

Against Every Antisemitism

**An Attempt at a Systematic Presentation of My
Conception of a Modern Antideutsche**



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[Translator's note: »Antideutsche« (lit. »anti-German«) names a current within the German radical left that combines categorical anti-nationalism, an uncompromising critique of antisemitism, and – against the grain of most of the pro-Palestinian left – solidarity with Israel's right to exist. The term is left untranslated throughout, as no English equivalent captures its specific political history.]

(Revised edition – the section »Zionism: Historical Necessity and Its Exhaustion« in Part III has been reworked and sharpened.)

Preface

Contrary to the claims of both authoritarian to openly reactionary representatives of a worldview-Marxism found in K-groups and Palestine-solidarity movements, and of the contemporary right-Antideutsche movement, the critique of antisemitism, categorical anti-nationalism, and communist critique of society do not form a juxtaposition of three separate concerns, but a single movement of the concept – one that falls apart the moment it is split up. Whoever criticizes bourgeois society without grasping the very ideology in which its contradictions have, for a century and a half, repeatedly translated themselves into a face, has not understood this society but merely described its surface. Whoever rejects nationalism but stops short precisely before the nationalism that considers itself enlightened has not criticized nationalism but only its most unpleasant manifestation. And whoever calls themselves left-wing without examining their own milieu for exactly those patterns of thought it indignantly denounces elsewhere has turned critique into a pose.

This movement begins with form, not content: with the question of how a society whose cohesion is essentially abstract, anonymous, and mediated without a subject explains itself when it runs up against its own contradictions. Antisemitism is the oldest, most powerful, and to this day unresolved answer to this question. That is why its critique stands at the beginning of this text – not as one topic among others, but as the precondition for understanding how ideology functions at all, how the nation serves as its vessel, and why it is precisely that left which believes itself most decisively opposed to domination that keeps falling for it, in the shape of anti-imperialism. From this determination of form, what follows will move to the concrete conflicts in which it shows itself – Zionism and its history, the Middle East conflict, October 7th – and from there to the question of what follows from this for organization and practice.

Part I

The Societal Form

Antisemitism and Anti-Semitism: A Necessary Distinction

The term antisemitism arose in the late nineteenth century to lend traditional Jew-hatred a pseudo-scientific, race-theoretical veneer. Despite its linguistic borrowing from »Semitic« — a language family that also includes Arabic and Aramaic — the term from the outset meant exclusively Jew-hatred, never resentment against other speakers of Semitic languages. The coinage is, in this sense, a historical euphemism, not a descriptive term for a language group. In this meaning the term is used to this day in a critique that derives its object not merely historically-empirically but from social theory: antisemitism as a crisis phenomenon of commodity society itself. Capitalist domination is structurally anonymous, abstract, mediated through value, money, the world market. Wherever this abstraction is imagined not as a relation but, personalized, as the machinations of concrete actors, the pattern of thought arises that has historically always ended up with the Jews — because the antisemitic stereotype gives precisely this void a face.

Anti-Semitism, written with a hyphen, by contrast designates a later coinage developed within postcolonial theoretical traditions, one that takes the literal meaning of »Semites« as a language group as its starting point. Out of the analysis of Orientalism, antisemitism is here reformulated as a variant of a broader racism directed against »Semites« — understood as Jews and Arabs together. The term thereby comes into conceptual proximity with, or is even rendered interchangeable with, Islamophobia, and is in places equated with it.

The decisive difference lies in how each derives its object. While the first category is developed out of the analysis of capitalist socialization and its specific crisis dynamics, and can therefore explain why this resentment historically comes to a head again and again with the Jews, the postcolonial variant derives its object from a linguistic-ethnic definition of a people that has nothing to do with this content drawn from social theory. This conflation is not harmless but analytically damaging: whoever equates the two terms dissolves the categorial specificity of antisemitism — precisely its structural and its secondary form — into a generic »racism against the Orient«. What thereby disappears is exactly what a critique of antisemitism must be able to explain: why this resentment does not circulate arbitrarily but reproduces itself structurally whenever a society fails to grasp its own abstraction and instead personalizes it. Whoever conflates the two terms mistakes a crisis-form of bourgeois socialization for an arbitrary variant of

xenophobia — and thereby becomes blind to exactly those mechanisms of reproduction that carry this text.

Antisemitism as a Pattern of Thought of Bourgeois Socialization

Antisemitism is not a collection of prejudices correctable through a bit more enlightenment or tolerance. It is a self-standing ideology of societal interpretation, in which real contradictions, crises, and relations of domination are not grasped as what they are — an expression of societal mediation — but are instead projected onto an imagined Jewish collective. It appears as a rumor about the Jews: an ensemble of attributions, myths, and interpretations of the world that ascribes a hidden power to an imagined group, thereby making one's own powerlessness in the face of a genuinely anonymous, abstract domination bearable.

This domination is essentially faceless. Capitalist socialization does not organize itself through direct relations of domination but through the subjectless compulsion of the value-form: people do not encounter one another directly but mediated through the value of their products, through money, through competition on the world market. Within this mediation the commodity appears as an animate thing, and societal cohesion appears as a property of things — the commodity fetish. Whoever lives within this structure experiences domination as something that is everywhere and nowhere, that no one commands and to which everyone is nonetheless subjected. It is precisely this facelessness that the antisemitic pattern of thought cannot bear — and it answers it by giving it a face.

Historically, this pattern of thought arises, like classical racism, first out of a nationalism and the belief in the *Volksgemeinschaft* [national/ethnic community] that comes with it. The centuries-long economic and social marginalization of European Jewry, enforced through exclusion from land ownership, combined with its real presence in trade and finance — a sector that, owing to its economic abstractness, has always been a target of conspiracy myths. Out of this combination arose the projection of the ungrasped abstract — of the abstract, societally mediated relations of domination themselves — onto an imagined Jewry. In this projection, Jewishness does not appear as a religion but is constructed as an enemy image that can subsequently be projected onto actual believers as much as onto arbitrary other people. There is no »Jewish people« as a substantial, ideal collective, any more than there is an ideal German people; what exists are national populations that, through adaptation to the same relations of domination, display certain similarities — but not a pre-political collective subject, as the antisemitic projection assumes.

This pattern of thought appears in three analytically distinguishable, though historically interwoven, forms. Manifest, folkish antisemitism is directed straight at Jews as a really or imaginarily constructed collective — openly, by naming them, or coded, in ciphers such as »East Coast«, »globalists«, »Rothschild«, which function synonymously in discourse, or Israel-substituting, where »Israel« or »Zionists« take the place of »Jews« without anything about the resentment itself changing. Structural antisemitism does not consist in direct Jew-hatred but in the reproduction of a pattern of thought: the personalization of abstraction. Where talk turns to »predatory« versus »productive« capital, where »the bankers«, »financial elites«, or »locusts« are made responsible for an exploitation that is in fact a structural relation in which people act as character masks and not as evil subjects, this thinking reproduces a form that has historically — independent of the awareness of those who carry it — always ended with the Jews, because the antisemitic stereotype has always given the contours of a face to precisely this void of abstraction. A special variant is the Israel-related double standard: when Israel, unlike any comparable case, is singled out from a standard that is not otherwise applied universally — through unique demonization, exclusive mockery, or selective delegitimization. The criterion is not the critique itself but its selectivity; selectivity alone turns an otherwise possibly non-antisemitic position into a reproduction of the antisemitic pattern of thought. Secondary antisemitism, finally, is directed against Jews not despite Auschwitz but because of it — as resentment against remembrance, against the moral obligation that follows from it, articulated in the reversal of perpetrator and victim, in score-settling, and in demands to draw a final line.

What all three forms share is that they function independently of the subjective awareness of those who carry them. Structural and secondary antisemitism can therefore be found precisely also among people and organizations who consider themselves explicitly anti-fascist and categorically rule out Jew-hatred for themselves. The critique of antisemitism is therefore directed not only against open enmity but equally against those forms of truncated critique of society and capitalism that personalize abstract domination, suggest conspiratorial thinking, or interpret complex relations mythically. It remains a necessary condition of any emancipatory politics — not because antisemitism is the worst conceivable prejudice, but because it supplies the pattern of thought in which societal crises repeatedly discharge themselves whenever critique of abstraction itself is absent.

Imagery, Symbolism, and Projection

Antisemitic patterns of thought are not exhausted by explicit comparisons or programmatic statements. They show themselves equally in seemingly incidental imagery and symbolism, whose premises their originators often fail to make conscious to themselves. Where a Jewish symbol such as the Star of David is used as a decorative intensifier of polemical critique or parody, this reveals more about the awareness of its authors than about those being criticized — who may well deserve criticism: such a symbol can intensify mockery only under the tacit assumption that something suspicious, ridiculous, or offensive already clings to it. Whoever uses a Jewish symbol as an intensifier appeals to, and simultaneously feeds, exactly that pre-conscious resentment which critique should actually be taking as its object.

Something similar holds when Jewish symbols are themselves deployed, in the context of criticism of Israel, as an ostensibly legitimate vehicle for conveying criticism of Israeli policy. This implicitly produces exactly the equation of Jewishness with the Israeli state that ought to be the object of critique. This appropriation of Jewish symbolism as an instrument of critique structurally reproduces the very projection that a consistent critique of antisemitism opposes: it treats »the Jewish« as an addressable, responsible collective instead of naming concrete political actors — governments, armies, institutions. Whoever paints the Star of David on a placard against Israeli government policy is not protesting a government but summoning a collective subject that, outside the antisemitic imagination, does not exist.

The same structure reappears, mirrored, in the symbolic politics that carries this very text: even where a flag or a national symbol is deliberately deployed in order to mirror and criticize exactly this appropriation, the danger remains of being taken for what one displays rather than for what one means to say by displaying it. This danger cannot be resolved by dispensing with symbolic politics — critique would then lack its point of entry into the imagery in which ideology first shows itself at all — but only by laying open its function: escalation, not confession; means, not statement.

Part II

The Political Forms of Ideology

Nation, People, and Authoritarian Normalcy

But why, then, this hatred of »love of the fatherland«? Because the nation is the ideological form in which an abstract, antagonistic capitalist socialization can

appear as a concrete, reconciled community. It promises exactly the immediacy, the belonging, the warmth that a society in which people encounter one another mediated through the value of their labor cannot structurally deliver — and it promises this precisely where this society is least reconciled. German nationalism was never a harmless football party. It has shown most consistently what this form is capable of: from the Kaiserreich through the First World War, national pride culminated, under National Socialism, in a war of extermination and the Shoah. This is not a contingency of German history but the logic of the form itself, viewed at its most consistent example. Whoever takes »pride in the fatherland« for an innocent emotion fails to recognize that this emotion structurally carries within it the susceptibility to personalize the abstract — precisely the gateway for antisemitism. Hence the radical rejection of national identity as a category, not merely as a specifically German vice.

Whoever asks why people whose material interests are about as alien to one another as can be nonetheless open themselves, in strikingly similar ways, to the same nationalist, antisemitic, or campist propaganda cannot get by with a derivation from interest position alone. Two observations resist this derivation. First: the same appellative structure — leader figure, national community, external enemy — functions across class lines, working similarly well in structurally quite different material situations; were susceptibility purely a function of one's respective economic position, it would have to vary more than it does. Second: the affective reaction to particular symbols and ciphers — the mere naming of a name, an abbreviation, an enemy image — regularly turns out disproportionate, far beyond what the propagandistic content itself would rationally warrant. Both demand an explanation that goes beyond mere standpoint logic without replacing it.

This explanation, however, is not to be sought in a complete drive-economy, in a naturalistic-biological id that would be tamed or unleashed. It lies at the level of socialization theory: in early-formed, relatively stable character structures that arise out of experiences of authority, punishment, and attachment — out of an upbringing toward submission to an authority experienced as external and overpowering, whose recognition becomes the condition for belonging and affection. Such dispositions do not merely furnish a further content for later judgments; they shape their form: a readiness not to bear ambivalence but to resolve it into idealization upward and aggression downward; a readiness to submit to the authority one fears, and to work off the rage resulting from this submission on those who appear weaker or are marked as foreign. Authoritarianism, understood in this sense, is the combination of a wish to submit and aggression directed downward — a structure that is socially produced, the

result of socialization and upbringing, not a natural, evil drive-nature that would need to be tamed. It is precisely this structure that makes people receptive to ideologies offering an authority to which one can submit, and a collective against which the released aggression may be directed: nationalism, which supplies external and internal enemies; antisemitism, which holds ready a target for aggression that appears at once powerful enough to justify one's own submission and weak enough to be attackable; campist anti-imperialism, which exports the same structure by romanticizing state authority in distant countries and subjecting one's own capacity for criticism to it.

This is not, however, meant to replace political-economic explanation with psychology: wherever tendencies toward the concentration of capital, fear of *déclassement*, or the function of organized propaganda can be explained purely from interest position and the structure of accumulation, this additional level is not needed; it comes into play only where pure standpoint logic leaves an explanatory gap that crosses class lines and shows itself in the disproportion of affective reaction.

Part of this authoritarian normalcy is the break with the German myth of victimhood. German memory culture has developed a remarkable ability to turn perpetrators into victims — secondary antisemitism as resentment precisely because of Auschwitz, as a defense against guilt, not despite it. Dresden 1945 is stylized into a »second Holocaust«, while the Nazi crimes that preceded this bombing campaign and explain it are relativized. Provocations such as »Bomber Harris, do it again« are therefore not cynicism for its own sake but the deliberate breaking of this myth of victimhood: no equating of the bombing war with the Shoah, no tears for perpetrators. The bombing of German cities was a consequence of National Socialist crimes, not their equivalent. Perpetrators remain perpetrators, sixty, even eighty years later, even if one's own grandparents sat under the bombs. Whoever seeks this closing of the books is not seeking it out of grief but out of that resentment which the authoritarian structure holds in readiness the moment it no longer wishes to admit its own submission and instead converts it into an accusation against the supposed beneficiaries of its own guilt.

Anti-Imperialism as Ideology

Classical anti-imperialism follows the schema: the enemy of my enemy is my friend. This is a personalizing, agent-theoretical misconstruction of domination that is in truth subjectless and structural — the same misconstruction already underlying the antisemitic pattern of thought, here transposed onto the international stage: in place of a diffuse Jewish collective steps the West,

imperialism, NATO, as the agent behind all evil. Precisely this pattern has repeatedly led leftists into alliances with dictators whose sole merit consisted in opposing the same external enemy. Whoever wants liberation must not glorify antisemitic or authoritarian regimes. Criticism of the West, of NATO, is legitimate; but it must never tip over into relativizing antisemitism or supporting reactionary movements. Solidarity ends where it justifies the violence of antisemitic regimes or terrorist groups.

Campist, anti-imperialist anti-Zionism constructs Israel as a singular evil, denies Jewish self-determination as a matter of principle, and repeats old antisemitic motifs in new guise — wherever this happens, political critique ends and ideology begins. A double standard becomes apparent here that the loudest critics of Israel rarely notice in themselves: the very same national self-determination which, even according to Lenin, no longer constitutes a progressive force at all in today's hegemonic-capitalist world, is suddenly valued positively again in the Palestinian case, while it is flatly denied in the Israeli case. This double standard rests on a conflation of a relation of support with total identification. Whoever claims that the — certainly criticizable — support for a state or a movement is to be delegitimized by individual crimes it has committed would, to be consistent, have to apply the same logic to every nationally liberatory struggle regarded as legitimate that was itself accompanied by war crimes. Once this conflation is resolved, the supposed asymmetry reveals itself as mere projection — as the same inability to bear ambivalence that already characterizes the authoritarian character structure: one's own camp is idealized, the opposing camp demonized, and the real ambivalence of any political movement disappears in favor of a pure friend-enemy schema.

At the same time, one thing remains unshakeable: rejecting the one prejudice obligates one to reject all prejudices. Any blanket hostility toward Palestinians, Arabs, or Muslims is to be rejected. Critique of antisemitism must never become a justification for racism, chauvinism, or the dehumanization of other populations — whoever replaces one resentment with another has not criticized ideology but merely exchanged its personnel.

Part III

Zionism and Israel

Zionism: Historical Necessity and Its Exhaustion

Zionism is not a timeless national idea but a historically specific answer to a concrete societal constellation, and whoever wants to understand it must

historicize it rather than either sacralizing it or denouncing it as mere colonialism. Two lines of justification carried it — accentuated quite differently from one another, yet compatible. The first is the refuge conception: the notion that Jewish life, after European societies had proven themselves for centuries incapable or unwilling to protect it from pogroms and discrimination, required a self-administered place of refuge — a notion already articulated before the Shoah, for instance as a reaction to the pogroms in Tsarist Russia, and one that received a terrible, subsequent confirmation through the Shoah. The second is the labor-Zionist argument: the Jewish population had, through its historical exclusion from land ownership and productive labor, been pushed into a distorted, top-heavy class structure that lacked the material basis for a socialist transformation of its own society. On this reading, the demand for a territory of one's own was not a generic national right to self-determination but the specific answer to an economic-social anomaly that cannot be copied according to any other anti-colonial pattern. After Auschwitz, something is added that neither line alone can carry: that in the present world of states there is no reliable refuge for Jewish life without a monopoly on the use of force that is likewise organized as a state and Jewish-controlled. This historical necessity must be acknowledged — not as a defense, but as an explication of what actually took place.

And this is exactly where the tension begins that I do not want to smooth over: with the founding of the state of Israel, this figure of justification has exhausted itself — not as a protective function, but as a founding necessity. Both lines were answers to a concrete, historically datable condition: lack of rights, danger of persecution, structural landlessness, the absence of any reliable, self-administered instance that could have protected Jewish life. What was called for was the establishment of the capacity for self-defense — a one-time founding act, not a continuous one that would need to be performed anew again and again. Precisely this act has been accomplished with the establishment of a sovereign, Jewish-controlled monopoly on the use of force; it is not repeatable, nor does it need to be. The protective function itself, by contrast — against a threat that, as the passage on the Israel-related manifestations of antisemitism shows, persists structurally — is not thereby settled: the personalizing logic of antisemitism shifts onto the Jewish state; it does not dissolve into thin air simply because that state exists. What does not follow from the founding, once accomplished, however, is an equally ongoing transfer of its legitimacy onto the present-day politics, government, or form of this state. A project that, by its own claim, aimed at establishing a refuge cannot derive from this one-time establishment a permanent blank check for everything the state thus established has undertaken since. What was necessary was the founding, not every one of its governments. No eternal

privilege of legitimation for its present form follows from historical necessity. Israel is today, in this respect, a state among states — which is not to say it has no real specificities of its own; every state has some, without that exempting it from general critique of the state — and its nationalism, however understandable its genesis remains, is subject to the same critique that applies to every nationalism. A categorical anti-nationalism knows no exception in favor of historically legitimate beginnings.

At the same time, this entails a rejection that is just as important as the concession itself: Israel could not be abolished without replacement, as it were out of nothing, without restoring exactly the vulnerability against which its founding was historically an act of self-defense — so long as nothing changes in the societal conditions that originally compelled that self-defense. This is not a defense of the status quo but the plain consequence of the very finding just made: that the threat is structural, not contingent. The abolition of Israel is therefore deliberately not left hanging as an isolated, advance demand, but is tied to the abolition of antisemitism itself; to single it out prematurely, ahead of the general question of the system, would be exactly the selectivity that this text elsewhere charges against the Israel-related double standard.

None of this, however — contrary to the classic Antideutsche reading — grounds an affirmative partisanship for the state, its policy, or its present form: the persisting protective function no more justifies critique of its concrete exercise than it exempts one from such critique. Whoever reads a profession of faith in the state out of the rejection of an unreplaced abolition confuses the determinate negation of its opponents with the positing of a positive counter-image — exactly the fallacy that Adorno's insistence on criticizing every premature reconciliation opposes. To remain in the negative — to stop at the determinate negation of anti-Zionism rather than turning it into a positive profession of faith in the state — is more uncomfortable than choosing a side and taking its part; but it is precisely this that distinguishes critique from camp logic. Israel is not being affirmed here; its enemies are being contested.

From this follows a distinction that must be held onto unconditionally, against every attempt to level it: criticism of Israeli policy, of settlement policy, of concrete conduct of war is legitimate and demanded by this very theory, because the state follows its own logic of reproduction and is not identical with the interests it is meant to protect. This criticism becomes antisemitic only where it uses a double standard to deny the right to exist as such, or measures Israel by a yardstick applied to no other state. Opposition to antisemitism does not stop at state borders here: where Israeli politicians themselves speak of »the Jews«, where a

government, an army, a state disappears behind an imagined collective subject, the same structure reproduces itself, regardless of who it comes from. Israel is not above criticism. But it would be equally wrong to construct an Israeli special case out of this — nationalist ideology and collective attributions of guilt are not specific to Israel but phenomena found in the most various states. Another clear line, gladly crossed by the anti-imperialist milieu, concerns comparisons of Israeli policy to the Holocaust: such equations demonize Israel while simultaneously trivializing the systematic extermination of the Jews — a clear Holocaust inversion. Since Israel is neither committing nor planning a Holocaust, such comparisons are to be judged antisemitic.

What follows from this exhaustion in real-political terms? Not indifference, but a sober determination of what remains conceivable at all under the existing balance of forces — without losing sight of the question of the system on which every one of these solutions founders anyway, so long as it is not raised. A two-state solution founders on the logic of Israeli sovereignty and on the region's competition among states; a Palestinian state founders additionally on productive capacity that has been practically wiped out by destruction. A Palestinian one-state solution would be dear to the pro-Palestinian movement but remains a postulate without reality so long as the regional hegemon is not overthrown. What is most sustainable is what sounds least likely and yet remains the most conceivable: an Israeli one-state solution under left-wing leadership, binational, with equal rights for all who live there, a right of return for the displaced, and continuing to serve as a refuge. This is not an elaborated programmatic demand but a determination of what remains theoretically conceivable within the existing order, against the background of a fundamentally revolutionary perspective that knows the question of the system is ultimately not resolved regionally but only at the level of society as a whole. Whoever misses an institutional substructure here — citizenship law, security architecture, transitional justice — misses the claim of the passage: it is meant to normatively pull the ground out from under the pro-Palestinian movement and to indicate where a non-nationalist alternative would even have to point, not to supply an elaborated constitutional order. Normative determination and concrete implementation are two different levels; that the proposal remains on the former does not devalue it as a critique of the opposing position, so long as it is not presented as what it never claimed to be: a set of operating instructions. This, too, is presently far from any reality — but it is the most likely among the good endings, and there is, in any case, no more than that on offer here.

October 7, 2023: Pogrom, Not Liberation

They call it resistance. What is meant is a pogrom — the most brutal since the founding of the state of Israel — that, almost before the dead had been counted, was recast into an anti-colonial turn. Hundreds of femicides, abducted hostages, annihilated families: all of this is transposed into a category in which it ceases to be what it was and becomes the symptom of a history that can be rewound arbitrarily far, until the perpetrators become objects of explanation and the victims a footnote. This is the old trick of monocausal explanation: where a violent crime is deduced entirely from its causes, the moment of the act as an act disappears — and with it any possibility of still naming it for what it was.

The choreography is familiar. First, the tactical silence that disguises itself as a pause. Then the appeal to »context«, which in truth is the refusal to recognize the particularity of this crime — on this day, against these people — as something that does not dissolve into the generalities of colonial theory. And finally, once the facade no longer holds, the celebration in plain terms: paraglider symbols on protest signs, joy over dead civilians reinterpreted as »settlers« so as to make them shootable. Those especially eager to be laundered clean in the process are those who label themselves secular and Marxist-Leninist, as if mass rape could be purified by a choice of vocabulary.

The perfidious part is the claim with which all of this appears: as a left-wing, emancipatory position, while it is the exact opposite of what liberation means. Liberation was never identical with mere partisanship for whoever declares themselves oppressed — it is measured by the standard it applies to its own practice. Whoever books mass murder and sexualized violence as self-determination has not radicalized but put resentment in the place of critique: instead of grasping the relations at work, one seeks out a collective subject to which one can hand over one's own powerless rage, and calls that solidarity — the same authoritarian displacement this text has already addressed in connection with nation and character structure, here merely translated into left-wing vocabulary. No »never again« came from this direction. This is not a left. This is ideology that takes itself for its own opposite.

Gaza: The Concept of Genocide and the Moral Accompaniment of the War

Israel's conduct of the war in Gaza is to be criticized; so too the destruction and suffering it causes. Criticism of Israeli policy is legitimate; the reproduction of antisemitic patterns of thought is not. Whoever rejects the category of genocide for this conduct without disputing the actual events thereby »denies« nothing — denial would consist in turning away from acknowledging the events themselves,

not in a differing conceptual classification of what is alleged as a war aim. A requirement of consistency applies here: moral-legal categories such as that of genocide have validity only if they are also applied consistently to other contemporary wars. If such a label is used with great emphasis in the case of Gaza while scarcely being applied to simultaneous interstate crimes elsewhere, this selective application says more about the political function the term serves in the respective debate than about the matter itself. A clear line applies here too regarding comparisons with the Holocaust: such equations demonize Israel while simultaneously trivializing the systematic extermination of the Jews — a classic Holocaust inversion, one directed not against criticism of Israel but against its conflation with something it is not.

But this position alone falls short if it stops at the question of whether the right term has been found. For the genocide debate itself has a function that needs to be seen through, independent of how one decides it in the individual case. It functions as the highest moral tier within a scale of permitted and impermissible atrocities of war — as the »crime of crimes«, relative to which everything else that war brings in destruction, displacement, and death appears comparatively bearable, so long as it does not cross this one threshold. Public debate increasingly works itself out on exactly this question: whether this war still falls within what counts — however cynical this sounds — as permissible destruction, or whether it has already crossed the threshold into the exceptional category. This perspective, however, does not call the purpose of the war into question but only morally accompanies its means; it does not ask why war is being waged at all with this force, striking population and infrastructure indiscriminately, but merely whether the force reaches the correct category under international law to count as especially condemnable.

An emancipatory critique therefore does not exhaust itself in either of the two positions between which public debate mostly moves. It does not exhaust itself in an affirmation of Israeli conduct of war that regards every question of proportionality as settled by reference to the right to exist. But nor does it exhaust itself in the mere moral charge of genocide, which replaces the actual question of the system — why states wage war this way at all, whose interests are thereby served, what purposes a war pursues that would have to be measured not against the threshold of the exceptional category but against its actual aims — with a question of correct labeling. Whoever exhausts themselves in the question of whether the word fits has already given up the critique of the war itself in favor of its moral administration.

Part IV

Consequence

Project, Pose, and Organization

What is happening with this particular conception of the Antideutsche is ideology critique in the form of escalation, not the wearing of a costume. Critique of antisemitism, categorical anti-nationalism, and communist critique of society are joined together — not in order to set them side by side as three separate planks of a program, but because each of the three, without the others, falls back into exactly the truncation against which this text has been written. A critique of antisemitism without anti-nationalism ends in uncritical apologia for the state, in a partisanship for Israel that scrutinizes its policy no more than the nationalism it condemns in one's own state. An anti-nationalism without critique of antisemitism overlooks that Israel-related antisemitism in particular likes to disguise itself as radical critique of the state. And a critique of antisemitism that is sufficient unto itself tips over into mere camp logic: into a department one tends in order to demarcate oneself from another camp without further grounding one's own position, or into a blanket anti-communism that places every materialist critique of society under general suspicion because it confuses it with its truncated, personalizing caricature. Whoever wants to fight antisemitism seriously must grasp it as a societal problem and must not use it as a weapon in political skirmishes — not even within the left.

From this position, a categorical, not gradual, line must be drawn against two formations that have emerged from the same tradition and whose critical substance has each tipped into one of the two possible truncations. One, in the course of its drift to the right, has become socially conservative, Islamophobic, and uncritically statist — critique of antisemitism as a pretext for a politics that no longer has anything to do with ideology critique. The other has inherited the form and traded its critical substance entirely for mere identification with a distant state — symbolic politics without theory, profession of faith instead of concept. Both affirm their respective government unmediated. That is exactly what is to be avoided.

The flag, along with the aesthetic deployed here, is set deliberately, repeatedly — as escalation, not as a profession of faith in the state apparatus or in the current Israeli government. Its function is the counter-reaction to Palestinian nationalism and the reinforcement of the critique of Israel-related antisemitism within one's own left-wing milieu, not the affirmation of what it displays. This anti-nationalism is not directed against the practical defense of concrete interests within existing states but against the state form itself — the same relation familiar from the

struggle over wages: whoever fights for higher wages does not thereby affirm wage labor; whoever defends the immediate security of a threatened collective does not thereby necessarily affirm the state as such. In the course of an anticipated overthrow, the abolition of Israel as a state is therefore aimed at just as self-evidently as that of any other — the critique of the state hits it as the object of an abstract universalism, regardless of which symbol is carried in the process. To mistake the means for the statement would be to affirm a whole, and that would be as untrue as any other false whole.

This exaggeration is calculated: it generates attention, and this attention is filled with theory-building and critique of antisemitism. At the same time it tempts the other side into carelessness, so that it exposes itself — ideology is undone less often by refutation than by self-exposure. This project is legitimate not despite but because of its proximity to caricature: critique that does not nestle up against its supposedly own side but approaches the shape of its object in order to strike it from within remains ideology critique — even there, precisely there, where it risks being mistaken for it.

Against all antisemitism — including where it appears as criticism of Israel, and including where it is articulated in Israel's name. Against the nation-state and the nation as a category, without exception for historically legitimate beginnings. Against regressive anti-imperialism and its camp logic, which declares dictators allies and massacres liberation. Against that authoritarian structure which buys submission to an authority through aggression directed downward and which constantly needs new enemy images so as not to have to recognize itself. And for an emancipatory perspective that proceeds from the suffering of those concretely affected — not from identitarian partisanship, not from the question of which side of the front this suffering occurs on, and not from the question of which label is ultimately assigned to it.