visit,” November 2007,

http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/palestine_final.pdf.

⁶³ Lior Baron, Histadrut seeks int’l help over SA ports boycott, *Globes*, February 5, 2009,

<http://www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/docview.asp?did=1000423536&fid=942>.

⁶⁴ Benjamin Weintal, “German trade union head backs Histadrut against anti-Israel boycotts,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 14, 2009,

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1244371087763&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

⁶⁵ Irit Rosenblum, “Israeli Turkish tourism boycott growing: 98% of unions going elsewhere,” *Haaretz*, January 25, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1144672.html>.

⁶⁶ “STUC General Council Delegation to Palestine and Israel 2009.”

⁶⁷ Scottish Palestine Solidarity Committee, “Scottish TUC commits decisively for Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions,” April 22, 2009,

http://www.scottishpsc.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2871:scottish-tuc-commits-decisively-for-boycott-divestment-a-sanctions&catid=523:news&Itemid=200466

⁶⁸ “76 Palestine,” <http://www.congressvoices.org/2009/76-palestine/>.

⁶⁹ Amir Mizroch, “Hubs of delegitimation,” *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 24, 2009,

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1261364499151&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>