

## Jewish Liberation, Zionism & White Nationalism

**Racism and anti-Semitism** both have roots in white supremacy, a system that rests on the false concept of white superiority to exploit the labor of people of color. Anti-Semitism fuels white nationalism because white nationalists have seized on the anti-Semitic trope of Jews holding secret outsized power to argue that Jews are attempting to replace white people with people of color.

**The white supremacist logic** depicts people of color in general (and black folks, in particular) as subhuman. Then, in order to explain the successful impact of black-led justice movements, including the Movement for Black Lives, white supremacists argue that some group must be manipulating black activists behind the scenes. Conveniently, centuries of anti-Semitism tell them who that is - the Jews (viewed as a monolithic group) who are seen as puppet masters attempting to erode white power by using people of color as their pawns.

**This analysis helps make sense** of white nationalists' anti-Semitic obsession with secret Jewish power but doesn't explain why many white nationalists also support the state of Israel. In fact, some white nationalists and anti-Semites, such as Richard Spencer, call themselves "white Zionists" who applaud the state of Israel for being "the most important and perhaps most revolutionary ethno-state" where they turn "for guidance."

Why would Spencer look to Israel as a model for white nationalists? While Zionism was certainly a response to anti-Semitism, it was also modeled after the settler colonialism of Europe, which emerged from the same system of white supremacy as white nationalism. Zionism as a nationalist movement is compatible with white nationalism because it privileges one set of people (in this case, Jews) while excluding another set of people, Palestinians, the indigenous inhabitants of the land, from its state-building project.

White nationalists love the idea of Jews being contained to their own ethno-state, which is also the aim of the Israeli government, because it increases the likelihood that white nationalists can achieve their goal of making their states (in Europe or the USA) purely white and Christian. When Trump tells congresswomen of color to "go back" to their own countries, he is suggesting that the USA is meant only for white people. But when he accuses these same women of anti-Semitism because they are critical of the Israeli state, he links his white nationalism explicitly to Zionism.

Zionism developed in the late 19th century as a response to anti-Semitism in Europe, but it sadly reinforces the logic of anti-Semitism. A nationalist ideology that drove the founding of the Israeli state, Zionism developed as one response to the sharp rise in violent and pervasive anti-Semitism in Europe. Under escalating attacks, European Jews at the time

responded to anti-Semitism in myriad ways, including assimilation, emigration and rejecting nationalism.

Theodor Herzl, the founding father of political Zionism, and his political allies argued that it was the presence of Jews in predominantly non-Jewish societies that caused anti-Semitism. Hence Zionists at the time called for the exodus of Jews from Europe not to combat anti-Semitism itself, but to remove Jews from Christian countries. They appealed to the anti-Semitism of European leaders, making the case that helping to create a Jewish state elsewhere would help them expel Jews from Europe. After the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust came to light, in 1947 there was support for the establishment of a Jewish nation-state in the land of historic Palestine.

**This founding is referred to as the Nakba, or catastrophe in Arabic, because 750,000 Palestinians had their homes and property confiscated as part of a process of ethnic cleansing that continues to this day.** The subsequent Jewish nation state was also a catastrophe for many Jews from across the Middle East and North Africa who were forced to leave their previous homes. After immigration to Israel, they suffered everything from being sprayed with DDT upon arrival to the horrors of having their children taken from them, as well as medical experimentation.

After the war, the explicit colonial era was coming to a close and post-colonial independent states were emerging. Overt colonialism was no longer seen as a viable methodology, which left the Zionist founders of the Israeli state scrambling to represent the Israeli state as the solution to anti-Semitism, instead of as a colonial project. This strategy then allowed them to portray Palestinian resistance not as a struggle against colonialism, but as a struggle that was inherently anti-Semitic. This story continues to this day - the state needs anti-Semitism to justify its existence and accuses anti-colonialists of anti-Semitism.

Disturbingly, one of the most prevalent current anti-Semitic tropes, the Soros myth, was spread by two of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's key American advisers George Birnbaum and Arthur Finkelstein whom Netanyahu introduced to authoritarian Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. In 2013, they began advising him to focus his campaign on George Soros, Hungarian-American investor and philanthropist, as the "shadowy figure" and "puppet master" behind the scenes who controlled the Hungarian economy.

In 2015 Orbán made a speech that Soros wanted to weaken the country and flood it with refugees. By 2017, election posters around the country showed Soros's face and the slogan "Don't let George Soros have the last laugh!" According to BuzzFeed News, the campaign worked: "A huge part of the country turned against Soros. Orbán won in 2014 and 2018, both times with an overwhelming majority." Netanyahu himself has disparaged Soros, and in 2017, when Netanyahu's son Yair posted an anti-Semitic meme showing Soros and reptilians controlling the world, David Duke came to Yair's defense.

Netanyahu has deep ties with Orbán, whose mission is to keep white Christian Europe free from non-European refugees. When the Israeli ambassador in Budapest issued a statement expressing concern over Orbán's campaign against Soros, Netanyahu made him retract the statement. After Poland passed a highly controversial Holocaust law in 2018 making it illegal to accuse Poland of complicity in Nazi war crimes, Netanyahu and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki issued a joint statement downplaying the role of the Polish in the deaths of Jews. It was so historically inaccurate that Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust museum felt compelled to point out its **"grave errors and deceptions."**

Israel also enthusiastically supports Christian Zionists and their anti-Semitic religious doctrine, which dictates Jews must return to Israel as part of a biblical prophecy and prerequisite for the second coming of Christ. When Christ returns, if Jews don't convert, they will end up in hell with the rest of the unsaved people. The group Christians United for Israel (CUFI), led by televangelist Pastor John Hagee, claims to be the largest pro-Israel organization in the USA. Hagee himself infamously preached that Hitler was "a hunter" sent by God to drive the Jews back to Palestine so that the divine prophecy could be implemented. Many Christian Zionists are also white nationalists and some of Trump's most enthusiastic supporters. Netanyahu meets frequently with Hagee, endorses CUFI, and has spoken at numerous CUFI events

In a wildly cynical move due to its negative image worldwide, in 2018, Netanyahu argued that "vicious efforts to demonize the Jewish state and deny the Jewish people the right to self-determination" are a "new form of anti-Semitism." With the urging of Netanyahu, the U.S. State Department and the EU have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition adopted in 2016 that includes such targeting of the state of Israel.

Ironically, this definition of the "new anti-Semitism" reinforces anti-Semitism by conflating the Jewish people with a nation-state. It's inaccurate because the majority of Jews in the world live outside Israel and many Jews disidentify with that nation-state completely. This move to collapse Jews into one nation-state increases the likelihood that all Jews will be held responsible for the oppressive actions of that state.

From its origins, Zionism as a nationalist ideology wasn't and still isn't an attempt to eradicate anti-Semitism or make the lives of all Jewish people better - only those who support and participate in its nation-building project. There is only one place to stand against white supremacy and anti-Semitism: on the side of justice for Palestinians, for Jews, for all of us trying to be free. The fight for justice for Palestinians, it turns out, is also a fight for Jewish liberation - a fight that will liberate Jews from having our identities used to justify the colonialism of the Israeli state.

**Wendy Elisheva Somerson**  
One of the founders of the Seattle chapter of  
Jewish Voice for Peace.

## Man Dies After ICE Deportation ~ to a Country He Never Knew

A 41-year-old Detroit man deported to Iraq in June has died. The man, Jimmy Aldaoud, spent most of his life in the U.S., but was swept up in President Donald Trump's intensified immigration enforcement efforts.

Edward Bajoka, an immigration attorney who described himself as close to Aldaoud's family, wrote on Facebook that the death appeared to be linked to the man's inability to obtain insulin in Baghdad to treat his diabetes. Aldaoud was an Iraqi national, but he was born in Greece and came to the U.S. as a young child, his family friend said. He had never lived in Iraq and did not speak Arabic, according to Bajoka. "Rest In Peace Jimmy," Bajoka wrote. "Your blood is on the hands of ICE and this administration."

The Trump administration has sought to deport more than 1,000 Iraqis with final orders of removal, including Chaldean Catholics in the Detroit metro area, of which Aldaoud was one. Chaldeans are an eastern branch of the Roman Catholic church who trace their roots to ancient Mesopotamia in present-day Iraq, where they are at high risk of being tortured or killed by the the terror group ISIS, the American Civil Liberties Union argued in a related legal case.

"Jimmy Aldaoud ... should have never been sent to Iraq," Rep. Andy Levin (D-Mich.) said in a written statement. "My Republican colleagues and I have repeatedly called on the executive branch to cease deportation of such vulnerable people. Now, someone has died."

Miriam Aukerman, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, which represents the immigrants in a class-action lawsuit, warned that continued deportations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement could put more people at risk.

"Jimmy's death has devastated his family and us," she said in a written statement. "We knew he would not survive if deported. What we don't know is how many more people ICE will send to their deaths."

The battle over the fate of the immigrant group has played out in Michigan, a state that Trump won by a narrow margin in 2016. Many in the Chaldean community supported Trump's candidacy and feel betrayed now.

Martin Manna of the Chaldean Community Foundation said roughly 160,000 Chaldeans live in the state and that at least half are registered voters.

Manna said his organization has pressed the Trump administration to grant Chaldeans "deferred enforced departure," a form of humanitarian relief that would allow the population to remain in the U.S. and work legally on a temporary basis.

The administration extended the status for as many as 3,500 Liberians in March, but generally has moved to draw down enrollment in immigration relief programs.

Levin and Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Mich.) introduced a bipartisan bill in May, H.R. 2537 (116), that would grant two years of deportation relief to Iraqis with final orders of removal. While the measure counts 30 cosponsors, the passage of any immigration legislation in the current partisan environment could be a challenge.

The government of Iraq in 2017 agreed to accept deportees after previously refusing to cooperate with repatriations. Reuters reported at the time that the concession was part of an agreement to remove Iraq from the list of restricted countries in Trump's original travel ban.

Advocates for the immigrants took the fight to federal court, but were hit with a major setback in December when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit ruled the Trump administration could proceed with removals. The decision reversed a lower court's ruling that had blocked the enforcement actions.

In its decision, the 6th Circuit stressed that many of the people subject to deportation had committed crimes.

According to the ACLU and a POLITICO search of court records, Aldaoud had a criminal conviction for disorderly conduct and served 17 months for a home invasion.

Bajoka, the family friend, said Aldaoud suffered from schizophrenia and other mental health issues. "His mental health was the primary reason for his legal issues that led to his deportation."

Aldaoud spoke about his deportation in a video posted to Facebook this week. He appears to be sitting on a sidewalk stoop in Baghdad. "Immigration agents pulled me over and said I'm going to Iraq," he said. "I said, 'I've never been there. I've been in this country my whole life, since pretty much birth.' ... They refused to listen to me."

Aldaoud said in the video that he had been homeless, vomiting because of a lack of access to insulin and unable to speak the language in Iraq. He also said he had been kicked while sleeping in the street.

"I begged them," he said of his conversations with ICE agents.

**"I said, 'Please, I've never seen that country, I've never been there.' However, they forced me."**

**TED HESSON & NAHAL TOOSI**  
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