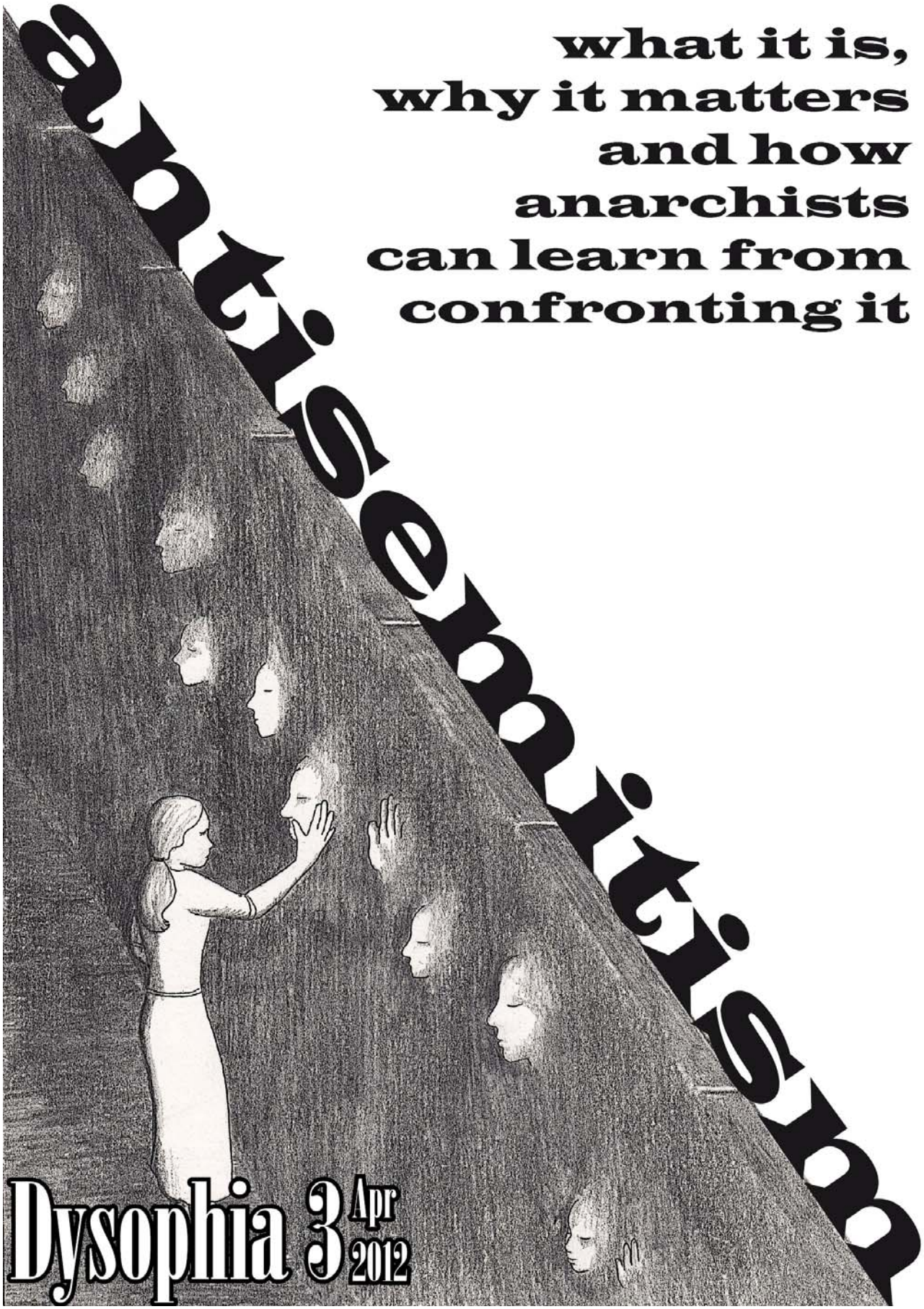
antisemitism

what it is, why it matters and how anarchists can learn from confronting it



Dysophia 3 Apr 2012

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INTRODUCTION

The choice of antisemitism[1] for this issue of Dysophia is motivated by the regular explosion of argumentative debates on various activist email lists. Few topics seem to generate as much heated discussion and my hope is that a deeper, more nuanced exploration of the subject will help inform the various debates, specifically from an anarchist perspective.

Two stand out for me: the viciousness of the discussions around Gilad Atzmon on UK Indymedia and the debate around hosting Boycott, Divestment & Sanction lists on Aktivix.org. These show the practical need to dig deeper.

For me, a key question is why, given the very nature of anarchist politics, are anarchists struggling with this issue in the first place? The straightforward answer is that we have simplified our politics too much[2], that we have assumed that being anarchist is sufficient to be against all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism – an assumption that applies across much of our politics.

This simplification is not only disruptive in fanning arguments, but is dangerous in that it ignores the subtler ways that liberal politics infect anarchism. If something is not actively challenged by a thought-out anarchist critique, then that vacuum is filled by the hegemonic ideology of the moment; we are drawn back into politics we have supposedly rejected, that of liberal democracy, and so on.

Only by moving away from simplified positions can we build an anarchist movement that takes resisting modern antisemitism seriously. At the same time we can confront other flaws in current anarchist praxis, such as how we use our politics to interact with the wider world, national liberation struggles, our own poorly analysed anti-racist struggles and so on.

Antisemitism has moved on, yet for the most part our thinking and rhetoric remain stuck in the anti-fascist struggles of 50 to 100 years ago. Too often we rely on images and ideas that fail to reflect the current situation. There are new challenges to be faced and subtler manifestations to be acknowledged. The constant flicker of antisemitism around the Occupy movement is a clear example of why we need to ensure that our own politics reflect the circumstances of the present.

The following is a selection of articles that throw light on this; the first stage is to acknowledge what antisemitism is and that it is around us now, and not just on the extreme right. This is followed by some existing anarchist perspectives on the Israeli-Palestine Conflict, the dominant narrative of the moment, which is unleashing much anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic racism and forms the background to much of the discourse in the west.

I then attempt to bring these threads together using an anarchist approach that incorporates anti-racism theory and a critique of liberal politics within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. This is followed by some examples of some positions of solidarity with Palestinians which make a concerted effort to avoid the pitfalls of antisemitism.

To complement this is Mina Grauer's exploration of Jewish nationalism within 19th Century anarchist circles and a pre-WWII letter of Emma Goldman, also addressing the issue of Zionism.

If you want to read more, there are a number of resources listed at the end. There many articles we wanted to put in, but did not have the space. However, two stand out, the late Steve Cohen's book *Funny, you don't look Anti-Semitic*, and the pamphlet *We are all Anarchists against the Wall!*

Thanks to Uri Gordon for his advice and encouragement, and to all the authors for their permission to use their work. *Cover image: Carrie Mackinnon.*

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1 We use antisemitism rather than anti-Semitism, to reflect that this is not about being against Semites, a contested issue in itself, but refer to the historical racism directed against Jews which is often done using abstract concepts.

2 See, for example, *Make a foreshortened critique of capitalism history,* TOP Berlin, Shift Magazine, Issue 1;and the *Reply* by The Wine and Cheese Appreciation Society of Greater London, Issue 4: http://shiftmag.co.uk/?p=73 & http://shiftmag.co.uk/?p=135

FEAR AND LOATHING

Lucy Michaels

It has only been in recent months that I've found the courage to speak to some of my Jewish and non-Jewish friends within the Palestine solidarity community, and the broader anti-globalization/anti-war movement, about the difficulties I have experienced as a Jew within that movement. And to name that experience: anti-Jewish racism, or Judeophobia.

The first time I joined the struggle for Palestinian rights was at a rally in Trafalgar Square in 2002. Here was a place that I could be anonymous yet stand up in solidarity for what I believed in. I watched in horror, however, as the reactions unfolded to an Israeli-Jewish peace activist who took the platform. 'The occupation is terror!' she said. 'It breeds despair in the hearts of young Palestinian boys and girls. But the suicide bombings are not helping the Palestinian struggle. Whoever is sending these kids – Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or Tanzim – plays into the hands of Sharon.'

At this, a group of young Muslim fundamentalists, some of them with empty toilet rolls strapped around their stomachs like dynamite, surged forward throwing bottles at the podium and chanting, 'Scud, Scud, Israel! Gas, Gas, Tel Aviv!' and in Arabic – 'Death to Jews'. I was even more horrified to see that woman struggle on with her speech, unsupported. No-one sitting on the platform raised a finger to challenge such blatant racism. When she stepped down, the Chair took the microphone from her, commenting: 'Well not all of us agree with the last speaker…'

The overwhelming feeling that I got from the mainstream British Left that day was not so much solidarity with the Palestinians as virulent hostility towards Israel, and by extension towards anyone who didn't express shame to be Jewish or utterly reject a Jewish state.

The notion of racism against the Jewish people has been so exclusively linked to the Shoah (Holocaust) that its more subtle and everyday manifestations often pass people by. Of course Jews are not being carted off to the gas chambers, and thankfully in Britain actual racist attacks on people and buildings are rare. However, there are instances, especially around the Israel/Palestine issue, where attitudes and expressions of Judeophobia often surface. Criticism of Israel's policies is not Judeophobic. The way in which it is conducted, however, sometimes is. Judeophobia is present in careless and inflammatory language; in 'black and white' attitudes that polarize the debate; in gross insensitivities to Jewish concerns and collective memory; in the level of hatred expressed towards Jews and Israelis; and, on top of it all, in a blanket denial that the problem of anti-Jewish racism exists.

Holocaust fatigue

Perhaps predictably, a lot of the tensions revolve around the Holocaust, and the failure to realize how deep and unresolved a pain it is for my community. My grandfather tells vivid stories of how, as a young Jewish British sailor transporting Holocaust survivors from Odessa to Marseilles, he gave his coat to the starving and penniless Otto Frank, Auschwitz survivor and father of Anne Frank. Her diary was my companion in my own adolescence. This bright young woman, so enchanted by and prescient about the world around her, died horribly of typhus in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp aged 15 because she was Jewish. I grew up conscious of the possibility that if I had been born 40 years earlier in Europe, that would have been me. Of course I get emotional when I feel disrespect around this very real pain.

In certain circles on the Left, talking about the Holocaust elicits nothing but groans and sighs – it's

called ‘Holocaust fatigue’. There are various stock responses which seem to dismiss the whole experience out of hand – ‘Yes it was terrible but it was used by Zionist leaders as an excuse for the foundation of the illegitimate Jewish state of Israel on land stolen from the Palestinians.’

Yet within those same circles, very deliberate comparisons are made between the current situation in Palestine and the Holocaust: a banner equating a Star of David with a swastika and cartoons of Israeli soldiers in SS uniforms. I have been to Palestine several times over the last couple of years and seen the appalling situation with my own eyes. It is a massive over-simplification to say that the Israelis are repeating history and have ‘become the Nazis’, yet some Palestine solidarity activists constantly make that comparison. It is as though Jews must be collectively punished for the behaviour of the Israeli state by the use of inflammatory symbols and language, and a widespread denial of our experience of persecution. It taps into a profound trauma that immediately and inevitably puts me on the defensive – which is ironic because I don't support Israel's policies towards the Palestinians.

Shades of Zion

Five million Jews live in Israel today; many have a deep emotional connection to the place they were born in and call home. This connection to the ‘land of Israel’ has been a profound part of our consciousness throughout history. A connection that I too have felt through my upbringing as a Reform Jew. I remember, as a 16 year old, feeling the weight of what it means to be Jewish, and my responsibility for the continuity of the Jewish people, when for the first time I put my palm on the cool stones of the Western Wall, all that remains of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

Does this mean I’m a Zionist? Many Jews who disagree with Sharon’s policies are Zionists. They disagree with the occupation and believe in a workable and just two-state solution. The term ‘Zionist’ has become so confused and contested on the Left, that it’s sometimes hard to know what others mean when they use it. For me Zionism has always meant Jewish nationalism – the belief that the only way in which Jews can ensure their survival in a hostile world, is through a Jewish homeland, essentially a Jewish state. In this sense, I am not a Zionist. While I feel a historical and emotional connection to the land where the Israeli state exists, I want to see a world in which Jews and all peoples can live securely anywhere and be celebrated for their culture without recourse to states. In a world full of states, however, Jews surely have as much right as any- one else to self-determination.

That’s why I find it extraordinary that for many on the Left the term ‘Zionism’ drips from their lips like venom while they embrace the Palestinian flag. It seems that Zionism has become synonymous with arch-imperialism. If you are a Zionist (and ‘all Jews are Zionists’), it is implied that you are clearly a supporter of Bush and Blair and have some global imperialist agenda to control the world on behalf of the Jews. Not only is this untrue, but it implies that Zionists are worse than any other nationalist. Surely, if you believe that nationalism is problematic because it must be inherently racist, then we should be challenging all forms of nationalism and all colonial projects, not just singling out Zionism for special attention.

Fear and Loathing in the Left

British Jews don’t look like a typical oppressed minority, so it is easy to miss the genuine fear that we feel about our safety and security as Jews in this country. I grew up with rotas of parents standing guard whenever our synagogue was in use and today many Jewish institutions are guarded by police, barbed wire, CCTV and intercoms. I know also that I am not the only Jew to have walked through the predominantly Jewish London neighbourhood of Golders Green and suddenly felt that flash of fear – ‘We are so vulnerable here to a hate attack.’ I know that the racism experienced by asylum seekers and Muslims in this country is much more acute. But does this mean that my feelings and experiences of racism should be belittled or ignored?

Yet for some groups on the Left, any talk of antisemitism is automatically dismissed as a convenient and manipulative strategy to deflect criticism away from Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza. Other times, when Jews claim they have experienced antisemitism, there follows the predictable semantic debate about the term 'anti-Semitism' excluding Arabs (which is why I prefer to talk about 'Judeophobia' to begin with), or a lecture about how the Jews are not the only victims of war and oppression. The only time I challenged someone directly for an anti-Jewish comment, she looked at me incredulously and said: 'What are you talking about? You're the racist here!'

Being stuck in the middle of this complex debate is not an easy place to be, yet you begin to see that both 'sides', the pro-Occupation Jews and the 'anti-Zionists' operate in exactly the same way: not listening to each other; using emotive language; belittling each other's pain; dehumanizing each other; learning stock responses; being highly selective in the use of facts; and making huge generalizations about 'the Jews' or 'the Palestinians'. I hear that at one point in Belfast, Catholic neighbourhoods sported Palestinian flags, and Protestant ones hung up Israeli flags. Some people use the imagery of a conflict that they know so little about in order to polarize their own. Somewhere in there you forget you are talking about real people and that calling into question a people's religion, history or identity is bound to cause deep pain, liable to result in a closing off and defensiveness rather than an openness to your ideas.

As Jews we have been left with deep patterns of behaviour as a result of centuries of oppression including its most recent terrible manifestation in the Shoah. These patterns include fear, defensiveness, anger and a determination not to be victims again. If we feel attacked for having these patterns, we will just retreat into them. If the Left fails to take Judeophobia seriously then the opportunity for countless potential allies in the fight for justice for the Palestinian people will be lost. What's more, it will push us into the arms of false friends such as the Christian Zionists.

On the other hand, it's surprising how far a small act of solidarity can go. I felt immense trust and relief on the 15 February 2003 anti-war march, when a non-Jew took down a Judeophobic banner. Suddenly fighting anti-Jewish racism wasn't just my struggle any more.

There is so much more to being Jewish than the Israel/Palestine conflict. When I hear people celebrating Jewish culture, my heart sings. For me, and for many other Jews, campaigning for a just peace in the Middle East has re-awakened our Jewishness and our pride in our religion and the diversity of the Jewish identity: our music, food, art, literature, symbols and language. I look forward to the time when the society I live in also celebrates my Jewishness and doesn't merely consider me a 'good' Jew for challenging the Occupation.

First published in *The New Internationalist*, Issue 373, October 2004.

How to strengthen the Palestinian solidarity movement by making friends with Jews

Guy Izhak Austrian & Ella Goldman

"O Havruta O Mituta"
"Give Me Friendship Or Give Me Death" (Talmud Taanit, 23a)

Countless Jews in the U.S. hate what the Israeli government and army are doing, support the rights of Palestinians, and want to speak out and take action. They're longing to fight for a cause that they feel calling so closely to their Jewishness, but instead they're watching the Palestine solidarity movement from an uneasy distance. Some who did join have left, like one Jewish Israeli-American woman who dropped out of a radical media collective after a fellow activist, returning from Palestine, looked at her and said, "Israelis are the ugliest people I've ever seen... no offense," while other collective members watched in silence.

We are two Israeli-American Jewish activists in the New York-based organization Jews Against the Occupation. JATO (which we're not speaking for in this article) is a Jewish group that works in support of self-determination for Palestinian people, recognizes the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and calls for an end to U.S. aid to Israel. We are Palestine activists because of our outrage and grief over the crimes against humanity committed in our name.

We're writing this article because it's apparent that the Palestine solidarity movement in the U.S. and Europe often stumbles over Jewish issues. Our political opponents use any insensitivity toward Jews to discredit our movement and justify the repression of Palestinians. Yet the movement has a historic opportunity--by including a progressive vision for Jewish liberation--to grow tremendously in influence and numbers, to confound its critics, and to help put a stop to the war on Palestinians.

Seeing the links between Jewish and Palestinian liberation is necessary in part because anti-Jewish oppression doesn't only harm Jews. Throughout history and in a consistent, predictable pattern, anti-Jewish prejudice has been used to disrupt people's resistance to oppression. During times of relative stability, ruling elites bribe some Jews with material privileges and public positions of limited power. Most Jews have neither wealth nor political power, but enough of us appear as the visible faces of a larger oppressive system to make it look as though Jews are not oppressed. Some leftists who see oppression only in economic terms also fall for this illusion and don't include Jews on their progressive agendas.

Meanwhile, the elites subtly nurture stereotypes and myths that Jews are in control, hungry for money and power, and so on. When the system is threatened by internal crisis or popular resistance, anti-Jewish prejudice diverts anger and violence away from the root of the problem and onto this group of scapegoats. After surviving an outbreak of persecution, Jews are left vulnerable to cooperating with our own oppression by accepting once again the short-term privileges of an illusory alliance with the ruling class. At the same time, Jews become isolated from the struggles of other oppressed peoples.

Tenants, for example, may hate their Jewish landlord instead of organizing against city and state housing laws and the larger system of private property. A recent example of this dynamic happened at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001. The U.S. didn't want to attend because its entire economic system is based on the racism and imperialism that the conference was confronting. But the U.S. declared that it wouldn't attend because the conference would be critical

of Israel. This manipulation sparked overt displays of Jew-hating in Durban that the media played up to discredit this crucial conference, obscuring the Palestinian cause and the resistance to Western imperialism.

The war on Palestinians shows the same set-up on a global, extreme scale. The imperial powers funded a people traumatized by the holocaust to colonize the Middle East. Israeli Jews receive material benefits and a false sense of safety while the primary drive is the interests of U.S. arms and oil companies. Israel is just one small arm of U.S. worldwide imperialism, and U.S. “aid” to Israel is really just a tiny part of U.S. military spending.

Meanwhile, the primary blame is shifted onto Israel by manipulating common anti-Jewish ideas. Bigots spread the myths that Jews control the U.S. budget and government and are draining resources from Americans' domestic needs. The U.S. government and corporate media foster racism against Arabs and other people of color, while giving loud attention to Israel and to denouncing anti-Jewish prejudice. This imbalance makes us highly visible while infuriating other oppressed groups and isolating our oppression from theirs.

In the absence of a progressive, loud, and consistent voice against their oppression, many Jews make the mistake of fighting for their liberation without allies and without addressing other oppressions. On the other hand, Jews in progressive movements often feel pressured to assimilate, to not "take up space" when other struggles appear so much more pressing. In reality, movements do have room to struggle against all oppressions together. Jews need progressive allies to fight with us for our liberation. And when we fight in solidarity with other groups, we need our allies to encourage us to wear our Jewish identities proudly.

Tips from Jews to Youse:

* Anti-Jewish prejudice is everywhere. There is no need to pretend that the Palestine solidarity movement is untouched by it. Because a part of this oppression is the idea that it doesn't exist, denying accusations only fuels them. It's more effective to receive such accusations respectfully and consider them, even if they come from the right. It's never reassuring to Jews to hear you say, "I'm not anti-Semitic." Instead, let us know that you're aware of the oppression and that you want to confront it.

* Interrupt anti-Jewish prejudice when you see or hear it happening. Instances in which a gentile voices opposition to attacks on Jews, such as removing a swastika from a demonstration, stay etched in our minds and build trust and solidarity.

* When Jews are struggling to articulate their experiences of an oppression that is kept so eerily invisible, your first response should not sound like a debate. Don't get technical about the term "anti-Semitism" excluding Arabs, lecture us about how the holocaust has been used for political gains, or remind us that we're not the only victims of war and oppression. Instead, value our trust in you and listen. Put thought and caring into appropriate ways to raise these other points.

* Let's face it, Israel/Palestine is and isn't about the holocaust. People tell us that the holocaust is irrelevant to Palestine and then bring a swastika to a demonstration. No one is really done dealing with this trauma, and that makes it hard to understand the present without being overwhelmed by the past. We're not saying don't talk about it, just don't get too clinical and analytical. And don't imply that we should have gotten over it by now.

* Don't treat Jews who support Palestinian liberation like “the good Jews” - it implies that Jewish culture is generally reactionary, and it's like asking us to betray our people. Like all cultures, Jewish cultures are exciting and complex, as well as scarred by irrationalities that stem from oppression. The Palestine solidarity movement would reap enormous benefits from showing respect and care

for Jewish cultures. There is nothing inherently reactionary about Jews finding meaning in our languages, customs, literature, the Jewish star, or other symbols. Also, being an atheist or a critic of organized religion is not a reason to dismiss Judaism; our Jewishness is a big part of why many of us are inspired to fight for justice.

* As activists we may want to criticize the way the state of Israel sets up Jewishness as its legal basis. But it's a mistake to challenge that by denying the reality of Jewish identity. It's true that Jewish identities are made of diverse combinations of cultures, ethnicities, languages, and religious traditions, but all are equally and legitimately Jewish. We have a right to feel a sense of peoplehood, and we want to hear that our allies desire Jewishness in all its forms to flourish in multicultural, democratic, and just societies.

* Keep in mind that the vast majority of Jews who oppose the occupation are Zionists, that is, they believe that a Jewish nation-state is essential for Jewish safety and survival. You may disagree (and we do too), but your criticism of Zionism will be more effective if you show that you understand why it has such an emotional appeal to Jews. For example, the phrase "Zionism=racism" seems true to us. But in its simplicity, it says that the main or only motive for all Jews who came to Palestine/Israel was to exert supremacy over Palestinians, when in fact it was survival. Holocaust survivors, sitting in the Allies' displaced-persons camps in 1945, weren't privy to the diaries and letters of Zionist leaders who described their frankly racist and colonial intentions. When criticizing Zionism, we should always offer a compelling, radical, alternative vision of Jewish liberation, in which Jews would thrive safely as equal citizens, everywhere in the world, at all times.

* It may help to be aware that the word “Israel” was not invented by Theodor Herzl in the 1800's. Israel (meaning, struggle with God) is a word by which Jews described themselves for over 3000 years. So while we criticize nation-states and fight to end the occupation, we must understand that words like “anti-Israel,” or stickers like “apartheid IS-REAL” sound like a personal attack to many Jews. Additionally, and regardless of Zionism, the concept of "the land of Israel" has been a profound part of our consciousness through history. A realistic approach to the future of Palestine would factor in this permanent, though not exclusive, Jewish connection to the land.

* Recognize the Israeli radical left as an invaluable arm of our movement that needs to be included, supported, and consulted. Dismissing Israelis is anti-Jewish bigotry and bad politics.

* Get information about Jewish liberation from Jews who understand it. A Jew who claims that it's not an issue should not be the token Jew on a panel. Help each other get educated as allies for Jewish liberation. Organize discussions, study groups, and cultural events, and write articles like this one. Don't leave Jews alone to do this work.

* Dig up your earliest memories of hearing about Jews. Examine any oppressive ideas and feelings about Jews with other gentiles, not with Jews. Come to us for input, not for an opportunity to vent.

* Understand internalized oppression: the ways that any oppressed people come to believe the lies about themselves and others in their group, and even to act on those stereotypes and reinforce them. Learn to gently question Jews' expressions of anger or contempt for other Jews. Encourage us to be visibly Jewish and to celebrate our culture. And when it comes to telling Jews that we're liked and wanted and totally good-looking, you really can't overdo it.

* Remember that Jews can hear anything you want to say about Israel/Palestine if it's obvious that you care about Jews and our safety. It's not enough to refrain from saying insensitive things. Find ways to communicate that the liberation of Jews is on your agenda.

And a Fews for Jews:

* Remember that there is room for Jewish liberation on progressive agendas. Keeping it off the agenda will trip up all other liberation struggles. So get out of the closet! And remember that being visibly Jewish is different for everyone. There is no such thing as “too Jewish” or “not Jewish enough.” Know that you are a good Jew.

* Don't fall into the trap of isolation by taking on Jewish liberation with Jews only. Reach for allies, and work from the assumption that our gentile comrades want to know and to do the right thing. And always address Jewish liberation through your commitment to the liberation of Palestinians and the struggle to end all oppressions.

Every time we communicate care to Jewish communities, that is activism against our oppression. Taking on the fight for Jewish liberation will transform and advance the Palestinian liberation movement in ways we have hardly begun to imagine.

More books to read

[1] *The Socialism of Fools: Anti-Semitism on the Left*, Michael Lerner.

[2] *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*, Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Barbara Smith.

Thanks to Sara Marcus for help with editing, and thanks to many others who gave input, feedback, and support.

First published as a Clamor Communiqué, as part of Clamor Magazine. Available online as a pamphlet at http://clamormagazine.org/communique/

ANARCHY IN THE HOLY LAND

Uri Gordon

Are Israeli anarchists demonized because their actions are actually coherent and bold?

It's pretty rough being an Israeli anarchist these days. On a good day you are dismissed as irresponsible and naive, ignorant of history and blind to reality while your dedicated, life-risking activities are, at best, an easily-absorbed tantrum in the Nanny State.

And that's on a good day.

The normal treatment is a bit less savory. You are violently despised, branded a fifth column for Iran and al-Qaida, and all the beatings, tear-gassings and shootings you and your comrades endure are gleefully cheered on, alongside the usual calls to put the anarchists up against the wall.

In his May 24 “Power & Politics” column “Anarchy has its place”, Elliot Jager is just the man to give you a bit of both. After a rhapsody of belittling rhetoric designed to brand anarchists as irrelevant, we are back with the usual vitriol and bad faith: well-rehearsed cheap shots, stock phrases and smug moralizing alongside harangues of abuse and dehumanization of the enemy.

Hate, not reason, is behind the accusation that Israelis who take direct action against the Segregation Barrier effectively aid those who would murder Israeli civilians. This is manipulative nonsense. Get real - as if every publicly dismantled roadblock or hole in the segregation barrier isn't closely guarded and soon repaired by contractors.

At most we're costing the state some money and man-hours. The main thing that happens is that everybody gets to see our weekly demonstrations violently repressed. Symbolic actions are only the most visible part of a much wider struggle that includes more sustainable actions, from interfaith dialogue to the accompaniment of olive harvesting to joint ecological projects, as well as demonstrations, publishing and educational work.

The point of all this is not only to dismantle barriers but to get the army out of Palestine, dismantling the entire regime of occupation with its apparatus of death, imprisonment and confiscation. We are not interested in better managing of the conflict - we want to end it by reconciliation among enemies.

AND THAT'S just for starters. Jager invokes Leviathan, Hobbes's metaphor for the State. It is the sovereign to which everyone supposedly cedes his autonomy, so as to avoid a war of all against all and a precarious life that is “nasty, brutish and short.” This is what we are told about human nature.

Now tell me one thing: If you don't trust people to get along without rulers, how can you possibly trust them to rule other people?

Leviathan is not as Jager imagines it. The cadaverous beast is an artificial social machine of domination, with living human beings as operating parts. We all fuel the matrix of hierarchical and coercive institutions, and we can destroy it by constructing a new society from the grassroots even as we confront injustice.

Leviathan speaks from the mouths of those who apologize for having lost faith in their capacity to make their own history. Those who know they can do so reject its easy lies. People with this kind of analysis don't inhabit cafes and art galleries. And so when Israeli activists get out of their comfort zones and put their bodies on the line for the future, suddenly they're a threat.

THERE ARE remarkable parallels here to the civil resistance to the withdrawal from Gaza - a self-organized, grassroots campaign of disobedience and direct action if there ever was one, brutally repressed by the forces of the state in the name of majority rule.

Many anarchists, by the way, opposed the disengagement - as they would any armed unilateralism toward citizens or non-citizens under military occupation.

The truth is that Israeli anarchists are demonized because their actions are coherent and bold. The joint Palestinian-Israeli struggle transgresses the fundamental taboos put in place by Zionist militarism. Alongside the living example of nonviolence and cooperation between the two peoples, the struggle forces Israeli spectators to confront their dark collective traumas.

Israelis who demonstrate hand-in-hand with Palestinians are threatening because they are afraid neither of Arabs nor of the Second Holocaust that they are supposedly destined to perpetrate.

Notice how everything comes out when the anarchists are vilified: the fear of annihilation, the enemy as a calculated murderer, and victims' guilt expatiated through the assertion of self-defense and just war as unexamined axioms. And this is threatening on a deeper level than any hole in the fence – but, then again, anarchists didn't get their reputation as trouble-makers for nothing.

Refuse communion at the edge of the Abyss.

“Disimagine” this nightmare disguised as reality, where victims of victims victimize each other until one day we are all blown away to Kingdom Come. We can still break out of the vicious cycle of drawing the justification for present atrocities from the living memory of the horrors of the past – if only we realize that in doing so we are playing into the hands of all those who mean to rule us.

AS FOR ourselves, in manifesting our solidarity with Palestinians we have no intention of romanticizing their struggle, or of hiding our opposition to anyone who would rule the peoples of this land. Rather it is a question of starting to practice desertion, refusal, sabotage, attack against every violent authority, all coercive power, and every state.

The writer is an Israeli activist and lecturer in environmental studies. His book Anarchy Alive: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory *is published by Pluto Press*.

ISRAELI ANARCHISM:

STATIST DILEMMAS AND THE DYNAMICS OF JOINT STRUGGLE

Uri Gordon

This article examines anarchist activities and positions in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and addresses some under-theorised dilemmas that they raise around joint struggle and active solidarity with national liberation struggles. The first part of the article begins with a critique of the scant anarchist polemical writing on Palestine/Israel, which reveals a pervasive reliance on 'old-school' anarchist formulations and a lack of attention to actual struggles on the ground. At the root of these difficulties, I argue, lies the inadequacy of traditional anarchist critiques of nationalism for addressing what seems to be the overriding dilemma in the present context – the question of statehood for a stateless people. As a response, I examine four reasons why anarchists can, in fact, support the statist independence claims of Palestinians and, by extension, of other peoples under occupation. The second part of the article analyses three threads of intervention present in the activities of anarchists and their allies in Israel/Palestine – linking issues, direct action and grassroots peacemaking. The goal here is to examine how the global agendas of contemporary anarchist politics receive a unique local articulation within the context of a joint struggle, and to expose the insights afforded by the experience of Israeli anarchists to social struggles elsewhere.

[1]The purpose of this article, then, is to examine anarchist responses to the conflict in Palestine/Israel through two lines of inquiry: theoretical and empirical. The first regards anarchist attitudes to national liberation and to solidarity with the non-anarchist agendas of peoples struggling against occupation. Here, the primary issue is the apparent contradiction created by the anarchist commitment to support the ongoing struggles of oppressed constituencies on the latter's own terms – which in the case of Palestinian liberation would inevitably entail support for the creation of a Palestinian state. This would seem to contradict both anarchism's anti-statist positions and its objections to nationalism. In addressing these dilemmas, I begin with a critique of existing anarchist literature on Israel/Palestine, and briefly review the anarchist critique of nationalism and the traditional distinction between the 'nation' and the 'folk'. I go on to argue that there are at least four separate reasons why anarchists can in fact support the Palestinian struggle despite its statist implications.

The second, empirical line of inquiry regards the ongoing anarchist activities in Palestine/Israel. Here, rather than engaging in a merely descriptive exercise, an attempt is made to offer an analytical framework which situates these activities within the context of three threads that characterise the contemporary anarchist movement on a more global scale. These are (a) the linking, in practice and theory, of different campaigning issues and axes of social antagonism through an overarching agenda of struggle against domination and hierarchy; (b) the ethos of direct action and civil disobedience which emphasises unmediated confrontation with social injustices and community self-empowerment; and (c) the construction of alternative modes of social organisation and interaction which have both practical value (in contributing directly to the creation of a different society) and educational/propaganda value (in displaying and exemplifying the validity and practicability of anarchist visions). In our case, this means the extension of the constructive logic of

[1] Editor note: non-relevant paragraph removed.

direct action to efforts at grassroots peacemaking. The discussion, through concrete examples, of each of these threads has two goals. First, to trace the way in which the emergent global framework of contemporary anarchism is reflected and receives unique articulation in the Israeli/Palestinian setting; and second, to point to a number of anarchist issues and dilemmas – e.g. non-paternalism, violence and burn-out – which activity in the region throws into especially sharp relief, and whose discussion contributes to broader anarchist debates.

Unexpected Complications

With the conflict in Palestine/Israel so high on the public agenda, and with significant domestic and international anarchist involvement in Palestine solidarity campaigns, it is surprising that the scant polemical anarchist contributions on the topic remain, at their best, irrelevant to the concrete experiences and dilemmas of movements in the region, and, at their worst, depart from anarchism all together. Thus the American Platformist Wayne Price (2002) descends into very crude terms when proclaiming:

> *In the smoke and blood of Israel/Palestine these days, one point should be clear, that Israel is the oppressor and the Palestinian Arabs are the oppressed. Therefore anarchists, and all decent people, should be on the side of the Palestinians. Criticisms of their leaderships or their methods of fighting are all secondary; so is recognition that the Israeli Jews are also people and also have certain collective rights. The first step, always, is to stand with the oppressed as they fight for their freedom.*

Asking all decent people to see someone else's humanity and collective rights as secondary to anything – whatever this is, this is not anarchism. Where does Price's side-taking leave the distinction between the Israeli government and Israeli citizens, or the expectation of solidarity with Israelis who struggle against the occupation and social injustice? These Israelis are certainly not taking action because they are 'siding with the Palestinians', but more likely out of a sense of injustice, responsibility and solidarity. For the anarchists among them, it is also clearly a struggle taken from the perspective of self-liberation from a militaristic, racist, sexist and otherwise unequal society.

Price's complete indifference to those who consciously intervene against the occupation and in multiple social conflicts within Israeli society rests on vast generalisations about how 'blind nationalism leads each nation see itself and the other as a bloc'. However, people who live inside a conflict can hardly be expected to display such naïve attitudes – the author is only projecting his own, outsider's, black-and-white vision onto the alleged mindsets of the subjects, and the side tagged as black is subject to crass and dehumanising language (see also Hobson, Price & Quest 2001). This has become a widespread phenomenon in the discourse of the European and American Palestine-solidarity movement and the broader Left, representing what anarchist critics have recently pointed to as a typically Leftist form of Judeophobia or anti-Semitism (Austrian and Goldman 2003, Michaels 2004, Shot by both sides 2005).

Meanwhile, Price is so confident about having insight into the just and appropriate resolution that he permits himself to issue elaborate programs and demands, down to the finer details: unilateral Israeli withdrawal to 1967 lines, a Palestinian state and the right of return, ending up in 'some sort of 'secular-democratic' or '"binational" communal federation' with 'some sort of self-managed non-capitalist economy'. Meanwhile 'we must support the resistance of the Palestinian people. They have the right to self-determination, that is, to choose their leaders, their programs, and their methods of struggle, whatever we think'.

A blank cheque, then, to suicide bombings and any present or future Palestinian elite. The statement's imperative tone also begs the question. To whom, precisely, are Price's 'we' supposed to be issuing such elaborate demands? To the Israeli state, backed perhaps by the potent threat of

embassy occupations and boycotts on academics, oranges and software? Or maybe to the international community, or to the American state for that matter? In all cases this would be a 'politics of demand' which extends undue recognition and legitimation to state power through the act of demand itself – an approach far removed from central anarchist strategies.

Myopia towards what is happening on the ground is also a problem for Ryan Chiang McCarthy (2002). Though taking issue with Price's failure to distinguish between peoples and their rulers, McCarthy's call for solidarity with libertarian forces on the ground is unfortunately extended only to struggles which fall within is prejudiced gaze: 'autonomous labour movements of Palestinian and Israeli workers … A workers' movement that bypasses the narrow lines of struggle … and fights for the unmediated demands of workers'. Besides being entirely detached from reality – the prospects for autonomous labour movements are as bleak in Israel/Palestine as they are in the rest of the developed world – such a workerist fetish is also directly harmful. It reproduces the invisibility of the many important struggles in Palestine/Israel that do not revolve around work, and in which most anarchists happen to be participating (see below). Meanwhile, stubborn class reductionism demarcates no less narrow lines of struggle than the ones which it criticises, and does the protagonists violence by forcing their actions into artificial frameworks. Thus Palestinians and Israelis are first and foremost 'workers … manipulated by their rulers to massacre one another'; army refusal is a 'sparkling [act] of class solidarity carried out across national lines' (most refuseniks are middle-class, and self-declared Zionists to boot); while 'the nationalist poison … drives Palestinian proletarian youth to destroy themselves and Israeli fellow workers in suicide bombings'. This may still be anarchism, but it is of a fossilised variety that adheres to the antiquated formulas of class struggle, with little or no attention to the actual articulation of the struggle by those who are engaged in it.

The root of the problem displayed by these writings is that the Palestinian Israeli conflict introduces complexities that are not easily addressed from a traditional anarchist standpoint. The tension between anarchists' anti-imperialist commitments on the one hand, and their traditionally wholesale rebuttal of the state and nationalism on the other, would seem to leave them at an impasse regarding the national liberation struggles of occupied peoples. The lack of fresh thinking on the issue creates a position from which, it would seem, one can only fall back on the one-size-fits-all formulae of class struggle, or otherwise disengage from the debate altogether. In order to understand why this is so, let me now look at anarchist critiques of nationalism.

Anarchism and Nationalism

Prevalent in anarchist literature is an epistemological distinction between the artificial *nationalism* constructed by the state on the one hand, and, on the other, the feeling of belonging to one's *folk* or people – a natural grouping arising from shared ethnic, linguistic and/or cultural characteristics. Michael Bakunin (1871: 324) argued that the fatherland ('patria') represents a 'manner of living and feeling' – that is, a local culture – which is 'always an incontestable result of a long historic development'. As such, the deep love of fatherland among the 'common people … is a natural, real love'. While Bakunin (and many other anarchists) by no means rejected the feeling of common belonging, most typically to a land, it was this feeling's corruption under statist institutions that they rejected *as* nationalism – a primary loyalty to one's *nation-state*. Such nationalism was and is seen as a reactionary ideological device intended to create a false unity of identity and interest between antagonistic elements within a single society, pitting the oppressed working classes of one country against those of another, and averting their attention from the need for struggle against their oppressors along internationalist lines.

Thus for Bakunin 'political patriotism, or love of the State, is not the faithful expression' of the common people's love for the fatherland, but rather an expression 'distorted by means of false abstraction, always for the benefit of an exploiting minority' (ibid.).

The most elaborate development of this theme was made by Gustav Landauer, who saw in the folk an organic entity based on the uniquely shared spirit (*Geist*) – feelings, ideals, values, language, and beliefs – that unifies individuals into a community. For Landauer, the folk spirit is the basis for community; it existed before the state and would return to prominence in a free society. The presence of the state is what prevents this spirit from realising itself as 'an equality of individuals – a feeling and reality – which is brought about in free spirit to unity and union' (Landauer 1907). Landauer also considered it possible to have several identities – he saw himself as a human being, a Jew, a German and a *southern* German. Elsewhere (1973/1910: 263) he wrote,

> *I am happy about every imponderable and ineffable thing that brings about exclusive bonds, unities, and also differentiations within humanity. If I want to transform patriotism then I do not proceed in the slightest against the fine fact of the nation … but against the mixing up of the nation and the state, against the confusion of differentiation and opposition.*

Rudolf Rocker adopted Landauer's distinction in his *Nationalism and Culture*, where a folk is defined as 'the natural result of social union, a mutual association of men brought about by a certain similarity of external conditions of living, a common language, and special characteristics due to climate and geographic environment' (Rocker 1937: 200-1). However, Rocker clarifies that it is only possible to speak of the folk, as an entity, in terms that are location- and time-specific. This is because, over time, 'cultural reconstructions and social stimulation always occur when different peoples and races come into closer union. Every new culture is begun by such a fusion of different folk elements and takes its special shape from this' (346). What Rocker calls the 'nation', on the other hand, is the essentialist idea of a unified community of interest, spirit or race. This he sees as a creation of the state. Thus, like Landauer and Bakunin, it was the primary loyalty to one's nation state that Rocker condemned as 'nationalism'. At the same time, the traditional anarchist position expected that, unencumbered by the state, a space would be open for the self-determination and mutually-fertilising development of local folk cultures.

These attitudes to nationalism, however, had as their primary reference point the European nationalisms associated with existing states. The issue of nationalism in the national liberation struggles of stateless peoples received far less attention. Kropotkin, for example, saw national liberation movements positively, arguing the removal of foreign domination was a precondition to the workers' realising their social consciousness (Grauer 1994). However, what may be a necessary condition is by no means a sufficient one, and it could equally be argued that national liberation efforts can only end up creating new state-sponsored nationalisms.

This tension comes very strongly to the fore in the case of Israel/Palestine. The overwhelming majority of Palestinians want a state of their own alongside Israel. But how can anarchists who support the Palestinian struggle reconcile this with their anti-statist principles? How can they support the creation of yet another state in the name of 'national liberation', which is the explicit or implicit agenda of almost all Palestinians? What is at work here is anarchists' critique that in their national liberation efforts, Palestinians are bowing to the idea that the state is a desirable institution, and lending themselves to nationalist illusions fostered by Palestinian elites, who will only become the source of their future oppression. This is the logic animating McCarthy's stance, as well as that of the British syndicalists of the Solidarity Federation, who state that 'we support the fight of the Palestinian people … [and] stand with those Israelis who protest against the racist government … What we cannot do is support the creation of yet another state in the name of 'national liberation' (Solidarity Federation 2002).

But there are two problems with such an attitude. First, it invites the charge of paternalism, whereby anarchists are pretending to be better than Palestinians at discerning their 'real interests', while jettisoning the need for solidarity to happen on the terms articulated by the oppressed. Second, and more importantly, it leaves anarchists with nothing but empty declarations to the effect that that 'we

stand with and support all those who are being oppressed by those who have the power to do so' (ibid.); or that 'it is not about forcing the Israeli state to respect the rights of Palestinians, nor supporting the formation of a new Palestinian state. Rather it is a question of starting to practice desertion, refusal, sabotage, attack, destruction against every constituted authority, all power, every state' (Friends of Al-Halladj 2002). Again, while such sentiments are certainly in tune with longer-term anarchist aspirations, they also consign anarchists to a position of irrelevance in the present tense.

On the one hand, anarchists could certainly agree that the establishment of a capitalist Palestinian state through negotiations among existing and would-be governments would only mean the 'submission of the Intifada to a comprador Palestinian leadership that will serve Israel', and that neoliberal globalisation, and initiatives for regional trade cooperation such as the Mediterranean free trade zone, are demarcating a capitalist trajectory for the region which will only increase economic hardship and social gaps, giving no solution to the refugee problem (Anarchist Communist Initiative 2005). On the other hand, by disengaging from concrete Palestinian demands for a state, such anarchists are

left with nothing to propose except 'an entirely different way of life and equality for all the inhabitants of the region … a classless anarchist-communist society' (ibid.). This is all well and good, but what happens in the meantime?

Supporting Statehood

While anarchists surely can do something more specific in solidarity with Palestinians than just saying that 'we need a revolution', any such action would appear hopelessly contaminated with a statist agenda. The fact that anarchists nevertheless engage in on-the-ground actions of solidarity with Palestinian communities and groups requires us to grip this particular bull by its horns. Here, I believe there are at least four coherent ways in which anarchists can deal with the dilemma of support for a Palestinian state.

The first and most straightforward response is to acknowledge that there is indeed a contradiction here, but to insist that in a liminal, imperfect situation, solidarity is still worthwhile even if it comes at the price of inconsistency. Endorsement of Palestinian statehood by anarchists can be seen as a pragmatic position based on anti-imperialist commitments or even basic humanitarian concern. It does nobody any good to effectively say to the Palestinians, 'sorry, we'll let you remain non-citizens of a brutal occupation until after we're done abolishing capitalism'. For this reason, one can see some kind of representative statehood for the Palestinians as the only short term solution, however imperfect, to their current oppression. This is attached to a view in which solidarity is 'not about supporting those who share your precise politics. It's about supporting those who struggle against injustice – even if their assumptions, methods, politics, and goals differ from our own' (ISM Canada 2004). With this type of response, anarchists recognise an unresolved tension in their politics, but they express a specific value judgement whereby one's anti-imperialist or humanitarian commitments are seen to 'trump' an otherwise fully uncompromising anti-statism.

A point to be emphasised here is that states are consistently hostile to stateless peoples (and nomads). The Jews in pre-Second World War Europe and the Palestinians are two among many examples of oppressed stateless peoples in the modern era. Note that while many Jews were citizens (often second-class citizens) of European countries at the beginning of the twentieth century, an important precondition for the Holocaust was the deprivation of Jews' citizenships, rendering them stateless.

A second and separate response is to say that there is actually no contradiction at all in anarchists' support for the establishment of a Palestinian state. This is for the simple reason that Palestinians are *already* living under a state – Israel – and that the formation of a new Palestinian state creates

only a quantitative change, not a qualitative one. Anarchists object to the state as a general scheme of social relations – not to this or the other state, but to the principle behind them all. It is a misunderstanding to reduce this objection to quantitative terms; the number of states in the world adds or subtracts nothing from anarchists' assessment of how closely the world corresponds to their ideals. Having one single world state, for example, would be as problematic for anarchists as the present situation (if not more so), although the process of creating it would have abolished some 190 states. So from a purely anti-statist anarchist perspective, for Palestinians to live under a Palestinian state rather than an Israeli state would be, at worst, just as objectionable. In such a situation, the pragmatic considerations mentioned in the first response above are no longer viewed as a trade-off, but as an entirely positive development. If the choice is between an Israeli or a Palestinian state controlling the West Bank and Gaza, while the basic objectionable social relations remain static, then clearly the latter option is purely preferable. A future Palestinian state, despite maintaining the basic scheme of statist and capitalist social relations, and no matter how corrupt or pseudo-democratic, would in any event be less brutal than the Israeli state currently is towards the Palestinian population. Control by a civilian authority, though far worse than anarchy, is still far better than military occupation with its relentless humiliation and control over every aspect of Palestinians' everyday lives.

A third response, informed by Kropotkin's view mentioned above, is to say that anarchists can support a Palestinian state as a strategic choice, a desirable stage in a longer-term struggle. No-one can sincerely expect that the situation in Israel/Palestine will move from the present one to anarchy in one abrupt step. Hence, the establishment of a Palestinian state through a peace treaty with the Israeli state, although far from a 'solution', may turn out to be a positive development on the way to more thoroughgoing social change. The reduction of everyday violence on both sides could do a great deal to open up more political space for economic, feminist and environmental social struggles, and would thus constitute a positive development from a strategic point of view. In the region at present, all liberatory agendas are marginalised by the ongoing conflict. While the fighting continues, it is very difficult to engage with people on other social issues since the conflict silences them out. Thus, the establishment of a Palestinian state would form a bridgehead towards the flowering of other myriad social struggles, in Israel and in whatever enclave-polity emerges under the Palestinian ruling elite. For anarchists, such a process could be a significant step forward in a longer-term strategy for the destruction of the Israeli, Palestinian, and all other states along with capitalism, patriarchy and so on.

A fourth response would be to alter the terms of discussion altogether, by arguing that whether or not anarchists support a Palestinian state is a moot point, and thus leads to a false debate. What exactly are anarchists supposed to do with their 'support'? If the debate is to resolve itself in a meaningful direction, then the ultimate question is whether anarchists can and should *take action* in support of a Palestinian state. But what could such action possibly be, short of declarations, petitions, demonstrations, and other elements of the 'politics of demand' that anarchists seek to transcend? One can hardly establish a state through anarchist direct action, and the politicians who actually get to decide whether or not a Palestinian state is finally established are not exactly asking anarchists their opinion. Seen in this light, debates about whether anarchists should give their short-term 'support' to a Palestinian state sound increasingly ridiculous, since the only merit of such discussion would be to come up with a common platform.

From such a point of view, anarchists may take action in solidarity with Palestinians (as well as Tibetans, West Papuans and Sahrawis for that matter) *without reference* to the question of statehood. The everyday acts of resistance that anarchists join and defend in Palestine and Israel are immediate steps to help preserve people's livelihoods and dignity, which are in no way necessarily connected to a statist project. It is doubtful whether the Palestinians whom anarchists join in removing a roadblock, or in harvesting their olives while threatened by settlers, are doing so while consciously

seeing it as a step towards statehood. The point is that, once viewed from a longer-term strategic perspective, anarchists' actions have worthwhile implications whether or not they are attached to a statist agenda of independence.

With this approach in mind, it would seem that the most fruitful avenue for further inquiry would be to analyse what anarchists and their allies are already doing on the ground. This leads us to the second part of the article. Now the key question becomes: Which aspects of anarchist involvement in the struggles in Palestine/Israel point most clearly towards *relevant* anarchist strategies and approaches?

Linking issues

In looking at the landscape of struggle in Palestine/Israel, one should be aware that the anarchist presence on the ground is scarce and unevenly distributed.[2] On a generous estimation, there are up to three hundred people in Israel who are politically active and who would not mind calling themselves anarchists – most of them Jewish women and men between the ages of 16-35. Among Palestinians there are a few kindred souls and many allies, but no active anarchist movement. To this is added the presence of some anarchists in international solidarity efforts on the ground, primarily though the Palestinian led International Solidarity Movement (ISM).Despite their small numbers, however, anarchists and their immediate allies have had a significant impact.

In analysing the picture of anarchist activities in Israel/Palestine, three interwoven threads of intervention stand out, which point to broader features of global anarchist politics while raising some issues that have received less attention outside the region. The first of these is linking issues.

Perhaps the most obvious strength of contemporary anarchism is its multi-issue platform, a conscious agenda of integrating diverse struggles. In genealogical terms, this platform derives from the rootedness of the contemporary movement in the intersection of ecological, feminist, anti-war and anti-neoliberal movements. In theoretical terms, this intersection is grounded in anarchists' stress on domination and hierarchy as the basis of multiple injustices. By creating networks that integrate the different movements and constituencies in which they are active, anarchists can facilitate recognition and mutual aid among struggles.

This strand is clearly present in the activities of anarchist and other radical movements in Israel/Palestine, where it comes into unique local configurations. As a result of their activity, more profound and aware connections are being made between the occupation, the widening social gaps between rich and poor, the exploitation of foreign and domestic workers, the status of women, racism and ethnic discrimination, homophobia, pollution and consumerism.

One example of linking the struggle against the occupation to a different liberatory agenda is the activity of Kvisa Shchora (Black Laundry) – a direct action group of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and others against the occupation and for social justice. It was created for the Pride Day parade in Tel-Aviv in 2001, a few months after the second Intifada began. Jamming the by-now depoliticised and commercialised celebration, about 250 radical queers in black joined the march under the banner 'No Pride in the Occupation'. Since then, the group has undertaken actions and outreach with a strongly anti-authoritarian orientation, which stresses the connection between different forms of oppression, which 'feeds on the same racism, the same chauvinism, and the same militarism that uphold the oppression and occupation of the Palestinian people … In a military society there is no place for the different and weak; lesbians, Gay men, drag queens, transsexuals, foreign workers, women, Mizrahi Israelis, Arabs, Palestinians, the poor, the disabled and others' (Black Laundry 2001). In recent years the radical queer community in Israel has grown in numbers and has become more strongly networked. Free public queer parties (the Queer'hana), often coinciding with the 'official' Pride Day events, added to public visibility, and connections with queer anarchists worldwide were strengthened through the organising drive towards the ninth

Queeruption – a free, Do-It-Yourself radical queer gathering in summer 2006 (see www.queeruption.org/q2006/). The Israeli radical queer network's multi-issue politics places it in a dual role: on the one hand promoting solidarity with Palestinians, as well as anti-capitalism and antagonistic politics, in the mainstream LGBT community; and on the other hand stressing queer liberation in the movement against the occupation. According to one member, while many activists did not initially understand the significance of queers demonstrating as queers against the occupation, 'after many actions and discussions our visibility is now accepted and welcome. This, I can't really say about our Palestinian partners, so in the territories we usually go back to the closet' (Ayalon 2004). The latter reality has also led the queer anarchists to make contacts and offer solidarity with Palestinian LGBTs, who find even less acceptance in their society than Israeli queers do.

Another interesting relationship to be examined in this context is that between animal liberation groups and anarchist struggles. While cross-participation in the two movements remains relatively small globally, the two movements clearly have shared attributes (a confrontational stance, use of direct action, extreme decentralisation, roots in the punk subculture). More recently, animal liberation groups such as SHAC have begun to target the corporate infrastructure of animal testing. While remaining a tactical choice, this also implies a deeper analysis of the connection between animal exploitation and other forms of domination – a direction explored in writing, with increasing intensity, in recent years (Dominick 1995, Anonymous10 1999, homefries 2004). Recent trends in state repression, including the narrowing of demonstration rights and legislation against economic sabotage, are beginning to generate meaningful solidarity and cooperation between the two movements, and individual activists from the animal rights movement have recently been making deliberate contacts with anarchists, a process which is beginning to create interesting cross-fertilisations.

In Israel, the small size of the radical scene has created a different reality whereby there is actually a very large overlap between the two movements. The most outstanding example is Ma'avak Ehad (One Struggle), an affinity group combining explicit anarchism and an animal liberation agenda, whose members are also very active in anti-occupation struggles. Again this combination of agendas is there with the explicit goal of 'highlighting the connection between all different forms of oppression, and hence also of the various struggles against them' (One Struggle 2002). Ma'avak Ehad's explicit anti-capitalist and ecological agenda also adds a rare radical critique of the relationship between capitalism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the latter is well researched on the economic level (see e.g. Nitzan and Bichler 2002), awareness of these connections is far from widespread in public discourse, going only as far as political rhetoric like 'money for social services, not for the settlements!'. The group's emphasis on animal liberation again creates a critical bridge: calling attention to animal rights within peace and social justice movements, but also encouraging resistance to the occupation in the vegetarian and vegan community. By operating Food Not Bombs stalls, the group creates meaningful connections between poverty, militarism and animal exploitation, which are highly poignant in an Israeli context. In addition, members of this group were some of the founders of Anarchists Against the Wall.

A third example in this thread is New Profile, a feminist organization that challenges Israel's militarised social order. Its activities fall into two categories. First, it does educational work around the connections between militarism in Israeli society and patriarchy, inequalities and social violence, and acts to 'disseminate and realize feminist-democratic principles in Israeli education by changing a system that promotes unquestioning obedience and glorification of military service' (Aviram 2003). Activities in this area include debates in schools that promote critical, non-hierarchical thinking, and workshops on consensus, conflict resolution and democratic process for groups. In its second role, New Profile is the most radical among the four Israeli refusenik groups,

and the one through which anarchists refusing military service predominantly organise. The group campaigns for the right to conscientious objection, and its website has full guides to refusal for both men and women. It operates a network of support 'buddies' for refuseniks before, during and after jail, arranges seminars for youth who are still dwelling on whether or not to refuse or evade service, and campaigns to support and recognise the struggle of women refuseniks. The group's radical feminist/anti-militarist stance, besides being an important message to society, also creates a meaningful bridge between feminists and the refusenik movement, critical in challenging the core narratives to which most refuseniks – predominantly mainstream left-Zionist males – continue to adhere.

Direct Action

A second thread of intervention in Palestine/Israel in which global trends are refracted is civil disobedience and direct action, in particular within the context of the anti-occupation struggles since the beginning of the second Intifada. Such tactics are clearly central to the anarchist political repertoire, with their emphasis on unmediated action to change reality – be it to destroy and prevent, or to create and enable – rather than appealing to an external agent to wield power on one's behalf.

The most prominent site of anarchist involvement in civil disobedience and direct action in Israel/Palestine is the everyday support for Palestinian non-violent resistance. The development of this thread can be quite neatly divided into two periods. The first was from summer 2001 to spring 2003, when the central organ for direct action solidarity activities was the International Solidarity Movement, a Palestinian-led coordination through which European and North-American activists, many of them anti-capitalists, arrived in the occupied territories to accompany non-violent actions

(Sandercock et. al 2004). The ISM became active before the height of the Israeli state's invasions and attacks on Palestinian population centres. Its actions included forming human chains to block soldiers from interfering while Palestinians tore down military roadblocks, held mass demonstrations, or collectively broke curfews to go to school or harvest olives or play soccer. Interestingly, organisers estimate that between a quarter and a third of ISM volunteers have been Jewish. As the violence escalated, the ISM was driven to focus more and more on accompaniment and human-shielding while at the same time drawing world attention to the repression of Palestinians through the 'live' presence of international witnesses. During the spring 2002 invasions, at a time where more proactive involvement would inevitably be suppressed with deadly force, ISM activists stayed in Palestinian homes facing demolition, rode with ambulances, escorted municipal workers to fix infrastructure, and delivered food and medicine to besieged communities. In what was the most widely-broadcast drama of this phase, internationals were holed-up for weeks in the besieged Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem with residents, clergymen and armed militants. For a while, what internationals did was dictated by when, where, and how the Israeli army would attack. As the violence ebbed, however, the emphasis on defensive operations diminished and the ISM turned proactive again, with demonstrations to break curfews and an international day of action in summer 2002.

Now while the ISM and similar solidarity groups are not nominally anarchist, and include a large and divergent array of participants from a wide range of backgrounds, two clear connections to anarchism can nevertheless be made. First, in terms of the identity of participants, international solidarity activities in Palestine have seen a major and sustained presence of anarchists, who had earlier cut their teeth on anti-capitalist mobilisations and local grassroots organising in North America and Europe. Thus, these networks constitute the foremost vehicle for on-the-ground involvement of international anarchists in Palestine. Second, and more substantially, it may be argued that the main source of anarchist affinities with the ISM is that it prominently displays many of the hallmarks of anarchist political culture: the lack of formal membership, comprehensive 'policy' or official leadership groups; a decentralised organising model based on autonomous

affinity groups, spokescouncils and consensus decision-making; and a strategic focus on short-term campaigns and creative tactics that stress direct action and grassroots empowerment. These affinities are evinced by a statement from ISM Canada (ibid.) on the need to move 'from an arrogant "saviour" model of activism, to a real "solidarity" model of activism', whose emphasis on direct action contains many keywords of anarchist political language:

> *Solidarity means more than 'charity' work to ease our conscience. It must also do more than simply witness or document atrocities – though these tasks are also critical to our work. The ISM views solidarity as an imperative to actively engage in resistance to the Occupation, to take sides, to put our bodies on the line, and to use the relative privilege of our passports and, in some cases, colour – first and foremost, in ways that Palestinians actually request, but also in ways which help build trust and expand networks of mutual aid.*

It should be emphasised, however, that these anarchist affinities are not the result of any direct influence on part of the Western anarchist movement. Rather, they are a point of convergence between anarchism and the endemic Palestinian tradition of popular resistance. Palestinians have a long-standing orientation towards civil disobedience and non-violent action, which has continued since the first Intifada – an uprising organised through popular committees and largely in detachment from the PLO leadership, and involving mass demonstrations, general strikes, tax refusal, boycotts of Israeli products, political graffiti and the establishment of underground schools and grassroots mutual aid projects.

Hence, the first point to be made about the particulars of anarchist involvement in direct action in Palestine relates to its strong display of anti-vanguardism. In all of these actions, anarchists and their allies have deliberately participated as followers and supporters rather than as equals. The ethos of the ISM and other solidarity groups stresses taking the lead from Palestinian community members or representatives, based on the principle that decision-making and control of actions should be in proportion to the degree to which one is affected by the potential outcome. As a result, ISMers have been careful to emphasise that 'internationals cannot behave as if they are coming to teach Palestinians anything about "peace" or "non-violence" or "morality" or "democracy", or anything else that many in the West typically (and arrogantly and mistakenly) view as the exclusive realm of Western activism and values' (ibid.). Similarly, Yossi Bar-Tal has argued that 'we're not working in Palestine to educate … We would never hand out leaflets in Arabic explaining what anarchism is and why you should join us, because this is not our way … we're not there to educate, because while they're being occupied by our state we have no reason to come there and preach' (Lakoff 2005). The same logic has been applied to the ideas of disobedience and direct action. In such a setting, any attempt at a defining contribution in terms of direct action – say, by way of implanting tactics garnered from Western models – would strike anarchists as an arrogant intervention. So in this case the anarchist connection happens more in terms of support for existing forms of popular resistance towards which anarchists experience affinity, rather than in terms of anarchists importing their own politics into a new arena.

The spring of 2003 marked a clear period of transition for direct action in Israel/Palestine, with the centre of gravity for solidarity activities shifting from the ISM to Israeli initiatives. The reason for this shift was a profound crisis in the ISM, following a rapid succession of tragic events, which led to a lowering of its profile and created a vacuum that was filled by Anarchists Against the Wall, who began their organising in the same period.

Two factors contributed to the ebb of ISM activities. The first was the killing of two of its volunteers in Gaza. On 16 March, Rachel Corrie was crushed to death under an Israeli armoured bulldozer which she was trying to obstruct during a house demolition in Rafah. On 11 April another international, Tom Hurndall, was shot in the head by an Israeli sniper in the same area and went into coma, dying nine months later. While the killings raised international outcry, increased the ISM's

profile and further highlighted the brutality of the occupation, they also underlined the immense risk accompanying solidarity activities and caused many activists to think twice about going to Palestine. The second factor was a concerted Israeli campaign to associate the ISM with terrorism, and subsequent clampdowns on the organisation. On the night of 27 March, during a period of curfew and military arrests in Jenin, a 23-year-old Palestinian named Shadi Sukiya arrived at the ISM office in Jenin, soaking wet and shivering, and was given a change of clothes, a hot drink and a blanket. Soon afterwards Israeli soldiers came in and arrested Sukiya, who they accused of being a senior member of the Islamic Jihad. The army also claimed that a pistol had been discovered in the office, but later retracted the allegation. On 25 April, a public memorial service for Rachel Corrie organised by the ISM was attended by two young British Muslims, Asif Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif. Five days later, the two carried out a suicide bombing at a restaurant in Tel-Aviv. Despite the fact that in both cases contact had been minimal and ISM volunteers had no idea about the identity of their guests, the Israeli government used these events as an excuse to publicly accuse the organisation of harbouring terrorists and proceeded to repress the organisation. On 9 May the army raided the ISM media office in Beit Sahour, seizing computer equipment, video tapes, CDs and files. Though unconfirmed, it is thought that among the materials seized was a comprehensive list of past and present ISM volunteers, including their addresses and passport numbers. This enabled the Israeli security apparatus to expand its ‘blacklist’ of unwelcome internationals, resulting in an increase of deportations and denials of entry into Israel in subsequent months. Put together, these events placed the ISM in crisis and seriously reduced the flow of internationals into Palestine – although small numbers continue to arrive to this day.

Meanwhile, also in spring 2003, some Israelis who were cooperating on direct action with ISM affinity groups and with other internationals increasingly felt the need to give more visibility to their own resistance as Israelis, by creating an autonomous group working together with Palestinians and internationals. This was the same period in which the construction of the segregation barrier on the western part of the occupied West Bank began in earnest (the barrier is a network of fences with vehicle-barrier trenches (95%) and concrete walls (5%). For details see PENGON 2003, PLO-NAD 2006). After a few actions against the barrier in Israel and Palestine, a small group started to come together and build a trusted reputation as Israeli direct-action activists willing to struggle together with local Palestinians. In March 2003 the village of Mas’ha invited the group to build a protest camp on village land that was being confiscated for the Wall (96% of Mas’ha land was taken). The protest camp became a centre of struggle and information against the planned construction of the barrier in that area and in the whole West Bank. Over the four months of the camp more than a thousand internationals and Israelis came to learn about the situation and join the struggle. During the camp a direct action group calling itself Anarchists Against the Wall was created. After the eviction of the Mas’ha camp in summer 2003 amid ninety arrests, the group continued to participate in many joint actions across the occupied territories. With about one hundred active participants overall, the group has been present at demonstrations and actions on a weekly basis in villages such as Salem, Anin, Biddu, Beit Awwa, Budrus, Dir Balut, Beit Surik and Beit Likia. In some of these actions, the Palestinian villagers and anarchists managed to tear down or cut through parts of the fence, or to break through gates along it. Since 2005, the group has mainly been active in the village of Bil’in, which has become a symbol of the joint struggle.

The appearance of Israelis taking direct action along with Palestinians has, over time, destabilised the unquestioned legitimacy of the barrier and impacted the public sensibilities in Israel to a degree which international activists could never have managed. This is not so much due to the type of actions – which are essentially the same – as to the identity of the participants. such actions taken by Israelis are far more transgressive and provocative in the eyes of the Israeli public, which is not accustomed to seeing its own citizens put their bodies on the line in support of Palestinian rights. Grassroots Palestinian leaders are interested in furthering such cooperation in order to influence public opinion in Israel, and more especially because the presence of Israelis, they hope, will

moderate the reactions of the soldiers. While the majority of the public certainly views Israeli anarchists as misguided, naïve youth at best and as traitors at worst, it is impossible to deny that their direct actions have had some impact on the discourse of wider Israeli society, especially around the barrier. Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in militant action is inherently powerful because it enacts a dramatic, 90-degree flip of perspective: the 'horizontal' imagery of conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is displaced by the 'vertical' one of struggle between people and government.

There are two further points to be made regarding the direct-action activities in Palestine/Israel surveyed above. The first regards the special intersection, in the current context, between direct action and questions of political violence. While recognising the legitimacy of organized, armed insurrection (though not of targeting civilians), the ISM and the Anarchists Against the Wall participate only in non-violent acts resistance by Palestinians. This has the goal of giving visibility to the non-violent aspects of Palestinian struggle, which in fact constitute the bulk of their activity against the occupation, and with which Western audiences can more easily identify. Now this position provides an interesting counterpoint to the debates around violence in European and North American anarchist circles. The endorsement of a 'diversity of tactics' places anarchists in a more comfortable position than strictly non-violent activists regarding the landscape of struggle in Palestine/Israel.

Here, the non-violent aspect of direct action plays an entirely different role, since it takes place against the backdrop of a highly *violent* conflict, in which armed struggle is the norm rather than the exception. By engaging only in non-violent forms of action while not denouncing armed resistance, the ISM and the anarchists have, after their own fashion, also adopted a diversity of tactics position. Where supporters of a more strict, ideological version of nonviolence (e.g. in the Gandhian tradition) might experience a deep conflict with such a position, Western anarchists who have distanced themselves from strict non-violence can more comfortably accept it – although in this case it is they who take on the non-violent option. In Palestine, then, anarchists have found themselves inhabiting the other side of the 'diversity of tactics' equation, counteracting the charge that this formula is merely a euphemism for violence (Lakey 2002) by showing that they too are committed to engage in purely nonviolent actions under some conditions.

The second point to be made in this context regards the uncommon degree of state violence faced by the Israeli anarchists, and the resultant pervasiveness of post-traumatic stress and burn-out among their ranks. While obviously amounting to very little compared to the lethal brutality directed towards the Palestinian population, the frequency of Israeli anarchists' experiences of state repression is certainly considerable in comparison to those of their European and North American counterparts. Exposure to tear-gas and baton blows has become a matter of weekly regularity, compounded by the use of sound grenades, rubber-coated metal bullets and even live ammunition. In one case an Israeli protester was shot in the thigh with a live bullet and almost died of blood loss, while another was shot in the head by a rubber-coated metal bullet and was also in critical condition. In addition, there have been uncounted minor injuries sustained at the hands of soldiers and border police during anti-wall demonstrations. The army has also been using demonstrations in the West Bank as an opportunity to test novel 'less lethal' weapons such as pepperballs (a small transparent red plastic ball containing an extremely irritant powder) and the Tze'aka (Hebrew for 'scream") – a minute-long blast of deafening sound emanating from a vehicle-mounted device that causes nausea and imbalance (Rose 2006).

These experiences have led to widespread post-traumatic stress (PTS), a phenomenon which is only now beginning to be acknowledged and dealt with in anarchist circles internationally. In the wake of repression, numerous activists have experienced emotional symptoms of PTS, including anxiety, guilt, depression, irritability and feelings of alienation and isolation; cognitive symptoms such as disturbing thoughts, flashbacks and intrusive images, nightmares, panic attacks and hyper-vigilance;

and physical effects including fatigue, elevated blood pressure, breathing and visual difficulties, menstrual changes and muscular tension. Unfortunately, until very recently the anarchists did not give any significant attention to these problems and failed to create a space for dealing with them. As a result of the accumulation of untreated stress, the initiative has seen high degrees of burn-out and withdrawal from activity, creating a lack of continuity in the group. Only a handful of the founding participants remain active today, while new and younger activists join in and soon experience the same difficulties.

The failure to address PTS and burn-out can be traced to the internal dynamics of the group: a short-term focus on organising the next demonstration, mirrored by a lack of more stragetical discussion about the group's long-term goals and sustainability as a group; and (perhaps most disturbingly) an uncritical reproduction, among at least some of the activists, of a cultural ethos which emphasised personal sacrifice, resilience and toughness, creating widespread reluctance to surface the psychological effects of regular exposure to repression for fear of being considered 'weak'. The same short-termism has also been responsible for the unchecked development of informal hierarchies in the group, due to differences in experience, personal time and energy, and access to resources and networks. In the past months, however, some promising changes have been taking place.

Two members of the British activist trauma group – a network of activists trained to treat post-traumatic stress who are raising awareness to the issue within the movement – arrived in the country with their Israeli partners and proceeded to set up a local group with the same goals (for details on the British group's work see www.activist-trauma.net). While initially intended as a support network for the upcoming Queeruption events, the initiative was soon received with enthusiasm by a much broader range of activists including participants in Anarchists Against the Wall, who could for the first time name what they had been going through and feel safe to ask for support. Also recently, a discussion of the issues of leadership and power in the group has been initiated in earnest, with increased awareness of the need for re-distributing responsibilities, decentralising communication and sharing resources and skills. These developments may mark a new phase in the activities of the Israeli anarchists, creating a more sustainable movement and a space for the elaboration of longer-term agendas.

Alternatives and Grassroots Peacemaking

This leads us to the third and possibly most important thread of intervention. European and North American anarchists have long been aware of the need to complement destructive/preventative direct action with constructive/enabling forms of the same. However, the context in which the latter are discussed and used has been predominantly social and economic, with examples ranging from squats and social centres through urban food-gardening and self-help groups and on to cooperatives and LETS systems. The unique situation in Israel/Palestine allows us to glimpse the further potentialities of this logic in a setting of military conflict. Here, we can consider a third thread of anarchist intervention, whereby direct action in its constructive mode is enacted through projects of grassroots peacemaking.

Israeli citizens cannot legally enter the West Bank or Gaza. Citizens of the West Bank and Gaza cannot legally enter Israel. The only Israelis that many Palestinians get to see are the army. The only Palestinians that many Israelis get to see are on TV. This reality obviously fosters mutual ignorance, fear and hatred on both sides. Paradoxically, however, for most Jewish Israelis the notion of peace is strongly associated with the notion of separation. Ehud Barak's central slogan in his 1999 election campaign was 'physical separation from the Palestinians – us here, them there'. Thus the refusal to reinforce separation works against the grain of mainstream discourse. It should be appreciated that the Israeli government's name for the barrier, the 'separation' fence or wall, signifies something *positive* for many Israelis. Most of the Israeli 'peace camp' has a problem with the wall, but would

be satisfied if its route were to overlap with the Green Line, say, as a border between two states. However, this idea too needs to be challenged by anarchists and others who support a genuine peace in the region. This is because conditions of physical separation cannot make for the true reconciliation that is required by a more thoroughgoing notion of peace. The latter would go beyond a 'permanent armistice' and signify the full normalisation of relations between Palestinians and Israelis, where coexistence is a relationship free of all fear, suspicion and distance.

Many grassroots peacemaking efforts are oriented in this direction. One example is the organisation Ta'ayush (Arab-Jewish Partnership), created after the beginning of the Second Intifada. That month saw one of the few cases when Palestinians who live in Israel actively resisted and raised their voices in solidarity with those in the occupied territories. Ta'ayush has a large membership of Jews and Palestinian Arabs of Israeli citizenship, including many students, and undertakes many actions in the territories – bringing food to the towns and helping farmers to work their land. A more communal example is Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salaam, a cooperative village of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, situated equidistant between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Founded in 1972, the village now houses about 50 families and operates Israel's first fully bilingual regional school, with 290 Jewish and Arab children. The residents also have been organizing projects to help Palestinians in the West Bank with distribution of food and medical attention. Overall, the network of organisations for Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel already lists over one hundred groups, from lobbying and advocacy groups through educational and artistic projects and on to local citizens' fora in mixed cities and regions.

However, unlike Ta'ayush, many of these initiatives explicitly designate themselves as 'a-political', sidestepping the obligation to confront social inequalities in Palestine/Israel, and see themselves as 'civil society' initiatives which supplement rather than challenge basic political and social structures. Thus a specific anarchist contribution to this thread of intervention is to infuse it with a more clearly antagonistic dimension. What anarchists especially contribute to grassroots peacemaking is to undertake projects within its fold, on their own or in cooperation with others, while maintaining a stance of refusal towards state power. Thus community peacemaking, as a form of politician-bypassing direct action, at least has the potential for generating further joint struggles and a deeper awareness of how collective oppression and trauma are at work on both sides.

In a highly-evocative article, American-Israeli anarchist Bill Templer (2003) points to one version of what this could look like, using many keywords that will be familiar by now:

> *Reinventing politics in Israel and Palestine means laying the groundwork now for a kind of Jewish-Palestinian Zapatismo, a grassroots effort to 'reclaim the commons'. This would mean moving towards direct democracy, a participatory economy and a genuine autonomy for the people; towards Martin Buber's vision of 'an organic commonwealth … that is a community of communities'. We might call it the 'no-state solution'.*

Templer's optimism for such a project rests on the perception of a widespread crisis of faith in 'neoliberal governmentality', making Israel/Palestine 'a microcosm of the pervasive vacuity of our received political imaginaries and the ruling elites that administer them … [but which] offers a unique microlaboratory for experimenting with another kind of polity'. While acknowledging the inevitability of a two-state settlement in the short term, he traces elements which are already turning Palestine/Israel into 'an incubator for creating "dual power" over the middle term, "hollowing out" capitalist structures and top-down bureaucracies'.

Amid the daily horrors of death and humiliation, and set against the backdrop of the defensive and bellicose attitudes of the Israeli public, Templer's speculations may involve more than a bit of wishful thinking. But the relevant point is that the activities of antagonistic groups and communities can 'contaminate' any future peace process with a more thoroughgoing agenda of social transformation. What grounds such an agenda, from an anarchist perspective, is the argument that

the creation of genuine peace requires the creation and fostering of political spaces which facilitate voluntary cooperation and mutual aid between Israelis and Palestinians. Indeed, even if the Israeli government turned around and accepted a route towards peace and normalisation between the two peoples, such peace and normalisation would still only exist to the extent that people practised them; they would not spring into being by executive fiat.

The Mas'ha camp has already registered a powerful example of the potentials of such endeavours. The encounter between Israelis and Palestinians engaged in a joint struggle against the construction of the segregation barrier in the village became a protracted face-to-face encounter, where members of both communities could work together on a daily basis, overcoming the invisible walls of isolation and stereotypes created by the occupation. For both sides, the camp was an intense experience of equality and togetherness, which by extension could create a model for future efforts – as these quotes from a Palestinian and an Israeli participant demonstrate (Shalabi and Medicks 2003):

> *Nazeeh: We wanted to show that the Israeli people are not our enemies; to provide an opportunity for Israelis to cooperate with us as good neighbors and support our struggle... Our camp showed that peace will not be built by walls and separation, but by cooperation and communication between the two peoples living in this land. At Mas'ha Camp we lived together, ate together, and talked together 24 hours a day for four months. Our fear was never from each other, but only from the Israeli soldiers and settlers.*
>
> *Oren: The young Israeli generation realizes that the world has changed. They saw the Berlin wall come down. They know that security behind walls is illusionary. Spending some time together in the camp, has proven to us all that real security lies in the acceptance of one another as equals, in respecting each other's right to live a full, free life … [we struggle] to topple walls and barriers between peoples and nations, creating a world which speaks one language – the language of equal rights and freedom.*

The imagery of resistance to fences, walls and borders already has a very strong currency in anarchist and broader anti-capitalist circles. The fences erected around summits, immigrant detention centres, affluent suburbs and prisons – all have been used as symbols for broader social processes such as border regimes, the enclosure of commons, restrictions on freedom of movement, the 'democratic deficit' in global institutions and the stifling of dissent (Klein 2002). Meanwhile, a series of No Border protest-camps have been taking place in Europe and the US-Mexico Border, under the slogan 'No Human is Illegal' – expressing an explicit rejection not only of immigration controls, but of all border regimes as such (and thus, by way of veiled implication, of the state). In such a discursive environment, the fence in Palestine/Israel was just asking for it. The challenge, however, is to extend this logic to the multiple fences – real and political – that segregate the Israeli and Palestinian communities on the level of everyday life.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to make sense of anarchist positions and actions in the context of Palestine/Israel. I have pointed to the obstacles that the traditional anarchist position against nationalism creates for solidarity with occupied peoples, arguing that support for national liberation in the form of a new state does not in fact contradict central anarchist concerns. While this is an interesting theoretical point, it turns out to be far less than critical in practical terms, since the relevant actions that anarchists undertake on the ground are either indifferent to the question of statehood (in the case of everyday practical solidarity and direct action), or else attempt to transcend it (in the case of grassroots peacemaking that seeks reconciliation and mutual aid alongside and as-against any statist resolution). In examining these concrete activities on the ground, I have pointed both to local expressions of the action repertoires and perspectives of contemporary anarchism as a

global movement, and to unique configurations and dilemmas that accompany anti-authoritarian activism in this particular context.

I would have liked to end this article on an optimistic note, but as it goes to print the situation in Israel/Palestine is worse than it has ever been. The Israeli government continues to make life hell for the residents of Gaza and the West Bank, and has adopted a policy of knee-jerk rejection towards any and every initiative for renewed negotiations. Among the Israeli public, wide support for the recent war in Lebanon and the lack of outcry at the ministerial appointment of Avigdor Lieberman – a barefaced racist advocating ethnic cleansing and centralisation of power – represent a mood of dazed passivity, fed by economic hardship and the constant revival of dark collective traumas. In such an environment, the efforts of anarchists and the wider left easily seem like a drop in the sea. Even when hundreds mobilise to protest the continued pounding of Gaza or the accelerated building of the segregation barrier, their voices largely fall on deaf ears as the seemingly-unstoppable engines of death churn on. As the nightmare unfolds, all that anarchists and their allies can do is hold on to their visions and continue the thankless work of building the infrastructures of joint struggle, never losing their hope for a breakthrough that will finally bring some solace to this orphaned land.

NOTES

1. Throughout this article, the terms ‘Israel/Palestine’ and ‘Palestine/Israel’ are used interchangeably to refer to the land west of the Jordan River.

2. The information presented in this part of the article is based on the author’s ongoing participant observation of anarchist activities, supplemented by examples from relevant literature.

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ANTISEMITISM & THE CHALLENGE OF THE ISRAELI PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Dónal O'Driscoll

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explore and open out how antisemitism is currently manifesting or being alleged in activist circles. It is written mainly for those who have encountered debates around the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict but have not necessarily explored the arguments and counter-arguments in the context of antisemitism and anti-racism – or who have not experienced much in the way of racism / antisemitism.

There are many struggles around the world, but few have the potency of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. As well as being at the heart of real, everyday struggles within those lands, it plays a role in global politics. As such, it has become a topic around which resistance from the political left to capitalism and imperialism coalesces. This can be seen, for instance, in how regularly the issue appears on campus and in the strength of campaign groups allied to both Israelis and Palestinians.

The Conflict is a persistent point of contention where left and right mobilize, its symbols being picked up by political activists on all sides, whether the keffiyeh worn by the Left or the Israeli flag waved by the Islamophobic English Defence League. Thus, the Conflict has become a screen on which the politically active of all stripes project issues that arguably have more to do with their own politics than the struggles in Israel and Palestine – for all that the symbols remain rooted in the current oppression of peoples.

When approaching the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories [OPT], we cannot barge in with our standard, pre-formed concepts that work for struggles in the West. It is possible to see opposition to the Conflict as merely an extension of resistance to US imperialism or as support for the struggles of an oppressed people to obtain national liberation. However, in reducing the issue to such black and white terms, we end up with narratives of good and bad that miss out much of the reality on the ground; narratives that are, let's face it, too often racist.

There is a fundamental inconvenience to the Israel-Palestine Conflict: there are genuinely two sides to take into account. Both have grains of truth in their perspectives and the power of such truths is that they cannot be simply dismissed, not if we want our anarchism to be consistent at least. Yet, most of what is said and written is divisive as it favours or ignores one side for the other.

Thus, the starting point of this article is one of solidarity with all. That is, in supporting the struggles of the Palestinian peoples, it is important that I am not antisemitic; in resisting antisemitism I should not slip into racist anti-Palestinian or anti-Arab positions.

Mostly this can be traced to the fundamentally liberal politics[1] of commentators and groups who do not have the critiques that anarchism provides. However, what they write is true within the perspective of the world they are engaging with – one where liberal democracy and nation states are seen as a given, an ideal even. This is true of many groups on the Left, from progressive social democrats to Marxists who have yet to shake off the dangers of statist positions. The problem is that anarchists can be quite bad at applying their political critiques to their own positions and without that critique, slip back into the dominant, liberalism-inspired language and approaches.

[1] By *liberal*, I do not mean centrist politics but the wider ideology formed in the period of the Enlightenment and gave rise to liberal democracies, statehood, universal human rights, etc. See *Political Ideologies,* Anthony Heywood.

A number of common features emerge from observing various discussions:

1. The meanings of words such as antisemitism and Zionism vary considerably, and the differences in the way they are used is not being noticed.
2. Debates regularly apply anarchist principles to a national / liberal, statist situation, as if this can work in a straightforward way.
3. The principles of anti-racism as a way of combating oppression are rarely applied, for all that anti-racist positions are proclaimed.
4. In 'supporting' one side, there is lack of practical consideration of how the other side will perceive the support or react, especially where throwaway phrases are the norm.

It typifies how unnuanced debates rarely produce consensus.

I should point out that the purpose of this article is not to provide 'answers' or to propose 'solutions' to the Israeli-Palestine Conflict. Rather it is about the debates between anarchists and their political kindred outside the East Mediterranean[2] region who want to show solidarity with those oppressed by states and other authorities but avoid being tripped up by liberalism, nationalism and the interests of political elites.

Being accused of racism or antisemitism is a powerful insult. However, the majority of people who raise concerns over behaviours and attitudes do so because they genuinely perceive that racism/ antisemitism is occurring, even if there is disagreement over the definitions being applied. Thus, an accuser's allegations, experiences and emotions should been taken seriously. Treating such accusations as merely an insult is in danger of perpetuating privilege by not acknowledging the weight that comes with such concerns.

Unfortunately, some use the accusation of antisemitism as a political tool to shut down debates, which in turn damages anti-racist struggles by disrupting groups whether internally or through their relationships with others. Hence, there is an additional challenge in how we confront ourselves and others over positions held honestly but which lead them, and us, unwittingly, down antisemitic paths. And that in doing so, we do not play into the hands of less scrupulous manipulators of public opinion, who serve agendas at odds to our own. We must be honest when applying this argument: that it is not distracting from the real challenge of facing up to the fact that someone has experienced racism, and that it is much more a part of life for some people than for others.

There is no straightforward, unambiguous way; having read over three hundred articles from every perspective in preparation for this one, it is about the only thing I am sure about. And if there is to be a way through it all, then it is will be informed by consistently applied anarchism. What I hope to do is to dissect some of the issues so that debates can move on from their current, rather simplistic forms.

2. Definitions & Explorations

2.1 “Old” Antisemitism

Antisemitism has been around for thousands of years – literally. There are plenty of resources available. This article only considers the general form it has taken. There are three main recurrent motifs or themes ('tropes') which can be identified as explicitly antisemitic:

I. the blood libel;

II. the all powerful Jewish conspiracy / lobby;

III. the Jew as the 'other' / 'different'.

[2] Pointed out by some Israeli and Arab anarchists as a less European-centric term than Middle/Near East.

The 20th Century added a fourth:

IV. Holocaust denial & erasing history.

Standard approaches to identifying racism apply to the historical hatred of Jews, but these four tropes form distinct strands which have been used to particular effect as part of the oppression of Jews across the globe, thus they are sensitive issues in their own right. As pointed out in April Rosenblum's *The Past Didn't Go Anywhere*, they continue to inform the present, whether creating fears or shaping manifestations of actual and overt antisemitism.

In comparison with "new" antisemitism, discussed below, all four are incontrovertible forms of antisemitism which should be challenged whenever they appear. Unfortunately, some of the imagery is not always clear cut but plays on more general symbols available. We explore this in the section on applying the principles of anti-racism.

I. The Blood Libel

Historically, an excuse for pogroms against Jews was the supposed sacrifice of Christian children for satanic rites. Related to this is the crass assertion that it was 'the Jews who killed Jesus'. Basically, there is a theme accusing Jews of deliberately shedding blood, which at various points in time has been used to justify murderous persecution.

This trope is still very much alive in, for example, the statements of President Ahmadinejad of Iran[3] and amongst the evangelical African-American churches of the Southern USA.[4]

It repeats itself in depictions of Israelis, i.e. Jews, bathing in the blood of Palestinian peoples (e.g. Latuff's cartoons). It is a standard metaphor for cruelty and violence that has been used to depict non-Jews as well. However, within the Jewish experience as a whole, it has a particular resonance.

IIa. The all-powerful Jewish conspiracy

While the blood libel was the dominant form of antisemitism in pre-industrial era, the conspiracy trope has held that place during the 20th and 21st centuries. Its premise is two-fold:

(i) All Jews are united as a single group with a common aim.

(ii) That aim is world domination.

A key text is the Tsarist Russian forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which has been used by people from Hitler to Ahmadinejad to justify calls for the extermination of the Jewish people. It remains popular among right-wing antisemites and conspiracists and in Eastern Mediterranean countries. When people talk of the 'pinko-commie-bolshevik-capitalist-jewish'[5] world conspiracy, it is this and similar stuff they rely on. Any self-respecting anarchist should run a mile from it.

As well as the odiousness of its right-wing hate language, this form of conspiracy theory compounds its racism when it implicates every Jewish person regardless. Regular themes are that the Federal Reserve is supposedly in the control of a cabal of Jewish bankers who use it to control the governments of the world and that Jews working in the Twin Towers were 'told to not go to work' on 9/11. In these ways antisemitism dresses up old themes in new clothes, burying itself under a cloak of respectability within popular topics. This can make it harder to recognise, leading to resistance from anyone who does not immediately see the connection.

Even where only a section of the Jewish people are singled out as having control, e.g. the

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3 See various speeches before the UN, and elsewhere; interestingly has led to him being criticised by Fidel Castro. http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/09/castro-no-one-has-been-slandered-more-than-the-jews/62566/

4 *Antisemitism in America*, Leonard Dinnerstein, 1996.

5 Though there are clear distinctions between capitalists and communists, the conspiracist sacrifices them for whatever is most expedient for their confused world-view, particularly where 'the Jew' is the scapegoat for all that is wrong in the world.

Rothschilds, the underlying message remains that it is their Jewishness that is the problem.

Disinterest in dealing with these issues from the Left, who tend to just write it off as right-wing fringe material, means that people who are open to new ideas are easily preyed up on by those peddling this material. Thus we see the likes of David Icke hanging around the Occupy movement.

IIb. The Jewish Lobby

The notion of an all powerful Jewish lobby is an important variation on this, as it is a key route of antisemitism into current Left thought – generally through claims that the 'Jewish Lobby' drives US Foreign Policy.

What is being assumed here is:

(i) that a real pro-Israel lobby represents all Jews;

(ii) that this lobby is all powerful.

It uses the same ideas used to justify antisemitism coming from the right-wing. This is not to say that there is not a pro-Israel lobby or various Jewish organisations that lobby, but the same is clearly the case for many other people and interests. The Jews are not the only people in town. It also ignores the fact that political elites have their own imperialistic agendas and Jews are not to blame for that – or Israel for that matter.

When the pro-Israeli lobby is singled out in this way, it is too easy to invoke the antisemitic cabal trope singling out Jewish representatives in a way that no other people are. Thus, it plays into an existing narrative which we cannot control and cannot change to make campaigning easier.

IIIa. 'The Jew' as the Other

Racism is not just actions, but includes processes as well. In one such process, 'the Jew' becomes the alien, the outsider, onto whom fear is projected. At the same time Jews as a people are made homogeneous, distinctions between them erased in favour of the singular 'Jew' who represents everything, usually bad, that can be projected onto them. An entire people are abstracted into an idea and it is the idea that becomes the repository for the hate. Thus Jews are dehumanised and abuses justified. Every Jew can be held accountable for the sins of all other Jews, whether supposedly eating children, killing Jesus or having responsibility for financial upheavals.[6]

Another way in which this appears, particularly among 19th century political writing (anarchist and Marxist included) is the notion that Jews cannot be 'assimilated' into the dominant culture because they are too different in some way. This refusal to bow to 'universal ideals' (and the dominant culture that goes with them) makes them both dangerous and undesirable in this view.

Often this serves a political end: whether getting rid of cumbersome debts (various European kings) or turning them into scapegoats that hide the real culprits (the Nazi party in the wake of the upheavals of the Weimar Republic). While people are focusing on the Jews as the cause of the problem they are not paying attention to the rest of the elite...

There are clear parallels today with the process taking place against Muslims (though that is not a new situation when one considers the Crusades, etc), both casting them as the convenient 'other' to be feared and whose culture cannot be 'assimilated' into the liberal democratic norms of the West.

IIIb. 'The Jew' as inferior

Connected to the above trope is that of Jews being singled out as 'different', or simply inferior. It

[6] See, for example, *Living in End Times*, Slavoj Zizek, 2010.

was part of the Modernist formation of antisemitism[7]. that the Jew was biologically inferior and 'contaminating', so represented a threat to society, whether through being innately criminal and amoral in nature, or threatening genetic purity.

The term 'Anti-Semitism' was coined in the late 19th century as a way of making hatred of Jews respectable in scientific circles.[8] The word 'Semites' referred to the biblical tribe of Shem, from whom all Jews, Palestinians and Arabs supposedly descend. It was nominally used as a classification but at the same time as a way of marking these peoples as inferior. The literature of the time makes it clear that it was meant to mainly apply to Jews.

Racial Essentialisation

When people state that 'Palestinians are Semites' too, what is going on is 'racial essentialisation'. This is the notion that there are easily-defined racial categories that can be reduced to simple characteristics, usually biologically based, and that people can be neatly assigned to them. Racism studies – and real life – regularly show just how problematic this is.

The biological notion of Semitism is still used to justify racist positions. For example, "Palestinians are Semites also, so it is not possible to be antisemitic in defending Palestinians", or "Israel is being antisemitic", etc. Even that antisemitism is an invention of Zionists. Explicit use by left-wingers of these arguments is unfortunately quite widespread, not so much demonstrating an inherent antisemitic position, but showing how easily weak analysis can lead one down that path, despite good intentions. Use of this argument also fails to take into account how Palestinians or Jews might feel about this *ad hoc* categorisation, or even having the term Semite applied to them.

IVa. Holocaust denial

Downplaying the Holocaust denies the suffering of Jews, whether what was directly experienced or the wider trauma it induced on Jewish peoples as a whole. Deliberately downplaying suffering is an insidious form of oppression.

The Holocaust is about more than Israel, or even Jews, but the wholesale slaughter of many peoples of different backgrounds of whom the Jews were the most numerous. It stands in its own right and appealing to it in order to win an argument is offensive.[9] Any comparison with a particular form of genocide must be respectful of those who suffered and died. In an arena of contention such as the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, it generally only serves to muddy the waters, regardless of which side makes the comparisons.

Often, the attack on the Holocaust is tied in with claims that it was catalysed by the Jews for their own interests, and the facts have subsequently been exaggerated by them, i.e. tying in with the conspiracy trope. While some Zionist leaders of the mid-20th Century may have engaged in unholy alliances with fascists, this does not negate the fact that the Holocaust was a horrendous act of genocide and that those 'leaders' are not representative of all Jews. As the foundation of Israel is so intimately connected with the Holocaust, denial has been used as a tool for attacking Israel itself, something we will explore later under the delegitimisation of Israel.

Few other genocides have such a broad cultural resonance as the Holocaust. This makes it far more likely to be used as everyone understands what happened to some degree, and it has been heard of far more than say the Bangladeshi or Armenian genocides. This is not to say the word is to be used solely for what the Nazis did. Other victims of genocide use the expression to draw attention to their

[7] *Anti-Semitism and National Socialism*, Moishe Postone (available on Libcom.org); see also some of his other writing.
[8] *Antisemitism: A very short introduction*, Steven Beller, 2007.
[9] In relation to this see Goodwin's Law - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goodwin%27s_Law_Of_Usenet .

own terrible suffering. The problem arises when it becomes a common term to create emotive responses around other events that do not compare, which devalues the word and with it the suffering it represents.

Increasingly, referencing the Holocaust is a political tool, both inside and outside Israel, which has encouraged its use on all sides in current debates. This politicization of the Holocaust has been criticised by various Jewish communities.

IVb. Erasing history

Holocaust denial is part of a wider problem in which the histories of Jews is suppressed or outright denied. It contributes to antisemitism when dominant cultures fail to recognise the vast divergence in experience and culture that comes under the banner of 'Jew'. This ties very much in with the homogenising aspect of the all powerful Jewish lobby/conspiracy and 'Jews should know better' antisemitic tropes. In racism it is a common complaint that the histories of various peoples are deliberately ignored or suppressed as inconvenient to the dominant mythology.

This is equally true within Jewish culture in Israel where the political system is dominated by the Askhenazi at the expense of Mizrahi Jews whose identity, culture and experiences are downplayed, and there is a concerted anti-Arab narrative which seeks to deny Palestinian identity and history in academic or social institutions.

Dubious Alliances

It is worth pointing out that no nation has emerged fully formed and unsullied by the action of its creation. As anarchists we should appreciate this more than most. So, we can point to Theodor Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement, and others in his tradition who sought to use antisemitism as a way of promoting their own agenda, including colluding with the openly antisemitic Nazi party. This is not an excuse to denigrate Israel as it is in some quarters, but likewise there is a failing on behalf of pro-Zionists to acknowledge this aspect of the movement's history.

While often used to challenge Israelis, equally dubious alliances occur among Palestinian and Arab nationalists. As anarchists none of this should be a particular surprise to us, but we should be on the watch for double-standards when one side is being subjected to accusations that apply to both.

2.2 Zionism & Anti-Zionism

Zionism is the historical aspiration of the Jewish people to a homeland, particularly in Palestine. It is a modern development, growing out of the 19th Century school of thought that produced Italian and German forms of ethnicity based nationalism.

In its simplest form, it refers to Jewish people having a state of their own – a Jewish nationalism, so to speak. However, it comes in many varieties and there is a history of many Jews not accepting it for various reasons. Hence there is no universal definition and for different Jews it means different things depending on their historical and cultural context.

Currently, the dominant form is *political Zionism* – that is, the taking of a pro-Israeli stance. Even this definition has its difficulties. For some it means that any criticism of Israeli government policy is wrong; for others it keeps the recognition of the importance of Israel's existence for Jews, both there and across the world, but retains the right to criticise the Israeli government.

Given the complexities around the word Zionism, it is not surprising that anti-Zionism is just as problematic. Many on the left consider themselves anti-Zionists and use this term as a shorthand for opposition to the colonising and repressive aspects of the Israeli state. However, when the word Zionism is used without being specific or distinctions made, it strengthens right-wing

interpretations of anti-Zionism, whether European crypto-fascist extremists or political elites who would like to see anti-Zionism discredited (Israeli elites included).

As a result, an anti-Zionist position can be seen by some as a call for the eradication of Israel, which, within the liberal ideology informing the subconscious political outlook of the West, can amount to an antisemitic position, rather than just the standard anarchist anti-state position.

Compounding this is the use of anti-Zionism as a cover term for antisemitic positions when antisemitism itself becomes politically embarrassing. This was used by Stalin and his ilk to justify oppression of Jews[10], while right-wingers speak of the 'International Zionist Conspiracy' or 'Forces of International Zionism'.

These are obvious cases, but things are rarely this clear-cut. For those who are genuinely trying to avoid antisemitism but use anti-Zionism as the way to avoid it, there are several pitfalls. Firstly, it imposes a personal definition of Zionism on the argument failing to recognise it as a term with a wide meaning, including a historical one. Secondly, it reproduces the 'good Jew / bad Jew' trope: in medieval times Jews could avoid persecution by converting; here the Jew is expected to convert to a more 'acceptable' political position that they do not get to shape, i.e. is imposed on them by others.

From a Palestinian perspective, Zionism is not the abstract concept it is outside the Eastern Mediterranean but a practical aspect of life. They live with the everyday impact of expansionist Zionism in all its forms, from the original (and ongoing) appropriation of their land and forced 'transfers' to the discriminatory policies and practices of the Israeli state and its institutions.

Thus, while there is a need for pro-Palestinian support groups to recognise that Zionism is not simply anti-Palestinian or anti-Arab in nature, there is also a need for pro-Israel commentators to recognise that it is not experienced solely from their perspective. It has equally strong negative connotations, denial of which amounts to airbrushing over the repression being carried out in its name. It is not for others to say to Palestinians that they can or cannot name their oppression with the label of Zionism; it would be tantamount to saying people of colour should not name their oppressors as white people. The onus is on those with the position of privilege not to allow oppression to happen in their name and to focus on challenging their own communities, rather than seeking to impose a language or framework on those experiencing the oppression.

For anarchists, the nationalist aspect of Zionism is a stumbling block. Yet on the other hand, one cannot have the right to self-determination for the Jewish people and then deny them the right to have a place to do it. So, regardless of the rights and wrongs of the creation of Israel in 1948 and the racist nature of any ethno-democratic state, there is a fundamental challenge to reconcile these two needs. This difficulty arises as we have a world dominated by liberal politics with its focus on nation-states. I will return to this below. However, it is worth noting that in many of the statements by Israeli anarchists or various other international groups, there is avoidance of the term Zionism.

2.3 'New' Antisemitism

'New Antisemitism' is a term used to describe antisemitism on the Left that has appeared around the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Normally it refers to the point where criticism of Israel becomes demonisation, though this point is hard to define. Often the antisemitism tropes are recycled versions of 'old' antisemitism, whose impact and cultural references are poorly understood. There are three places where the label has been applied:

I. Delegitimisation of Israel

[10] See the account of the Slansky show-trial at http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2012/01/03/60th-anniversary-slansky-trial-stalinism-anti-semitism-and-anti-zionism and summary of Stalin's purges of Jews at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalin_and_antisemitism.

This means denying Israel's right to exist or expressing a belief that this right should be withdrawn due to Israel's policies towards the Palestinian peoples. The context of Israel itself as a nation state within the wider community of liberal democracies is important, both because Israel is being singled out in a way that other nations are not, and because it plays into historical antisemitic tropes of Jews being oppressed in part precisely because they did not have a homeland (antisemitism that criticised them for being a 'wandering people' or for not assimilating). Into this mix is sabre-rattling from Iran and other neighbours that overtly threaten Israel's existence, the impact of which people in the West may not appreciate.

While anarchists may feel annoyed about being tarred with the same brush as the rest of the Left whose statist positions we reject, we must recognise the wider context of Jewish persecution.

II. Uncritical pro-Hamas/Hizbollah positions

A key fault in occasional rhetoric from the Left is unconditional support for groups such as Hamas or Hizbollah. These groups are seen as representing the Palestinian people's struggle for national liberation. While this has an element of truth, it is based on a traditionalist, Marxist political outlook where the state (or those parties aspiring to it) is seen as the unquestionable representatives of the desires of the people. On the other hand, unconditional support means unquestioning support of the message that these groups proclaim and its antisemitic and fundamentalist content. There are two arguments around this:

(a) "Hamas, etc. represent the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people."

This is true *within* the liberal democratic framework of electoral politics where, however much people disagree with their politics, there is an implicit right for these parties to govern and speak on behalf of their peoples' aspirations because they have been duly elected – just as the Tories in the United Kingdom do...

The problem is defining Hamas, Fatah and Hizbollah as *equivalent* to the Palestinian peoples. Though less an issue for anarchists who have the political tools to see past the hierarchies and dubious politics within these groups, an uncritical acceptance in some quarters over the years has tarnished the Left as a whole.[11] However, while criticism of these parties is legitimate, it should not be used as an argument to hinder Palestinian aspirations to sovereignty and self-determination.

(b) "It is only a symbol."

Chanting "We are all Hizbollah!"[12] at a demo critical of Israeli government policies or painting that name outside a synagogue[13] is a way some have chosen to show solidarity with the Palestinian peoples, using the political parties as a symbol of the resistance. It is not nuanced and effectively expresses open alignment with the antisemitic politics of these groups. It does not matter that this may not be the intention of those sending the 'message', but that it is likely to be perceived in that way, if indeed it can be perceived in any other way.

III.Jews should know better

This is an insidious form of antisemitism as it appears, on a superficial level, to be justified. It is a variant often encountered in anarchist spaces. The premise is, that given the Holocaust, there is no

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[11] See, for example, Steve Cohen's book for early incarnations of this, and latterly, the work of David Hirsh and others criticising this on the Engage Online website.

[12] The use of this slogan received particular outcry having appeared on the Stop the War Coalition march in London on 5 August, 2006. See for example, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5246790.stm and http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/aug/08/weareallhizbullahnowreall. The slogan has subsequently appeared on al Quds Day marches; e.g. see photos at http://thecommune.co.uk/2008/09/29/photo-report-on-al-quds-day-demonstration/

[13] See image at http://www.engageonline.org.uk/blog/article.php?id=622

excuse for the Jews not 'learning' an abhorrence of all oppression.[14]

It is a position that imposes a particular framework as to how people should react to a traumatic event, dictating how they should behave rather than allowing them agency to respond emotionally. It is also patronizing in that it collectivises the experience, seeing all Jews as a homogeneous group who experienced or reacted to the Holocaust in the same way. Further, it also assumes that Israel = Jews, because it was the Jewish people (or, more often than not, the Ashkenazi) who experienced the Holocaust, whereas the criticism is being made in relation to Israeli government policy.

As well as being implicitly racist, it obscures the roles of capitalism, imperialism and political elites from many different quarters in shaping the Conflict, historically and in the present.

That there are Jews who believe that there should be genocidal behaviour toward the Palestinian peoples is a separate issue to be tackled on its own, not by reference to other massacres. It is not a reason for others to politicize the Holocaust or use it as a argument for imposing a particular outlook. It is more appropriate to support those fighting the politicization of the Holocaust, including those within Jewish communities.

2.4 Israel

Many debates simplify the history, culture and politics of Israel. April Rosenblum pamphlet demonstrates that things are far more complicated and cannot be ignored as inconvenient or irrelevant. The present day state of Israel was created as a pressing response to a history of oppression. We cannot dismiss or diminish the impact of the Holocaust, Eastern European pogroms, or the long histories of antisemitism in the West. While Jews have found greater acceptance now than throughout history, the reverberations of that past are still very much with us. Israel represents safety and aspiration for many Jews, whether they live there or not.

One cannot reduce every Israeli Jew to the policies of Israel's rulers; something anarchists know as well as anyone, given our recognition of the deviousness of governments and elites. Like anywhere else, Israeli-Jewish society is full of its own diversity and has its own multitude of problems, such as racial oppression of non-Ashkenazi Jews, class issues, religious elitism and so on.

While many Jews identify with the concept of an Israeli state, it does not mean that they necessarily support its policies. Indeed, groups are emerging from within Jewish communities worldwide to take a more critical stance, challenging the hegemonic position of older organisations over their uncritical support of the Israeli government, their accompanying move to the right wing and their Islamophobia. Conversely, there is a need for those challenging Left-wing antisemitism from within the Left to recognise these trends in Jewish communities and to work with these groups.

Unfortunately, the antisemitic narrative has been picked up by the pro-Israel right who twist these positions to characterise criticism of Israeli government as antisemitism. The result is that antisemitism itself is being politicized and used within Jewish communities as an accusation flung against critics. The way around this is clarity of positions and for the battle to be fought on all fronts. Thus, those of us challenging antisemitism also need to recognise misuse of the term, including use of the term 'self-hating Jew'.

Related is the complaint that Israel is being singled out in a way that other states are not (referred to as 'exceptionalism'). It is less common now, given it is a tacit admission of wrong-doing. This accusation ignores all the many other campaigns that anarchists and others are engaged in supporting and have been active on over the last few decades, albeit in different fashions – one only has to think of campaigns around West Papua and Tibet or the support for struggles of indigenous peoples the Zapatista uprising, South Africa itself and the US Civil Rights movement.

[14] There is a possible subtext from a Jewish perspective, that the Holocaust was about teaching the Jews a lesson.

Worth recognising is that many things which Israel is criticised for apply equally to other states, for example racist immigration policies. This is not a trap that anarchists tend to fall for, given the breadth of their critique of the state, but it is something that other sections of the Left and liberal centre are susceptible to, particularly when they fail to acknowledge how they benefit from privileges based on the similar discrimination politics within their own countries.

2.5 The Palestinian Peoples

The Palestinian peoples are not a united whole but a name that has been applied to the non-Jewish, indigenous population of Palestine. Like all peoples they are diverse both culturally and politically. Their elected representatives do not represent the entirety of opinion or desire. What they share is a common oppression and a common interest in resisting it. Use of the term Arab for the Palestinian peoples is problematic as it is not necessarily how they self-identify and because it is used within Israel to marginalise the Palestinians – though it can be used by them for political expediency.

The scope of their history and resistance is outside of this article, though it is important in its own right. For my purposes, the starting point is that the Palestinian peoples are diverse, with their own long histories and connections with the land. Thus, in the dominant framework of liberal-democratic politics, they have legitimate national aspirations. It is also the case that in the Conflict it is the ordinary Palestinian peoples who bear the brunt of the suffering from the military conflict and who experience the day-to-day reality of Israeli policies. Understanding the role of their voice, and whether it is even heard, is a key aspect of unpicking the difficulties of the Conflict.

3. Application of Principles of Anti-Racism

There is considerable racism on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, including their various supporters. While commentators often state that they are anti-racist, it's clear that they, anarchists included, have little concept of what the politics of anti-racism actually mean.

For many, racism is just about openly expressed beliefs or politics of discrimination, such as the use of derogatory names or the denigration of an entire race. As a result, anti-racism tends to focus on these overt forms, leading to a belief in many quarters that confronting overt, personalised forms of racism is sufficient for an anti-racist politic.[15]

The last few decades have seen significant developments with deeper understanding of discourses of privilege emerging. There has been an exploration of ingrained systematic oppressions that are much harder to expose and challenge. These developments produce a practice of confronting the privileges of other groups in relation to the oppressed, e.g. economic, access to resources, etc., but from a cultural perspective. Underlying them is a more general theory of how we relate to different self-defined groups, ethnic or otherwise.

It presents anti-racism from the point of view of the oppressed, rather than imposing outside norms on how resistance should be conducted or what change is necessary. In particular, it demonstrates why it is not appropriate for people with privilege to impose political positions on the oppressed to suit their own desires and beliefs, thus effectively maintaining their privileges at the cost of the empowerment of others.

The politics of anti-racism deserve a whole publication to themselves[16], but I shall explore aspects of it using the Israeli context to draw out subtler issues.

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[15] It may be useful to recognise that *anti-racist* can be interpreted as being against racist individuals; while *anti-racism* implies the wider concept of being against the whole system of racism.

[16] See People of Color Organize (www.peopleofcolororganize.com/category/analysis), Paul Kivel (www.paulkivel.org), the Katrina Reader (katrinareader.org/legacies), Resist Racism (resistracism.wordpress.com/racism-101), and Racial Equality Tools (www.racialequitytools.org). These sites are US-focused and do not necessarily translate to other contexts; though useful starting points for people seeking a deeper understanding of anti-racism being put into practice.

3.1 Giving Voice and Respect

Central to modern anti-racist practice is the recognition that the oppressed must have the right to speak for themselves. It is not up to others to dictate how a struggle should be conducted or whose words get heard.

Part of the freedom to have a voice is the right to determine what your oppression is. It is not for the privileged to decide what is or is not racist or oppressive. This does not mean unconditional acceptance of those decisions; it has to be taken into account, for example, the way antisemitism has become a tool used by elites. However, it does require that we approach those decisions with respect, attempt to understand contested terms and accept that the oppression is real even if we cannot clearly demarcate is boundaries.

There is a duty of care, respect and enquiry from the privileged to groups suffering discrimination. Thus, outside those directly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, there is a requirement to respect the experiences of Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism and of antisemitism. Likewise, in showing solidarity there is a need to avoid offering support to positions that maintain privileges. Within the Conflict, this care is not letting discrimination from one perspective become an excuse for behaviour that itself becomes oppressive to others, something that applies to all sides.

If there is one thing to take away, it is the ability to ask the question of oneself: in expressing myself, am I doing it from a position of privilege; am I seeking to impose my beliefs on others? This is not to say that if the answer is yes, it is necessarily wrong (as an anarchist, I have no problem expressing my political opposition to authoritarian and hierarchical belief systems), but it may have to be put with an awareness of the sensitivities of the context.

3.2 Challenging Privilege and the Changing Nature of Racism

Often anti-racist practice works on unspoken sets of assumptions or 'rational' arguments; for instance, it is sufficient to name the privilege to abolish it or that racism is easily defined and so easily rooted out. Unfortunately, these are rarely true. Antisemitism shows how racism changes and adapts to dominant paradigms. Thus, while history is useful in identifying the paths of antisemitism, it cannot provide hard and fast definitions.

Confronting racism effectively involves challenging its roots in the maintenance of privilege. Those who benefit from privilege will often seek to subvert anti-racist agendas, sometimes subconsciously, to protect that privilege. Likewise, there are those who see gain in divisions, even if they are on the 'discriminated' side. This is true of many struggles of national liberation, anti-colonialism and civil rights, not just of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

As result, anti-racism, including antisemitism, means different things to different people. This does not mean we have to accept every viewpoint. We can have our own critical analysis, but it requires that we first listen to the voices coming from the oppressed groups and approach their arguments with open minds rather than trying to fit them into our preferred boxes.

This demands an ability to respect, which in anarchism is tied in with the key principle of equality. It means just as much the ability to differ as to agree, but also looking for practical ways to offer solidarity rather than demanding those less privileged conform to our political expectations. Achieving equality is a process that involves both sides. I cannot just decide that I am your equal; both of us have to agree that we are equal and acting as such.

3.3 Inadvertent Use of Racist Imagery

On several occasions I experienced conversations where it was argued that the swastika should be 'reclaimed' as it was originally an ancient sun symbol. It is not up to us to 'reclaim' a symbol which represents great pain and oppression, and which is still used in that sense. Those seeking to reclaim speak from a position of privilege and effectively deny the discriminated group their experience. The pain it symbolises is real; only by understanding and working with the wishes of those who experienced it do we acknowledge it in ways that are more than just lip-service – this lip-service being an expression of privilege in itself.

Though the swastika is the best known (it is not possible to distinguish Nazism from antisemitism), there are other images relating historical antisemitism such as the vampire squid, the fat Jewish banker, a Jew eating a child or bathing in blood. This presents problems as the underlying imagery with the racial aspects stripped out remains powerful and has appropriate uses in other contexts.

Thus, not every example of a vampire squid stuck on a seat of power is antisemitic – the same image can arise independently without the Jewish connection, but that does not mean that the image does not have a resonance. So when pointed out that there is this connection, it is not sufficient to say that “oh, that was not my intention, so it does not matter”. Not meaning to be racist does not deal with the fact that you have used something with a racist connotation, inadvertently or otherwise. Rather, refusing to acknowledge that it does and persisting in using it, thereby ignoring the racist trope, is the point where you cross the line into active racism.

Care does need to be taken here just as much by those seeking out images of antisemitism. Not every fat banker is necessarily a fat Jewish banker, for instance. There are points at which the border is indistinct between standard images and those with an antisemitic agenda. Furthermore, assuming that every greedy banker is a representation of a Jewish banker can actually reinforce the trope of linking bankers and Jews, while letting all those many greedy white Anglo-Saxons, who form the greater number of capitalists and bankers, off the hook.

Two wrongs make a right-winger of you

Another racist use of imagery is to use a racist trope as a way of highlighting an injustice. For example, people use the blood libel issue, arguing it is appropriate to use this form of antisemitic imagery as an analogy with what Israel is doing to the Palestinians. (Similarly, images which merge the swastika with the star of David). However, the blood libel applies to all Jews, not just Israeli Jews, and thus has resonances outside of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict. This approach is more commonly seen in right-wing circles as a way of justifying their own racist positions.

3.4 Climbing Into Bed with a Racist

Though you may be avowedly anti-racist, if you ally with racist groups you offer them tacit support. Often when creating a broad political church one risks alliances with groupings whose politics are very much opposed to your own. This is particularly problematic among movements that aim to be populist in nature (Occupy, Socialist Workers, etc).

Given the contested nature of antisemitism and anti-Zionism as terms, avoiding this can be a tricky feat; there will always be debate around it. While it is easy to reject groups that are overtly racist, not every group has thought-out political positions, or their spokespeople may make questionable statements. Most important, is that allies are constructively challenged when issues appear and it is made clear from the beginning what is required for alliances or support to be granted.

A criticism of this approach is that it sets one set of voices over others around that issue or grants privileges to the discriminated group at the expense of others. This is only true if we treat that group as a single entity with no difference of opinion, a discriminatory stance within itself, or that we

ignore other issues such as class. Within the Jewish and Palestinian communities there are a large number of different voices and some interesting historical strategies in play.[17]

A simplistic approach has led to particular voices being seized upon in order to justify political positions by those taking sides in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. It is very difficult terrain to navigate, for while someone cannot be said to stand for every single member of their race, it can also be said that they may represent a body of opinion to some degree, especially if associated with a given organisation.

This means actively looking at the principles underlying positions rather than seeing a stated objective as the unifying factor. This more nuanced response means that we would say, have the ability to reject the position of the religious Jewish anti-Israel group Neturai Karta[18] while maintaining our own anti-statist position.

Ultimately, there is no easy formula that can be applied. Each case will depend on context. However, the statements, which from an anarchist perspective at least, have come across as strongest, are not those who rely on the works of individual spokespeople, but speak in support of people in general, in recognising difference and privilege rather than shying away from it, and which speak directly from their politics. The Czech Anarchist Federation statement in this collection is a good example.

4. Critiques of Liberal Approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

A significant problem in debating the issues around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that they cannot be reduced to a class analysis. This means many analytic tools are not appropriate, so some of us of the more radical, non-authoritarian bent may fall back on the traditional liberal formulations which already inform much of the wider, public debate.

It is hard for us as anarchists to put forward our positions when they are not recognised by the main players, in particular where many of the points of resistance to the injustices of the conflict assume a liberal or statist perspective. However, groups such as Anarchists Against The Wall demonstrate there are practical ways of intervening that create effective challenges to oppression without falling into the pitfalls.[19]

4.1 International Law

A large amount of writing and blogging about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict focuses on UN resolutions critical of Israel or attempts to cite international and human rights law. This includes the criminalisation of Apartheid within international law.

International laws and resolutions are externally-imposed constructs. They do not ask the people directly what they want, what they would consider justice. Tribunals under international law impose norms constructed from a Eurocentric position. On a deeper level, it fails to acknowledge the inherent power relationships that riddle the international organisations or recognise their biases.

From another perspective, appeals to international law are seen as an attack on the legitimacy of Israel, though this depends on working within the framework of liberal democratic institutions. In

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[17] For example, the 'whisper tactics of many establishment Jewish organisations, which deal with antisemitism behind the scenes rather than drawing public attention to it, or the pan-European politics of assimilation which for many years formed a distinct political grouping in opposition to the Zionist movement within Jewish communities.

[18] An ultra-orthodox Jewish sect who believe that the Jewish can only be formed when the Messiah comes. Its rabbis have courted controversy such as meeting with Ahmadinejad. See http://www.nkusa.org/activities/Statements/20070402IranWhycfm.cfm

[19] See *We are all Anarchists against the Wall!,* 2004, *http://*zinelibrary.info/files/anarwall_EN.pdf

using terms such as 'occupying force' or calling the actions of its government illegitimate, it is criticising the ability of Israel to follow its own path, but saying that it must subject itself to a global power structure.

While for anarchists much of this is patently ridiculous, it does makes a form of sense from a liberal viewpoint. If Israel is not to be singled out for special treatment under the liberal paradigm, it should be as subject to international law as any other state. If not, it exacerbates the feelings of injustice and powerlessness of Palestinians who have pinned hopes on such frameworks.

If we as anarchists do support Palestinians in this argument, it does no harm to point out that many politicians in the West who place much store in these institutions to justify their own privileges, power and right of interference have their own abuses to answer for and regularly attempt to ignore or subvert the same institutions for their own agendas.

4.2 States & Nationhood

States and nations are two clearly intertwined ideas which developed as part of the liberal democratic ideology. As Mark Neocleous argues in *Imagining the State*, they connect with mythology and land.[20] States need concepts of nations and cultural identity, even those based on citizenship (e.g. Britain, France) rather than ethnicity (e.g. Germany). In forging a state there is a construction of a relationship to the land it occupies through the use of mythology; it is this latter aspect which also ties in, and even requires, the concept of a nation (or ethnic grouping) which can claim some ancient connection to the land and a kinship in the present.

Throughout the Enlightenment the nation played a key symbolic role in the struggles for emancipation from feudal landlords and so became an accepted condition for freedom. Hence, for the liberal-democratic state to exist with the freedoms that are claimed for it, the nation must come first. Zionism is inherently a position within this ideology.

Socialist states tried to overcome the mythological and ethnic basis of the nation through assimilation. That required assimilation to the existing dominant culture, and so became a form of oppression.

The upshot of these often obscured dynamics is that land becomes central to identity and to struggles, even when it is hidden behind other notions, including religion. Much of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict occurs around ownership of property – land and resources, over who has 'ownership' and the rights. This has allowed capitalists (and the politicians who support them) to exploit these resources and the various peoples while using the religion and race to hide or even justify their exploitation. This is where class analysis comes into its own in this context.

Thus, solutions which do not address land and mythology, or create artificial borders cannot provide long term peace. Yet many arguments are predicated on assumptions of sovereignty over land and on cultural mythologies shaped by intellectual elites with their own agendas, rather than actually challenging them. It is a case of the 'master's tools not being able to dismantle the master's house'.

Anti-antisemitic campaigns develop problems here, a particular instance being Engage's founding statement which states "*Jews have as much right to be nationalist as anybody else*".[21] Correct within the liberal ideological perspective but troubling to the anarchist.

The line of political thought that sees the right of self-determination for Jews requires the same right for the Palestinians. To deny this is to single out one group over another for greater privilege, essentially a racist position. However, most campaigns for self-determination will struggle to avoid elements of ethno-nationalism, and thus it is not hard to see that the nation-state itself is open to

[20] See also Shlomo Sand's *The Invention of the Jewish People* for a discussion of this in relation to Israel and the Jewish people.

[21] http://www.engageonline.org.uk/archives/index.php?id=14

contamination by elements of racism by its very nature.

This problem of nationalism in anti-antisemitic criticism is not just a recent one but, as Moishe Postone points out, has been present from the beginning of Zionism, such as the debates over the merits of Zionism and a homeland for Jewish people within the (Askhenazi) Jewish Left.[22]

Anarchists are good at avoiding these problems when the principles of anarchism are applied coherently. However, it is worth remembering the underlying assumptions feeding much of the liberal positions and the consequences that they have. Addressing imperialism, capitalism and political elites needs to include recognition that these sit upon a deeper set of assumptions successfully normalised to the extent that they are not questioned, but which maintain the privileges of those who benefit. As anarchists it is a powerful point of intervention if we can be heard.

4.3 Anti-War/Imperialism

Some of those campaigning around antisemitism have a valid fear is that the anti-imperialism and the anti-war movement in general is fertile ground for antisemitism to take hold. However, Israel is a significant partner of the US and is its number one recipient of aid, including military. It is also clearly able to demonstrate its own agency and independent military action. As such, the Israeli government should rightly be criticised for its actions and words.

So it is important to maintain vigilance and to avoid a point-scoring approach that allows those who would like to see Israel demonized or all Jews tainted by association to slip their message in. Simplistic positions allow opportunities for the 'all-powerful Jewish lobby' trope (section 2.2). On the other hand, it is clearly equally tempting for defenders of Israeli policy to use antisemitic accusations to quell such opposition, leading to charge and counter-charge moving the debate away from the original criticism.

This is currently important due to Israel's increasingly belligerent posturing toward Iran and equally strident language coming from anti-war groups. We should be wary of use of language which denies agency to either Israel or the US or plays into antisemitic or more general racist tropes, as they both are clearly actors with their own agendas.

4.4 Racism within Progressive Campaign Groups

Many people involved in these groups are regularly guilty of racism, explicit and implicit, against each side. Pro-Israel or anti-antisemitic groups have a strong tendency to ignore Palestinian voices, while trumpeting their own anti-racist credentials.

Anti-antisemitic groups such as Engage have successfully highlighted antisemitic tendencies among the Left so they could be countered. On the down side, their lack of engagement with voices coming from the Palestinian community in this process effectively excluded the latter so the dialogue becomes focused solely around the trope of antisemitism itself. My perception is that they are failing to recognize aspects of their own privilege.

Palestinian groups and their support campaigns have been equally problematic, often in terms of their uncritical alliances. For example, the debates around Gilad Atzmon (see section 5.3 below). The distinct lack of critical politics results in stark positions; so while many involved have good intentions it is easy to for them to slip into rhetoric and alliances that cross boundaries. There is also regular reliance on the 'Jews should know better' argument to justify this.

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[22] *Zionism, anti-semitism and the left (an interview with Moishe Postone)*, Martin Thomas / WorkersLiberty.org, 2010.

4.5 Israel as an Ethnocracy

A problem generated by the liberal perspective is the nature of the Israeli state. It presents itself as a liberal democratic state based on citizenship, which is one of the reasons it rejects the Apartheid analogy, but it clearly has laws biased toward those who define as Jews. It has many other institutionalised policies that undeniably discriminate against Palestinians.

It is hard to counter this argument without coming up against the issue that challenging it is effectively an exercise in the delegitimisation of Israel. There are two competing needs here: (i) to recognise that the Jews have the right to self-determination; and (ii) recognizing that Israeli is inherently biased toward Jews to the disadvantage of a non-Jewish indigenous population. That this can happen is one of the inherent contradictions that can develop within liberal ideology.

This leaves the liberal approach in a bind if it is to be consistently anti-racist, for to reject its racist nature is tantamount to rejecting the Jewish foundation of the state, regardless of whatever socialist heritage may be claimed via the Labor Zionist movement, and that is an exercise in delegitimisation. It is always going to be a struggle to reform the state in this situation, even before we start applying the anarchist critiques of hierarchy.

A criticism of this position from some quarters is that it is antisemitic to call Israel a racist state. This statement ignores the fact that Palestinians are part of making this identification. There is thus an onus on those rejecting this claim, such as Israeli citizens, to recognize their position of privilege. As with all forms of racism, part of a consistent anti-racism is recognising that in a racist society there are inherent privileges granted to some groups of people because of who they are, whether they asked for it or not. It does not matter if some people have more privilege than oneself; what does is that one has an attribute that grants privileges others do not have (e.g. the right to pass through a border; the ability to walk down a street and not be harassed). Actively denying that one has that privilege is more than just disrespect, but is potentially racist because it denies the reality of oppression. However, there are those who will seek to use the racist claim to delegitimize Israel, so an awareness of context will always be required.

Ethnocracies

It is worth noting that it is near impossible to find a state that is not racist in some way. This is obvious for any state which relies on an ethnic definition for its identity, as recognised above. But it is as true of 'enlightened' modern liberal democracies as any other. Even states that are supposedly 'citizen' based can readily be shown to have institutionalised racist policies, often around policing, education and immigration. I would argue that there is no way out of this bind; the anarchist has the opportunity to argue that a key component to a creating a non-racist world is through abolition of states. Even if the state is a protector of rights in the short term, it is always open to pressures, social and economic, that undermine any such commitment.

5. Contemporary Issues

By now it should be apparent there are two salient issues when discussing antisemitism in the context of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict.

1) It not possible to see the Conflict in isolation. It feeds into world-wide affairs, including antisemitism and is manipulated by various elites and groups for their own purposes.
2) There is an undercurrent of de-privileging the voice of grassroots Palestinians, including on the Left. This is often a result of an either-or politics where the position of one side is justified, while ignoring the impact that it has on the other side, or undermining their voice.

In this section we look at some of the main issues of debate that have arisen over the last few years.

5.1 The Apartheid comparison

The proposition that Israel is an apartheid state is one that raises considerable upset. For some, it is a way of adequately describing the situation on the ground in the OPT (and the Occupied Syrian Golan), using an expression that retains the emotive power it deserves.[23] For others, it is a way of demonising Israel and thus crosses the line to delegitimization and hence antisemitism.

Part of the problem is that there is no recognised Palestinian state, so in the occupied territories, Israel is a colonial-occupying power.

From the pro-Israeli side, there have been attempts to use legalistic arguments to say why the comparison is inappropriate. However, prominent anti-Apartheid campaigners are equally forthright that what is taking place in Palestine and in Israel itself is tantamount to the same thing, including the Jewish South African activist Ronnie Kasrils.

Those justifying the argument can rely on two things. Firstly, that the analogy is made by the people suffering the oppression. Secondly, the criticism is not necessarily against the state of Israel but rather its policies. However, those policies are greatly informed by the ethnic-based nature of the democracy in Israel with all the problems that throws up.

An advantage of the apartheid comparison is that it allows for movement away from comparisons with the Holocaust.

Responses

The standard responses are

- Israel is a citizen-based state: it is egalitarian because its laws say so.
- South Africa had a formalised oppression of people, i.e. the Apartheid was constitutional.
- In Israel, Jews are the predominant people, unlike white people in South Africa.
- There is scope for elected representatives that are non-Jewish.

These responses rely on appeals to the formalities of international conventions and law. Effectively, they form a position that oppression does not exist unless it is formally recognised as such. This implies that it is okay to pay lip-service to the norms of international law while continuing with systematic oppression.

The responses also fail to acknowledge the experiences of systematic, institutionalised discrimination. They dismiss the concerns of those being oppressed, particularly without putting forward alternatives – or alternatives that maintain their own privileges. They impose frameworks on the oppressed which seek to constrain how they should resist, without acknowledging the conditions in which they live. Critics of the comparison are selective in citing differences with South Africa which support their own viewpoint, so the underlying process remains one of non-engagement with Palestinian voices excluded when they say there *is* a comparison.

To the oppressed it must be insulting to have their suffering reduced to semantic and legalistic arguments. Not acknowledging these flaws in the legalistic position is tantamount to condoning it, so this approach is something which could be argued to be a racist position in itself.

Various commentators put forward the position that the apartheid analogy is counter-productive as it puts Israel on the defensive. Again, this speaks from the perspective of the privileged, as it implicitly prioritises the concerns of Israelis over Palestinians.

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[23] Israel and the Crime of Apartheid: Towards a Comprehensive Analysis, *al-Majdal* 47, 2011, http://www.badil.org/

5.2 The Boycott, Divestments & Sanctions Campaign

The BDS campaign has come under attack for perceived delegitimizing of Israel.

As a campaign it avoids a number of criticisms of previous solidarity movements. Rather than coming from Hamas, Fatah, etc., it is based upon a general call from within Palestinian civil society. In its original version it called for a blanket boycott of all Israeli institutions. Over time it has developed more nuanced strands – large sections of those taking up with the call have moved to positions where boycotts focus on direct misappropriation of resources from the Occupied Territories.[24] This has allowed a more direct connection between action and on-the-ground oppression as well as circumventing issues of antisemitism.

Its broad appeal and roughly decentralised nature does mean some supporters are expressing views that demonise of Israel or outright antisemitism. When this ties into an uncritical position where anyone supporting the BDS campaign is a 'fellow traveller', then problems can arise. There has been a failure within the campaign to recognise that antisemitism is an issue and to make efforts to ensure it does not become part of their narrative.

Israeli government policy has also sought to label the campaign as antisemitic, in part to legitimise its 2011 *Law for Prevention of Damage to State of Israel through Boycott*, making supporting the BDS a crime – even though it is supported by many Jewish groups. This makes it harder to fight antisemitism on the progressive Left as legitimate critique is likely to be seen as playing to the Israeli government rather than a genuine concern to counter antisemitism.

The Academic Boycott

This is not to say that the same argument applies to all Israeli institutions. An active debate within Palestinian society is around *normalisation* and in particular how Israeli seeks to portray itself as a *normal* place. Judith Butler in her talk *The Anarchist Turn*[25] refers to the role of academia in this, but care must be taken in distinguishing between the roles of institutions and individuals whose politics may be completely separate.

A counter argument which raises valid concerns is how the call for a boycott of Israeli academics is perceived, particularly where done solely on grounds of citizenship of Israel – and, by extension, of them being Jewish. Such protests could easily spill over into antisemitism. There are many resources online debating the pros and cons of this call from all perspectives.

The original academic boycott called for in the UK was a ham-fisted affair, which is what opened it to the charges of antisemitism in the first place. Though the call has developed since then, it remains a contested issue as to whether it can avoid being antisemitic. It is one of those areas that are hard to make a judgement call on, and it is down to people to make up their own minds.

5.3 Gilad Atzmon

Israeli born jazz saxophonist and pro-Palestinian activist, Atzmon has been a figure of contention for some time. Supported by the traditional Left in a number of places, he has come under criticism from the likes of the Jewish Socialist Group (UK), Jews for Justice for Palestinians and others for his anti-Jewish stance and for crossing the line to into antisemitism.[26] Often he does not distinguish

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[24] See, for example, *Targeting Israeli Apartheid*, Tom Anderson, et al / CorporateWatch, 2012.

[25] Online at http://blip.tv/adcs/tac-judithbutler-5202151. Though, normalisation of capitalism, the Iraq & Afghanistan invasions and so on are also something that UK and US universities have been complicit in. Something, which puts Butler as a professor at UC Berkeley, in an interesting place. Thanks to Josh Robinson for this point.

[26] (i) Open letter from US anti-racist campaigners http://www.israeli-occupation.org/2012-03-03/not-quite-ordinary-human-beings-

between Jews and Israel as a whole but actively conflates them.

Selected writings and issues:

1. *I do not consider the Jews to be a race, and yet it is obvious that 'Jewishness' clearly involves an ethno-centric and racially supremacist, exclusivist point of view that is based on a sense of Jewish 'chosen-ness'. Zionism too, is a clear manifestation of such an ideology.*[27]
2. "*The attack on the aid convoy [Gaza aid flotilla] is a continuum of the same ideology that killed Christ. Christ's killing is a symbol of a brutal assault against goodness, in the same way the attack on the aid convoy was against humanity and compassion.*"

   "*My studies have shown me that the Jewish identity is foreign to humanism, it is tribal and has evolved as an outcome of an exilic culture.*" He argues that we can learn a lot about Jewish collective ideology by looking closely to the biblical "Story of Esther" which he argues teaches Jews the art of infiltration into politics and governments... "*This form of infiltration is clearly evident in America today where the Jewish lobby (AIPAC) dominates the political discourse.*"

   "*...in fact I correct them 'I am not only a self-hater but a proud self-hater.'*"

   "*Instead of asking why we are hated they continue to toss accusations on others*."[28]
3. "*I have hardly seen any Israelis or Jews attempt to understand the circumstances that led to the clear resentment of Europeans towards their Jewish neighbors in the 1920's-40's.*"[29]
4. Atzmon admits to circulating Paul Eisen's "The Holocaust Wars", a text that supports Holocaust denier Ernst Zündel.[30]

While this might play better in Israel (I'm not saying it does), it is clearly problematic outside Israel where there are much stronger currents of antisemitism. As such, when considering his opinions and effect, one cannot focus solely on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict but must take into account the wider context.

The debates around the calls for Atzmon to be boycotted will no doubt rumble on continue. Hopefully, I have presented enough background material around antisemitism that people can make up their own minds. In my opinion, the danger of Atzmon's approach is that he provides a convenient and vocal position in support of Left action for boycotts, etc., but in a way that opens up a space for antisemitism because they actively allow criticism of all Jews. They are in danger of falling into the 'useful Jew' trope, which results in antisemitic statements being legitimized.

The Useful Jew

The 'useful Jew' is someone who is singled out for having the 'right' opinions and they are thus used to justify a political standpoint. The person is the 'lone voice of truth', or is projected as representing an entire class of people. Either way, they are singled out because their message is convenient for political purposes and the problematic views coming from that individual overlooked, a privileged position to adopt.

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anti-imperialism-and-the-anti-humanist-rhetoric-of-gilad-atzmon/
(ii) *"Disavowment" by Palestinian civil society*: http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=467843

27 http://www.gilad.co.uk/writings/gilad-atzmon-an-interesting-exchange-with-a-jewish-anti-zion.html

28 *Time for world to confront Israel: an interview with Gilad Atzmon*, Shabana Syed, Arab News, 2010, http://arabnews.com/opinion/columns/article66233.ece

29 http://www.gilad.co.uk/writings/jewish-ideology-and-world-peace-by-gilad-atzmon.html

30 http://gilad.co.uk/html%20files/atzmongreensteindebate.html – notes from a debate following Prof. Greenstein's challenging Atzmon's circulation of the leaflet.

5.4 Hamas, Hizbollah and National Liberation Struggles

Early incarnations of the Palestinian solidarity movement showed uncritical support for the elected representatives of the Palestinian peoples, and thus of their authoritarian and antisemitic policies. Fortunately, a more anarchist-based critique is coming to the fore: that these organisations are considerably different from the people on the ground with solidarity (re)focused on the latter in more practical ways. Combating marginalisation of such voices in debates is an important role that anarchists outside the region can play, thus demonstrating solidarity with people affected on all sides rather than having to choose one elite over another. Hopefully this trend will continue.

For the anarchist, an advantage of focusing on people as opposed to organisations is that one can get away from supporting the structures and ideologies that shape those organisations, such as the nation state and political parties.

In general, as anarchists we do ourselves a disservice when we fall into a default position of support for nationalism, Palestinian or otherwise, and lose sight of the anti-state politics which make us anarchists in the first place. We recognise the state as a system of oppression, so why would we wish one oppressor to be replaced by another? As anarchist groups have already demonstrated, it is possible to find ways to stay true to our politics and work within the struggle. This includes acknowledging that there are elites on the Palestinian side and in the wider Arab world for whom the anti-Zionist drum is a way to distract from their complicity in oppressing their own people.

5.5 Equating Anti-Capitalism with Antisemitism

One surprising assertion made occasionally is that the anti-capitalist/anti-globalisation movement is intrinsically antisemitic.[31] The argument is that as capitalism and Jewry have historical links, so to be against one is to be against the other. Indeed, the Nazis made this link and were putatively anti-capitalist in their rhetoric. As someone put it, they became the anti-capitalist's capitalist.

The Dutch group FAI used this argument to justify publicly distancing themselves from the anti-globalisation movement in 2000/2001, though with a more nuanced set of arguments.[32]

The argument has two flaws, both antisemitic in themselves: (1) lumping all Jews together as capitalists and ignoring the long and fine tradition of opposition to capitalism that was carried out by Jews – such as Alexander Berkman's shooting of notorious capitalist Henry Clay Frick. (2) while the Rothschilds and Warburgs were Jewish banking dynasties, the argument conveniently overlooks the banking houses of Medici, Fugger, Barings, Morgan, Barclays, Hambros, and all the other non-Jewish banking dynasties and organisations that were just as powerful in their day and continue to be So, in trying to make the connection between capitalism and Jewry in order to reject it, they are thus reinforcing a long-standing trope of antisemitism.

This does not mean there are no problems within anti-capitalism and related movements. As pointed out above, populist movements attract unsavoury bedfellows and there is need to be on guard for them. While some sections of the Occupy movement are clear on rejecting antisemitism, there is a deficit somewhere when we see antisemites like David Icke able to make videos at Occupy Wall Street and push his own agenda there. Likewise there is a legitimate question to be asked of Kalle Lasn of Adbusters, an influential figure within Occupy Wall Street, who authored a controversial article singling out Jewish neocons within the Bush administration.[33]

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[31] Discussed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antisemitism_in_the_anti-globalization_movement.

[32] http://www.doorbraak.eu/gebladerte/30010v02.htm. See also Also *Anti-Globalisation and the Dangers of Nationalism and Anti-Semitism*, Werner Bonefeld, 2004; and other resources listed at http://contested-terrain.net/resources/

[33] See http://radicalarchives.org/2011/10/20/lasn-adbusters-helps-you-find-the-jews/ for the Lasn article and also other links on the

5.6 States

A standard anarchist analysis from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict is that we as anarchists do not believe in states and should be able to criticize them come what may. However true, it is a position that needs care.

States are a feature of the present, practically and ideologically. It is not possible to ignore the wider context of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict or write states out because the concept does not suit us. For both sides, statehood and nationhood are key aspects of self-determination, so to be consistent in allowing both peoples agency to choose their own futures, we have to acknowledge their right to choose their own paths.

While anarchists work toward a future which will hopefully make states redundant, we cannot ignore practicalities on the ground in favour of theory if we are to show solidarity with the oppressed. This kind of argument conflates desires to show solidarity in the present with our own political hopes for the future, when actually they are not directly compatible.

So there are two challenges here; one to avoid specifically demonising Israel as a state more so than any other state; and two, to avoid supporting politics that reinforce the need for a state. A way of doing this is to recognise that there is a whole set of struggles and resistance, not from the elites of each side but coming from the grassroots. It is there, across communities, that we can offer our solidarity. We can talk about the needs of the here and now and express our hopes for the future in language that does not use commanding overtones.

It is also important to express criticism in a way that does not make implicit assumptions that Israeli government = all Israelis = all Jews.

5.7 Challenging Right-Wing Narratives on Left Campaigns and Antisemitism

Narratives from the pro-Israeli right-wing tend to identify Israel's interests with the interests of all Jews and likewise characterize all Palestinians support as supporting Hamas, etc. It is in their interest to create stark, simplistic imagery and narratives of good and bad, utilizing the very powerful charge of antisemitism when needed.

Unfortunately, the Left as a whole dropped the ball on countering antisemitism by discounting its impact in favour of supporting pro-Palestinian positions. Simplistic narratives from socialist-led campaigns in the West assumed a hierarchy which saw antisemitism as less important. This opened space for the wholesale takeover of the challenging of antisemitism by right-wing/conservative Jewish groups in US and UK and hardline religious/capitalist political parties in Israel.

A problem not recognised by left anti-antisemitic groups is how they play into right-wing agendas in the same way that they accuse left-wing campaigns of naively playing into antisemitism. This does not mean their criticism should be taken less seriously, but it is symptomatic of the flawed assumption that it is sufficient to feel that one is against racism without challenging ones own privileged position – that is, without actually having an understanding of the many subtle ways in which racism can manifest or how one benefits from various privileges.

Part of the problem comes from mis-characterising those opposed to Israeli government policies as being a uniform, united group. Anarchists, liberals and socialists are seen as having a common ideology and similar motivations. This suits a right-wing narrative, which smears everyone alike.

It is also used to attack groups from within Jewish communities who opposing Israeli government policies. This includes narratives of labelling Jewish opposition of the Israeli government as coming

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attraction of the right and conspiracism to the Occupy movement. Also see Adam Ma'anit's article *A Human Balance*, New Internationalist, 2004.

from 'self-hating' Jews, or 'traitors'. Indeed, many of the progressive Jewish groups who have been on the receiving end of this sort of accusation are right to point out that this is a form of antisemitism, and just because it comes from within the Jewish community does not lessen the effect; if anything, it increases it.[34]

Some have extrapolated this to criticize any Jew who does not identify themselves a Zionist on their standards is opened to criticism as a self-hating Jew. Thus, while there are problems with anti-Zionist positions as a cover for antisemitism, the issue is muddied by political abuse of the label by right-wing political elites, making it difficult to unpick and poisoning the atmosphere in general.

This loss of space to the right-wing needs to be challenged by the Left picking up the baton of combating antisemitism and seeing it as equal to any other form of racism. There is considerable movement in this direction from within the Jewish communities where a number of groups have formed (e.g. Independent Jewish Voices, Occupy AIPAC) to present more critical, albeit varied, stances on Israel.[35] Anarchists need to be more proactive in ensuring that they are working with this change rather than bolstering the interests of the right-wing.

Self-hatred

The 'self-hater' is a term that has emerged in some contexts of anti-racist studies and practice, used nominally to describe an individual who has rationalised their own oppression to the point they see it as justified and even work in its favour. Like with the 'useful Jew', they can be used by privileged groups to justify privilege and oppression.

A related term is 'Uncle Tom', the lead character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* who "*has become an epithet for a person who is slavish and excessively subservient to perceived authority figures, particularly a black person who behaves in a subservient manner to white people; or any person perceived to be a participant in the oppression of their own group*".[36]

Use of these terms is problematic as denying the person agency over their reaction to their oppression.[37] However, both have been deeply politicised within the contexts of their struggles. In black liberation struggles 'Uncle Tom' was used to criticise individuals seen as pandering to white supremacist agendas. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict advocates of the Occupation use 'self-hating Jew' accuse dissenting voices in Jewish communities of self-hatred (and by extension hating all Jews) to silence them. Without going into the pros and cons of labelling with in oppressed communities, those outside them should be wary of engaging with the term.[38]

5.8 The Apologist Drift in Left Anti-Antisemitism

The problem of challenging antisemitism is compounded by a drift to a position of apologising for Israel in the left anti-antisemitic groupings. Wary of feeding a right-wing agenda (of the European/US variety), some commentators present Israel as a passive player – which is clearly not the situation. The use of broad strokes to describe the Left, while downplaying the Palestinian voices, has led to the centre & left-wing anti-antisemitic camp becoming criticised for crossing the

[34] Slavoj Zizek uses the term 'Zionist Antisemite' to describe pro-Israeli Jews who attack other Jews using the same antisemitic themes that were adopted by 19th and 20th Century antisemites. See *Anti-Semitism, Anti-Semite and Jew,* 2009, on YouTube.com

[35] This process is well documented on the Independent Jewish Voices of Canada, Magnes Zionist and Mondoweiss.net blogs.

[36] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uncle_Tom

[37] Thanks to Tom Anderson for this point.

[38] Gilad Atzmon refers to himself as 'self-hating Jew' adopting that critical terminology as a matter of pride. However, this does not absolve the problematic nature of the term, its connotations or its politicization by sections of the right. See http://www.gilad.co.uk/writings/self-haters-unite-by-gilad-atzmon.html, http://www.gisborneherald.co.nz/article/?id=8879.

line to becoming pro-Israeli advocacy groups, thus damaging their otherwise valuable critical contributions.

From my reading, while giving lip-service to the the fact that there can be legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy, anti-antisemitism commentators rarely put this side by side with their attacks on pro-Palestinian campaigners. Palestinian solidarity campaigners with honest intentions are simply criticized rather than being shown how they could have done it alternatively, which again gives the appearance of seeking to silence. Room for doubt is often denied.[39]

This is a move away from the politics of earlier voices such as Steven Cohen, author of the seminal challenge to antisemitism on the left, *Funny, you don't look Anti-Semitic*. A socialist, Cohen saw himself as an "anti-Zionist Zionist", and recognised the problems inherent in Zionism. Current anti-antisemitism campaigners tend to come from the centre-left with a different take on Zionism.

The apologist drift is compounded by inappropriate liberal norms and sloppy characterization. For instance, sweeping statements about Palestinian nationalist aspirations, particularly where more extreme tendencies (i.e. more likely to get space in the right-wing press) are taken as representative of everyone. Things which would be rightfully criticized if applied to Jews.

If Palestinian aspirations to nationhood are to be questioned, then the same questions must be applied to Israel, including acknowledgement of the use of terror and violence in the founding of the Israeli state in 1948. Seeking to privilege one as acceptable or not having consequences and benefiting from that privilege, while then denying it to others is racist. One cannot claim the benefits and then say "it is all in the past, you must adapt to new norms that we will give you".

There is an inconsistency in the way pro-Israel groups require that massacres of Jews should be treated with respect yet have problems accepting, say, the Jenin massacre – for instance, trying to downplay the scale of death or criticising the Palestinian description of the founding of the state of Israel and the subsequent displacement and death of Palestinians as the Nakba ("Disaster").

While commentators paint a picture of moderate Israelis overtaken by fear and cynicism, there is only so far that responsibility or complicity can be abdicated. At some point it needs to be recognised that they set equal store on Israel being a democratic state and this democratic state has consistently voted in hawkish and right-wing governments. Using the fear and cynicism card is effectively saying that the Palestinians were originally to blame and painting Israel as passive, merely reacting to the 'problem' of Palestinians.

There have been other situations where this apologism is in danger of becoming a silencing force in its own right, including of progressive Jewish groups.[40] Likewise, there has been little to recognise or counter attacks on progressive Jewish groups by more right wing ones, which serve as attempts to shut down debate within Jewish communities that are critical of Israeli government policies. While anti-antisemitism groups such as Engage rightfully argue that simplistic stances feed into antisemitic currents, they are equally guilty of presenting a simplistic playing of the 'new antisemitism' critique. So they are, in part, helping to feed misuse of the antisemitic label to silence legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies from within and outside the Jewish communities. As well as being morally dubious, there is also a danger that the cumulative effect will be a reaction against them, in turn damaging the recognition of the dangers of new antisemitism.

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[39] For example David Hirsh's defence of Maureen Lippman which completely ignores the fact that offence could be taken by Palestinians at her insinuation they held life cheaply, yet it is consistently his position that where offence is caused to Jews then it is fine to come down hard with the criticism of antisemitism. See his *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections*, 2007 online at http://eprints.gold.ac.uk/2061/ and http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/aug/02/stopharassingjews.

[40] *Progressive Jewish Thought and the New Anti-Semitism*, Alvin H. Rosenfeld, of the conservative American Jewish Council.

5.9 Dictating Resistance

A significant proportion of liberal commentators who support Israeli or Zionist positions seek to impose norms on Palestinians. Particularly, what they should be doing or how they should be resisting. While recognising that there is a justification for opposition, they maintain their privileged standpoint to say what form it should take. In adhering to cherished liberal positions ('dialogue', 'non-violence', etc.) there is blindness to the practicalities. For instance, when being brutalized, a call for negotiation is a slap in the face and a failure to recognize the actual realities of occupation.

As it stands, the structures of 'dialogue' and 'negotiation' are dictated by an Israeli government that insists its demands are met first, without recognising its own role as colonizer or treating the Palestinians or their representatives as equals. The process of coming to the table is not 'mutual'.

Thus, a common reaction from Palestinians is that negotiation should not simply replicate the unequal power dynamics already in place. Demands are put in place by the stronger party actively seeking to delegitimise the weaker party's own agency and interest. It is asking someone to negotiate for peace while facing a fist: no successful solution is likely under such circumstances.

Likewise, it is simply rude to ask why other Arab countries are not doing something. Should they be should be doing something in a way that suits Israel? It also assumes there is a homogeneous pan-Arabic culture. Such statements make out that Israel is somehow faultless or distract from specific acts of discrimination. Or they imply that neighbouring Arab states bear more responsibility than Israel itself, for the refugee situation created by Israeli government policies.

5.10 Right to Return and Indigenous Populations

As it stands all Jews have a 'right to return' to Israel; that is, they can settle there and be accepted as citizens on the sole ground that they are Jewish. Palestinians who were forced to flee during the Nabka and other wars do not have this automatic right and their claims are systematically discriminated against by government policy. It is an anomalous situation that directly reflects the ethnocratic bias of the Israeli state and creates a situation where the indigenous population is treated as second-class.

To anarchists, this is problematic given that there is a no-borders position inherent in our anti-statism, so migration needs to be open. On the other hand, in the face of continued antisemitism around the world, why should Jews be denied a safe homeland?

It is not the right to migrate that is necessarily the issue but that it is not being fairly applied. As such, there tends to be an avoidance of calling for an end of the right to return *per se* in anarchist / solidarity groups on the ground, but that it should be open to all, Palestinian and Jew alike.

6. The Anarchist Heritage

It is worth quickly looking at the anarchist heritage because it has antisemitic taints of its own. Steve Cohen's work points to antisemitic remarks by Bakunin, Proudhon and some of their followers, not to speak of Marx's own abuse of 'the Jew' in his writing. There is also a semi-regular debate around whether or not Nestor Makhno was antisemitic.

Early anarchism was not immune to other political trends of its time, particularly around universality, a position which believed that culture(s) would be subsumed into politics or at least a dominant culture defined by a given politic, and which lead it down racist / antisemitic paths.

On the other hand, anarchist thought and action has a strong Jewish strand from its earliest days. At times the main anarchist newsletters in New York and London where in Yiddish. Many of those who contributed greatly to the struggle over the years were Jewish; we can point to Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman; from Gustav Landauer to Murray Bookchin, Fredy Perlman[41], Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky, and many more in between. The noted anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker, though not Jewish, did most of his organising within Jewish communities, and so on.

Some of our earliest thinkers were flawed and antisemitic and we can't brush that under the carpet. Refusing to acknowledge this aspect compounds the crime of antisemitism.

The strength of our political thought is that while we can draw on the work of different writers, we are not beholden to any. They are important influences on our thought, but there is an active part of our politics that prevents us from holding them up as gods and masters, as the sole repositories of truth in the way that many on the left hold Marx and Engels up as unimpeachable. We recognise the flaws, learn and move on; acknowledge without worshipping or become dependent solely on them.

Conclusion

In conclusion there is still much to be done. The first step is to educate ourselves, to understand the varied tropes of antisemitism, to learn what consistent anti-racist analysis and practice is. That is, to move from simply adopting these terms to recognising the everyday challenges in applying them. This requires all sides to be pro-active, whether Palestinian solidarity groups or those challenging antisemitism. There is also the need to recognise that the term 'antisemitism' is both poorly understood and contested which leads to a lot of bad practice.

It is easy to apportion blame to one side or another. Ultimately, this is not helpful as it assumes that one side is worse than the other, that there are not legitimate grievances to be had by both. Both sides have had difficult histories that need to be acknowledged, although the people alive now are not the people of 70 years ago. Progress is not going to be made by suppressing or rewriting the past, something which only serves the elites. Nor can one force justice by slapping international law and Western liberal norms, failing to address ongoing grievances.

While political leaders and vested interests continue to exist, this present situation is unlikely to change. At the end of the day, those most affected, those who live in the contested lands are simply trying to get on with their lives. Any future solution will require people to live side by side.

What an anarchist analysis can bring is a focus on communities and the needs of the people who live in them. Rather than abstracting the struggle so that people become objects to be criticised or romanticised at a distance, we should be working directly with the communities, building bridges rather than walls, allow a grassroots solidarity to grow that can bypass the problems that come with hierarchies. In opening this space, people can come together and develop the understanding that comes through communication and contact. Thus, the solidarity we express should always be with the people, of both sides, not those who would command their minds against the wishes of their hearts.

Thanks to Tom Anderson, Cath Muller, Josh Robinson & Sophie Roumat for discussions which allowed me to refine the ideas in this article and picking up on points were I tripped up and to Casey Pegg for a last-dash proof-reading. Any remaining faults are mine alone.

[41] Who wrote the interesting article *Anti-Semitism & the Beirut Pogrom*, 1983. Available at http://libcom.org/library

For Peace and Freedom in Palestine

Czech Anarchist Federation

The Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation (CSAF) joined an action organized by the Czech branch of International Solidarity Movement (ISM) on the 5th of June to denounce the Israeli attack on the humanitarian flotilla, and the occupation of Palestine as well. The anarchists brought a banner stating "Anarchists against the wall – solidarity with people of Gaza“. When the march reached the Israeli embassy, a member of CSAF spoke:

"Let me greet you and say a few words in the name of the anarchists who joined this action. As the advocates of the idea of free, self - organized and equal society, we feel we have to stand up against totalitarianism, exploitation, intolerant religion, racist delusions and prejudices of all kinds. That is why we are also standing up today, as always, against occupations. All occupations are alike. It does not matter what are called. The occupation of Czechia by the Nazi army, the occupation of Chechnya by the Russian army or the occupation of Gaza by the army of Israel differ a lot, but their essence remains the same. The militarily stronger force imposes its will on the occupied area and breaks down the resistance, violent or non-violent. Only the ordinary people suffer. The hate is escalating.

We will never stand by those calling for hate towards others, just because they have different skin colour, nationality, different or no religion. There are no Jews or Arabs for us, but just people abusing their power and people who want to live in peace. We do not see a significant difference between the leaders of Islamist groups, who do not mind killing innocent people, and the bosses of Israeli armed forces, doing the same. We stand by the side of those Jews and Arabs who demonstrate together every Friday in villages affected by the construction of the monstrous segregating wall on the west bank. Our Israeli friends from the group Anarchists Against the Wall are engaged there. Those people, Israeli activists side by side with Palestinian farmers, are evidence for us that it is possible to stand up to hate, to the wall, and to occupation.

Anti-Semitism is a manifest of stupidity; occupation is an act of despotism. We do not wish the Palestinians an independent state, we wish them freedom!”

Published 2010, Czech Anarchist Federation, http://www.csaf.cz/english.php?file=150

No state solution in Gaza

Statement distributed by the Manchester and Sheffield Anarchist Federation groups on the conflict in Gaza, in solidarity with the victims of the conflict, and for internationalism.

One thing is absolutely clear about the current situation in Gaza: the Israeli state is committing atrocities which must end immediately. With hundreds dead and thousands wounded, it has become increasingly clear that the aim of the military operation, which has been in the planning stages since the signing of the original ceasefire in June, is to break Hamas completely. The attack follows the crippling blockade throughout the supposed ‘ceasefire’, which has destroyed the livelihoods of Gazans, ruined the civilian infrastructure and created a humanitarian disaster which anyone with an ounce of humanity would seek an end to.

But that's not all there is to say about the situation. On both sides of the conflict, the idea that opposing Israel has to mean supporting Hamas and its ‘resistance’ movement is worryingly common. We totally reject this argument. Just like any other set of rulers, Hamas, like all the other major Palestinian factions, are happy and willing to sacrifice ordinary Palestinians to increase their power. This isn’t some vague theoretical point – for a period recently most deaths in Gaza were a result of fighting between Hamas and Fatah. The ‘choices’ offered to ordinary Palestinian people are between Islamist gangsters (Hamas, Islamic Jihad) or nationalist gangsters (Fatah, Al-Aqsa Martyrs brigades). These groups have shown their willingness to attack working-class attempts to improve their living conditions, seizing union offices, kidnapping prominent trade unionists, and breaking strikes. One spectacular example is the attack on Palestine Workers Radio by Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, for “stoking internal conflicts”. Clearly, a “free Palestine” under the control of any of these groups would be nothing of the sort.

As anarchists, we are internationalists, opposing the idea that the rulers and ruled within a nation have any interests in common. Therefore, anarchists reject Palestinian nationalism just as we reject Israeli nationalism (Zionism). Ethnicity does not grant “rights” to lands, which require the state to enforce them. People, on the other hand, have a right to having their human needs met, and should be able to live where they choose, freely.

Therefore, against the divisions and false choices set up by nationalism, we fully support the ordinary inhabitants of Gaza and Israel against state warfare – not because of their nationality, ethnicity, or religion, but simply because they're real living, feeling, thinking, suffering, struggling human beings. And this support has to mean total hostility to all those who would oppress and exploit them –the Israeli state and the Western governments and corporations that supply it with weapons, but also any other capitalist factions who seek to use ordinary working-class Palestinians as pawns in their power struggles. The only real solution is one which is collective, based on the fact that as a class, globally, we ultimately have nothing but our ability to work for others, and everything to gain in ending this system – capitalism – and the states and wars it needs .

That this seems like a “difficult” solution does not stop it from being the right one. Any “solution” that means endless cycles of conflict, which is what nationalism represents, is no solution at all. And if that is the case, the fact that it is “easier” is irrelevant. There are sectors of Palestinian society which are not dominated by the would-be rulers – protests organised by village committees in the West Bank for instance. These deserve our support. As do those in Israel who refuse to fight, and who resist the war. But not the groups who call on Palestinians to be slaughtered on their behalf by one of the most advanced armies in the world, and who wilfully attack civilians on the other side of the border.

Neither one state nor two states, but no states

Whoever dies, Hamas and the Israeli state win

ANARCHO-NATIONALISM:

ANARCHIST ATTITUDES TOWARDS JEWISH NATIONALISM AND ZIONISM

Mina Grauer

I

The need to belong to a distinct, well-defined group has been a natural, some say biological urge of human beings since early times. Common language and traditions, shared ancestry, history, and mythology, as well as territorial unity have been frequently used to demarcate one people from another. During the nineteenth century, however, these distinctive traits assumed a wider scope in the lives of people, heralding an era of rising national feelings and struggles for national self-determination. Jews began to ponder the issue of a separate Jewish national identity relatively late; indeed, they resorted to nationalistic themes only after realizing that Emancipation could no longer be considered a suitable solution for the specific problem confronting secular Jews in an era suffused with national outbursts.

Emancipation stood for the idea that as individuals Jews were entitled to all the civil, political and judicial rights enjoyed by other citizens, whereas as a group, a defined national entity, they had no rights at all. Thus, during a debate in the French National Assembly, Count Clermont-Tonnerre declared that "to the Jews as individuals everything, to the Jews as a nation – nothing."[1] Noting that the national problems of Jews stem from the fact that they function in abnormal conditions-its people scattered among many lands, speaking different languages, and belonging to varied and disparate cultures, Emancipation should be understood as an attempt to solve the Jewish problem on an individual basis, rather than provide a collective solution. Emancipation, therefore, failed to supply an adequate answer to the quest for a Jewish identity in the modern world. For while Emancipation was based on the universalist doctrines of the French Revolution it confronted the exclusive environment of nationalist separatism. Moses Hess concluded that only if Judaism was kept within the confines of a religious sect, could Emancipation solve the problems of the Jews. But in the nineteenth century, a century characterized by national revival, it was impossible to view Judaism as a mere religion. Therefore, claimed Hess, Emancipation only creates new tensions between the modern Jew, who wishes to partake in the social, political, and cultural life of his surroundings, and the nationalistically infused society in which he lives – a society which does not consider the Jew as an integral part of its national culture. The solution that Hess offered in *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862) was to establish a Jewish socialist commonwealth in Palestine where the Jews would be able to develop their national faculties simultaneously with the creation of a socialist society.[2] Hess' outlook contained two novelties: a perception of Judaism as a national entity, as opposed to the traditional understanding of Judaism as merely a religion, and a treatment of the Jewish problem as a national one.

Many Jewish radicals, socialists as well as anarchists, initially subscribed to the universalist ideas common to radical thought, ideas that Hess himself used to advocate before his nationalist conversion in *Rome and Jerusalem*. In *The Holy History of Mankind* (1837), Hess maintained that Jews have a future in the modern world only as individuals, and that a solution to the Jewish problem would only emerge via a process of assimilation and integration into the universal socialist revolutionary movement. But while it took Hess a relatively short time to sober up to the reality, whereby national affinities were deeper and stronger than class solidarity, mostJewish radicals continued to believe for a long time that the social revolution, which would solve the problems of the masses throughout the world, would also solve the specific problems of the Jews in a manner divorced from a national context. In fact, many Jewish radicals accepted Marx's rather hostile dissection of the Jewish question in his "Zur Judenfrage" (1844), in which he maintained that the

social emancipations of Jews is equal to the emancipation of society from Judaism, concluding that Jews, whom he defined as a “caste,” would ultimately disappear with the downfall of capitalism.[3] This firm belief in internationalism was partially undermined by events such as the pogroms in Russia in 1881-1882, during which the Russian revolutionary group “Narodnaia Volia” declared that it considered the persecution of the Jews as a positive step on the way to accomplish the social revolution,[4] or the Dreyfus Affair of 1896, during which a wave of antisemitism swept over France, regardless of the fact that one could hardly imagine a more assimilated Jew or a more chauvinistically French patriot than Captain Alfred Dreyfus. The frustration following these events caused many Jewish radicals to question the validity of their cosmopolitan orientations, as they suddenly realized that a socialist or an anarchist ideology might not solve the problems of the Jews in a satisfactory manner. As a consequence, they started to look for ways to combine their radicalism with their growing sense of national identity.

Much has been written about socialism and Jewish national revival, especially in the context of the Zionist movement, the Bund and the socialist parties in Israel. Yet, there exists no dicsussion in the literature on the anarchists' perception of the Jewish national problem. This article surveys the anarchist attitudes towards nationalism and examines the various answers given by both Jewish and non-Jewish anarchists to questions pertaining to Jewish national identity, Jewish political sovereignty, and Zionism. Theoretically, such a discussion should be very short; since anarchism and nationalism are incompatible, it stands to reason that anarchists should oppose all forms of nationalism whenever confronted with the issue. However, ideological compromises were not alien to the anarchists. Endowed with a healthy dose of realism, anarchists frequently realized that ideological purity should at times be sacrificed for the sake of either advancing their ultimate causes or providing immediate solutions to problems that could not wait for such times in which the conditions for supplying "correct" anarchist answers are met. The issue of Jewish national identity proved to be exactly such a problem. At the risk of transgressing the boundaries of anarchist dogma, Jewish anarchists looked for a scheme that would combine anarchist theory with a possible solution to the Jewish quest for national identity.

II

It is possible to distinguish between three different anarchist approaches towards nationalism. The first is the classical anarchist doctrine as expounded by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Michael Bakunin. According to this approach, anarchists should renounce all national loyalties and strive for the creation of a unified, nationless universe. Rudolf Rocker, too, can be regarded as belonging to the classical trend, although his platform allowed for certain deviations such as limited cultural expression constrained by national traditions. The second anarchist approach to nationalism is the gradualist approach. According to its advocates, most notably Peter Kropotkin and his followers, nationalism and internationalism serve two different purposes at different times in the historical development of the ideal social order. Nationalism is seen as a necessary force in the process of freeing people from foreign domination. Then, after national independence is achieved, the people can channel their resources and fight for a new world order according to internationalist principles. The third approach, advocated mainly by Jewish anarchists, such as Bernard Lazare and Hillel Solotaroff, seeks to come to terms with all aspects of nationalism. This approach, which was formulated as an answer to the Jewish problem, is based on the most realistic premises, as it recognized the power of nationalism and the futility of the fight against it. Nevertheless, this approach also constitutes the gravest breach with anarchist principles.

Classical anarchist dogma distinguishes between the concepts of “nation” and “nationalism”. Whereas the nation is viewed as a natural phenomenon, which has the right to exist and develop its faculties freely and independently of other nations, nationalism is usually branded as a false, articifial, and reactionary ideology. Moreover, it is viewed as a convenient smoke screen, a diversion used by the ruling class for purposes of channelling the restlessness of the masses into

"harmless" directions. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon believed that the loudest advocates of nationalism were, in fact, mere opportunists versed in utilizing nationalist themes as a means of evading, or at least postponing the economic and social revolution. Michael Bakunin, too, regarded nationalism as a tool through which the prerogatives and ambitions of the heads of states were promoted behind a blatantly false facade of historical legitimacy. He rejected the universal basis of nationalism, claiming it to be an exclusive, separatist phenomenon, a manipulative sentiment used to alienate peoples from one another, thereby inhibiting all attempts at uniting mankind. In contrast, the nation, according to Bakunin, was a natural, organic product meant to express legitimate societal affiliations, an extension of natural familial and tribal ties. He perceived only one danger in the existence of nations, and that was their propensity to succumb to the false charms of nationalism. Bakunin was vehement in his opposition to all forms of patriotic sentimentalism, advocating a universal renunciation of “what is called the glory, the might, and the greatness of the Fatherland.”[5]

When referring to Jewish matters, the remarks of both Proudhon and Bakunin ranged from the patronizing to the unabashedly antisemtitic. Proudhon, for instance, claimed that the Jews constitute a race capable of neither forming a state nor governing itself independently. The Jews, in the eyes of Proudhon, were the sworn enemies of mankind and should be either sent back to Asia or destroyed. Bakunin did not chose his words more carefully. Jews, he said, are an exploiting sect, a nation of parasites who are not fit for socialism, let alone suitable to lead the socialist movement.[6] Peter Kropotkin was the first anarchist philosopher to deal with the Jewish national problem in a manner devoid of racial prejudices.

His exceptional attitude can be credited to his close personal contacts with the members of the Jewish anarchist movement in London. He often visited the Brener Street Club, then the intellectual center of the London Jewish labor movement, and frequently addressed the anarchist meetings there. Being a close friend of Rudolf Rocker, who for two decades edited the main Jewish anarchist periodical in England, the *Arbeiter Fraint*, he also became familiar with their problems as an ethnic group. Moreover, during the great tailors strike of 1911, which was led by Jewish anarchists, Kropotkin came to respect and admire the spirit of solidarity and cooperation exhibited by the Jewish anarchists. It seems, therefore, only natural that those Jewish anarchists, who were looking for a compromise between the universalist revolutionary principles of classical anarchism and their awakened sense of national identity, would turn to Peter Kropotkin for his opinions on Jewish nationalism and Zionism.

In an open letter addressed to Kropotkin, a Jewish anarchist named Yarblum, who defined himself as both an anarcho-communist and a Zionist, asked the renowned anarchist to express his opinion on nationalism in general, and on Zionism as a national liberation movement in particular. In his letter, Yarblum maintained that only when the Jews form a state of their own in Palestine will they be able to develop normally. He added that there already exist anarcho-communist groups with Zionist affiliations which aspire to realize anarchist principles by establishing free communes in Palestine. In his answer, printed in the anarchist journal *Listki Khleb i Volia* in 1907, Kropotkin rejected the idea of aJewish state, and especially the notion that Jewish national sovereignty could be restored in Palestine. As a geographer, Kropotkin first pointed out that the climatological deficiencies of the place would turn the prospect of a settlement in Palestine into a physical impossibility. He then noted that historically Palestine was deserted by its inhabitants due to its arid geoclimatological features which made access to water extremely difficult.[7] Carried away by his own argument, Kropotkin failed to mention the true historical reasons which led the Jews out of Palestine, and neglected to mention the fact that despite its adverse climatological attributes, Palestine was not at any time in its long history a deserted place.

Although a libertarian and by no stretch of imagination an antisemite, it seems that even Kropotkin was not altogether free from the myths of immutable national characteristics so fashionable among anthropologists and social philosophers at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the

twentieth. First, he noted that a successful settlement can only be accomplished by people endowed with the ability to till the land, a quality, that Kropotkin claimed, was lacking among Jews, who for centuries were primarily urban dwellers, and have earned their keep mainly as self-employed merchants and artisans. Moreover, Kropotkin argued that if the Jews wanted so desperately to become farmers, they could have done so long ago, by establishing colonies in other parts of the world, such as in South Africa, where there was an abundance of land and the climate was certainly more hospitable than that in Palestine.[8] And finally, Kropotkin recognized that the creation of a Jewish nation would require the mass displacement of people from one place to another, and a process of rehabilitation and reconstruction on an unimaginable scale.

Notwithstanding the physical obstacles, Kropotkin's main objections to the establishment of a national entity in Palestine originated out of his political conviction that Zionism was, in fact, an idea infected by religious principles, rather than a secular national liberation movement. In his analyses of nationalism, Kropotkin takes into account the role of national liberation movements, which he regards as a positive force in the process of destructing capitalist society. Nations who fight for their national liberation cannot embark on the route towards social revolution since they are preoccupied with their fight against foreign rule. The role of national liberation movements is thus imperative for the revolution as they are intent on removing the obstacle that stands between the workers and the awakening of their social conscience. But Zionism, claimed Kropotkin, was not a regular national movement. Rather, it grew and developed out of the aspirations of religious Jews to establish a theocratic state in Palestine. Therefore, Kropotkin feared that the creation of a Jewish state would not only be materially difficult, but also extremely undesirable from the political point of view, since the investment of resources and sacrifices could only serve the purpose of reviving anachronistic ideas, which rightfully belong to a bygone past.[9]

Yarblum, whose letter prompted Kropotkin to write about Zionism, did not agree with these criticisms, and accused Kropotkin of confusing between Zionism and Messianism. Yarblum claimed that while Messianism was a religious idea, which maintained that the liberation of the “chosen people” would be brought about by the transfer of the Jews to Palestine “on a paper bridge,” Zionism was a revolutionary, anti-religious ideal, which held that liberation was an issue dependent on the people themselves and not on the acts of God and his Messiah.[10] In his response, Kropotkin acknowledged the existence of different trends in Zionism, but claimed that religous Zionism was the most important current within the Zionist movement, and that the political secular trend was a historically insignificant one.

Kropotkin's alternative to Zionism was political and economic assimilation of the Jews in the countries in which they resided. Yet, by no means did he advocate cultural assimilation. Even if a nation does not possess a state of its own, it does not follow that it should neglect its national heritage. On the contrary, the development of language and culture by nations should be regarded as an important contribution to the overall progress of humanity. Thus, Kropotkin urged the Jews to develop their culture and national folklore, similarly to other nations devoid of country, such as the Ukrainians, the Bohemians and the Georgians. This could take place in their countries of residence, without resorting to geographical displacement.[11] According to Kropotkin, if the political current of Zionism would realize this task as its target, it would stop being Zionism and Palestinism, and would then become a genuine national ideal suitable for the purposes of the Jews.

III

Gustav Landauer, a prominent German Jewish anarchist, who in addition to editing *Der Sozialist*, the main anarchist newspaper in Germany, was also an author and literary critic, became interested in the Jewish problem around 1913 following the Beilis blood libel affair, in which the Russian government attempted to pin a charge of ritual murder on an innocent Jew. His interest in Jewish affairs was also aroused as a result of his close friendship with Martin Buber, whose writings had a lasting influence on Landauer's philosophy.

In his *Dreissig Sozialistische Thesen* (1970), Landauer created an epistemoogical distinction between “nation” and “state.” Landauer regarded the state as an artificial, fortuitous political structure born out of the accidents of history, rather than the outcome of a common natural experience of a given people. In contrast, in line with the romantic tradition of historicism, Landauer viewed the nation of the “folk”, terms which he used interchangeably, as an organically developing entity that has always existed beneath the cover of the state. The nation, according to Landauer, is “an equality of individuals – a feeling and reality – which is brought about in free spirit to unity and to union.”[12] Landauer was clearly more of an antimaterialistic mystic than a rational political philosopher. Thus, while perceiving the “folk” as a historically developing organism, a living creation of the human spirit, he also maintained that “folk” was a mythical illusion, a non-entity. In fact, both the folk and the state were illusions, according to Landauer, but while the former was a life-giving organismic illusion which encouraged self-determination and promoted activism, the latter was an illusion leading to enslavement and perpetual passivity. In order to make a distinction between these two non-entities – one good, the other bad – Landauer invented one more non-entity. The new introduction was the “Spirit” (*Geist*). According to Landauer, the state lacks Spirit, whereas the folk possesses a disembodied "Spirit," through which each individual is tied to the rest of the community.[13]

Landauer perceives the folk as a spiritual and cultural unit, not as a political or economic structure, and definitely not as a biological entity determined by fixed and unalterable blood ties. In contrast to Bakunin, who urged anarchists to abandon the false principle of nationality in favor of universalism, Landauer viewed one's nationality as an essential part of one's existence. Moreover, according to Landauer, an individual can entertain many loyalties; in effect belonging to various folks. In a letter to anarchist historian Max Nettlau, Landauer described himself as “first an animal, then a man, then a Jew, then a German, then a South German, and finally that special I.”[14] Furthermore, Landauer regarded each category as independent, and he perceived no possible conflict between his hierarchical classifications.

Landauer's distinction between folk and state was adopted by Rudolf Rocker in his analysis of nationalism and its historical development. Rudolf Rocker, a German anarchist, who grew up in the German Social-Democratic Party and was among the founders of the German Anarchist movement, first came into contact with Jewish radicals while in exile in Paris. Later, in London, he became involved in the activities of the Jewish anarchist movement in the East End, and soon became its leader and spiritual mentor – its Rabbi, as one of his disciples branded him.[15] Rocker, who taught himself the Yiddish language, served for almost two decades as the editor of the *Arbeiter Fraint*, the most influential organ of the Jewish anarchist movement in England. Because of his activities among the Jews, Rocker was repeatedly confronted with the phenomenon of Jewish nationalism and its practical affirmations, Zionism and the issue of statehood in Israel.

In *Nationalism and Culture* (1937), a book in which he traces the development of the national idea from the dawn of history to modern times, Rocker concludes that national feelings are neither innate nor natural. An individual, according to Rocker, is not tied to a nation the way one naturally belongs to a family or a tribe. Rather, a person must be carefully trained to think of himself as part of a particular nation, similarly to the way one is trained to believe oneself a member of a particular church. National consciousness, claims Rocker, is thus no more than an artificial construct, which could not have possibly emerged from the people, but had to be imposed on the people from above. Rocker defines “folk” as a natural result of social union, an “association of men brought about by a certain similarity of external conditions of living, a common language and special characteristics due to climate and geographical environment.”[16] Moreover, a people or folk, is a defined, more or less homogeneous community existing within certain boundaries at a given time. As opposed to “folk” a nation, *sensu* Rocker, is an artificial product of society resulting from the political manipulations of the heads of states. Unlike the folk, the nation has no independent existence and

cannot be separated from the state. Despite the similarities between Landauer's and Rocker's perceptions on the issue of nationalism, their terminologies are quite incompatible, and they use different terms to describe similar concepts. Rocker's “folk” is Landauer's "nation," while Rocker's “nation” is Landauer's "state." Rocker uses “state” and “nation” to denote cause and effect, respectively. Landauer, on the other hand, much like Marx and Engels, does not clearly distinguish between the two.

Whereas according to Rocker's definitions, Jews were neither a folk nor a nation, Landauer considers the Jews to have achieved a level of nationhood, for according to Landauer a nation requires neither a common language nor a measure of geographical unity. The only unity Landauer emphasized was that of a common historical background, which the Jews possessed in abundance. Despite their different attitude towards the questions of whether Jews possess a discernible national identity or not, both Rocker and Landauer rejected the view that the Jewish issue was a separate problem which required a separate solution. Both Landauer and Rocker believed in the anarchist assumption that the specific problems encountered by Jews would be solved together with other social issues once the revolution starts. Yet, for Landauer, socialist universalism was neither an attempt to sidestep the problem of antisemitism nor an escape into a vision of humanity where national differences would disappear, as it as for many other radical Jews. On the contrary, Landauer rejected the assimilationist tendencies of most German Jews, insisting that Jews and Germans were separate folks, both endowed with the potential to make unique contributions to mankind's heritage. But, it was imperative that the potential special contributions of the Jews should not be channelled into the formation of yet another state.

The Jewish folk had an advantage over other nationalities because it was not confined within the boundaries of any given state. This historical fact should not be considered as a disadvantage, but rather as an advantage, for it liberates the Jews from the yoke of conformity; it enables them to remain a folk while at the same time strive not only for national self-betterment but also for an ideal future of universal unity encompassing all of humanity's components. According to Landauer, the territorial deprivation of the Jews made them distinct from all other nations in the sense that they were not addicted to the cult of the state.[17] Therefore, the Jews were entrusted with a historical mission which was destined to become the driving force behind the construction of socialist communities divorced from any connection to the state. Thus, while for other nations socialism meant a combination of party and politics, for the Jews socialism was a unison between practice and spirituality. This belief explains Landauer's hostility to the Zionist movement, which he thought was more concerned with the founding of a Jewish state than with cultivating that special “calling to serve humanity” that was entrusted to the Jews in the Diaspora.[18]

Landauer's negative attitude towards the Zionist interpretation of Jewish national self-determination was shared by Rudolf Rocker. Unlike Landauer and Kropotkin, however, for whom Zionism was a mere theoretical consideration, Rocker had to deal with Zionism on a dayto-day basis during his work among the Jewish immigrants in London's East End. In particular, Rocker had to fight constantly against the ideological mix-up of anarchism and Zionism that was prevalent among the Jewish immigrants in London. His task was a relatively easy one in the years preceding World War I, when the Zionist movement did not yet enjoy massive popular support among the Jewish working classes. Furthermore, prior to World War I, Rocker could rely on his unequalled charisma, and the fact that none of the Zionist leaders at that time could even contemplate challenging Rocker's legendary influence on the Jewish population.[19] In the years following the war, however, the relative numerical advantage of the anarchists over the Zionists was erased. The combined forces of war, Communism, Jewish orthodoxy, and the fast-growing Zionist influence eroded the anarchist grip on the Jewish worker. The process was further accelerated following Rocker's removal from the political scene with his internment as an enemy alien in 1914.

Rejecting national sovereignty for the Jewish people, Rocker saw some merit in the suggestions

made by Ahad Ha-am (Asher Tsvi Ginzeberg), who advocated the establishment of a cultural center for Jews what would serve as a unifying core for Jewish cultural life and would aim at spiritual and scientific excellence.[20] Yet, while agreeing with Ahad Ha-am's ideas on Jewish cultural expression, Rocker objected to the notion that the center had to be a geographically welldefined one. Geographical centralization, according to Rocker, necessarily implied a measure of political sovereignty, of which he did not approve. Rocker, who lived long enough to witness the establishment of the state of Israel, complained that most Jewish anarchists, blinded by its promises, had forgotten the lessons of history, and naively believed that the new state would become an exception to the atrociousness of the others.[21] He was also concerned that the new state would destroy or distort the achievements of the pioneers in the communal settlements, with which the anarchists sympathized. Rocker followed with great interest and hope the development of the communal settlements in Palestine, which at their inception largely conformed with Peter Kropotkin's vision of a future social order. Rocker was convinced that within the framework of a state, the libertarian nature of the Kibbutzim would ultimately be crushed, and their unique economic system would be brought to an end. Rocker also pointed out that the Kibbutzim were further imperiled because the creation of the state of Israel had triggered Arab hostility, and the resulting emergency could only inhibit the development of their still fragile and experimental communal structure.[22]

IV

Bernard Lazare, a French publicist with anarchist convictions, was the archetype of the assimilated Jew rooted in French society and alienated from anything Jewish. Yet, the many outbursts of antisemitic incidents in France, which reached their climax during the Dreyfus Affair, confused him. Was he, a perfectly assimilated Frenchman, with deep roots in French society, a Jew after all? Was his assimilation not thorough enough? Or, maybe assimilation was not the answer to the Jewish problem? Prior to the Dreyfus affair, Lazare believed that the Jewish national problem would be solved according to orthodox anarchist recipes that emphasized its universalist aspects. Lazare's premise was that if antisemitism is to disappear, the Jewish religion has to disappear first. Then, secularized and denationalized, the Jews will be absorbed into their host nations and cease to exist as a people.[23] But, assimilation must not mean absorbing the mores of the Christian middle-class. Rather, the Jews must avoid assimilating into a society ruled by the degenerate forces of capitalism and clericalism. The only place where Jewish assimilation could be complete will be within a socialist society. Following the Dreyfus Affair, Lazare realized that it was not enough to abandon one's religion and reject one's traditions in order to become truly assimilated. This realization caused Lazare not only to renounce his previous calls for assimilation, but also to doubt the widespread assumption shared by both anarchists and socialists that the social revolution would solve the Jewish problem along with all other social injustices. In fact, even if the social revolution could solve the problems of the Jews, the fundamental economic or social transformation of France in the late 1890's seemed to Lazare a prospect far too distant. The Jews simply could not afford to wait for the overall social revolution to liberate them.

The solution Bernard Lazare came up with was for the Jews to cease their attempt to assimilate within other nations, and instead develop their own sense of nationalism. The poor Jewish masses of Eastern Europe and North Africa should be taught to retain their Judaism. They should understand that Emancipation would not solve their problems, as it did not solve the problems of the rich, assimilated Jews of Western Europe. Emancipation could never be a solution for the Jews, for although it provides them with a legal status within their place of residence, this status is neither effective nor protective as long as racism and antisemitism exist. Emancipation, therefore, is only a stage on the way to nationhood, but never its final target,[24] and Jews will be able to embark on the road to nationhood only when they will liberate themslves from its false promises.

Bernard Lazare viewed the nation as a unity of sentiments, thoughts, and morals, not as a unity of

blood. Whenever a certain number of individuals possess a common past, common traditions and ideas, they belong to the same group, they form a nation.[25] Jews are a nation because their feeling of unity is derived from a commonly shared past. Their history involves many shared traditions and customs, not all of which have survived, but which nevertheless have left their marks upon the Jews, endowing them with a commonality of habits and a similar frame of mind. Moreover, the Jews also qualify as a nation in Lazare's eyes, because they possess both a common language and a common territory. Unlike Gustav Landauer, for whom a folk was a unity divorced of material realities, such as territory and language, Bernard Lazare was the only Jewish anarchist who maintained that Jews do, in fact, possess these two material attributes, commonly thought to define all other national entities. The common territory, according to Lazare, was the Jewish Ghetto, which although initially erected for purposes of segregation and oppression, in reality became a state within a state where Jews lived according to their own laws, traditions and unique social and moral codes. Similarly, Lazare categorized Hebrew as the common language of the Jews, a language in which they created a massive body of works of literature, philosophy, and theology.[26] Furthermore, Bernard Lazare noted that Jews also share common physical traits. Those were the result of a process whereby the spiritual type of the Jew emerged as a distinct morphological phenotype.[27] Thus, although Lazare rejected the “pure blood” arguments of race theorists, he himself endowed the Jewish people with the main attributes so dear to advocates of racism, a special Jewish phenotype which is distinguishable from all other people.

The most important characteristic of a nation, according to Bernard Lazare, was its national solidarity, which survives long after all other national traits have been discarded. Lazare's version of national solidarity is a very peculiar one, for it is based on affiliation to a class. Consequently, certain elements or classes are to be excluded from the Jewish national body. Lazare's radical convictions show through in his unequivocal distinction between the rich and the poor, between the Jewish bourgeoisie and the Jewish working masses. Those who form the Jewish nation are "the intellectual, the proletariats and the poor people of Israel." Excluded are those who belong to the bourgeoisie, who are "rich and not Jewish." Those he called "our garbage, our rubbish."[28] Bernard Lazare maintained that until the beginning of the nineteenth century, solidarity among Jews had been strong and firm, but as Emancipation and assimilation prevailed in Western Europe, the ties which bound the Jews together gradually lessened. A dividing line was drawn between the well-off, assimilated Jewish bourgeoisie of the Western European countries, and the poor, oppressed Jewish masses in Eastern Europe and North Africa. There exists no solidarity, no sense of shared destiny among these two groups, says Lazare, despite the fact that they practice the same religious rituals. The rich Jews of Paris, Berlin, and London, who assist the poor Jews of Russia or Morocco, are merely engaging in charitable philanthropy that has nothing to do with fraternal feelings towards fellow nationals. The Jewish bourgeoisie, therefore, could not become a part of the Jewish nation, and its members should be “cast aside as the filth which poisons us, which defiles us, which degrades us.”[29]

Initially, Bernard Lazare's nationalism was without a Zion, without a concrete geological address for the Jewish nation. Like Landauer, his concern was for the creation of a spiritual and moral nation, not for the practical act of establishing a state. Lazare agreed with Kropotkin that like other minorities, Jews, too, could develop as a nation within a nation. Jewish nationhood should be understood as the expression of the wish to be free, the wish to regain a measure of Jewish dignity. Lazare's peculiar brand of anarcho-nationalism, however, gradually transformed into a form of political Zionism, as he began to emphasize the need for a territorial basis for the fulfillment of Jewish national sovereignty. Lazare fully converted to Zionism in 1897, when he started to mention the desirability of a physical, concrete territory for the Jews, where "the wanderer may find himself an asylum, rest his heavy head, and stretch out his weary limbs."[30]

But even then, Palestine was not mentioned as the target. It could still be a piece of land anywhere.

A year later, in May 1898, during an interview with an English journalist, Bernard Lazare finally pointed his finger towards Palestine.

V

Dr. Hillel Solotaroff was born in Russia and emigrated to the United States in 1882. An active member of the first Jewish anarchist group in the United States, "Pioneers of Liberty," and a gifted journalist and propagandist, Solotaroff also studied medicine and wrote plays in the Yiddish language. Like Gustav Landauer and Bernard Lazare, Solotaroff, too, was awakened from his cosmopolitan *Weltanschauung* by an act of atrocity directed against the Jewish people, the Kishinev pogrom of 1903. In an article that he wrote that year, entitled "Erneste Fragen" (Serious Questions), Solotaroff confronted anarchist beliefs and caused an ideological schism within the Jewish anarchist movement. In the article he points out that one has to be blind not to realize that the force of nationalism is spreading all over the world. It is saddening, he continues, to see the powerful aspirations of nationalism threatening to destroy the beautiful ideas of solidarity and brotherhood advanced by the French Revolution. However, it looks as if the exalted ideas of the revolution are no match for the driving forces behind nationalism. It is even more distressing for Solotaroff that the ideas preached by socialism and anarchism could not stop the ever intensifying outbursts of antisemitism. Assimilation did not significantly alter the situation either, for even if Jews suppress and deny their Jewishness they will forever remain Jews in the eyes of their neighbors.[31] Solotaroff claims that the time has come for Jewish anarchists to decide what stand to adopt in order to confront the forces of nationalism, and how to merge the noble ideas of anarchist freedom and communal life with the inescapable realization that only a Jewish national entity could rescue the Jewish people from physical annihilation.

The anarchist “Shulhan Aruch” maintains that the division of mankind into different nations is unnatural and destructive. Therefore, anarchists should work to achieve international unity in complete disregard of racial or national variability. This argument, claims Solotaroff, is in need of a thorough revision.[32] The ideas of universalism and a united civilization are unrealistic, for this world is characterized by both within-group uniformity and between-group variability. The world is peopled by individuals, each of whom follows his own path and conducts himself in an egotistical manner. The similarity among various communities that share the same territory and are subject to similar natural conditions create a "further grouping of people, a natural wholeness,... a folk unity, a nationality."[33] Mankind is composed of many such nations, big and small, which have created markedly different societal systems and have pursued unique national lives. Thus, a nationless mankind is an unrealistic proposition. Solotaroff argued that the anarchist belief in internationalism, brotherhood, and human solidarity should be tampered with a dose of realism. The anarchists have to admit that they cannot stop the rising tide of nationalism. To preach to the Jews to adhere strictly to the internationalist scriptures of anarchism means, in fact, to serve as an agent to their physical destruction. The only logical solution for a Jew who neither wishes to assimilate into Christian society, nor desires to belong to the camp of those who regard the social revolution as the sole Messiah, is to admit and accept his own sense of nationalism. The Jewish question put in this context leads to the inevitable conclusion, that the Jews should strive for an independent national existence in a country of their own.[34]

Solotaroffs solution to the Jewish question acquired a distinctive Zionist flavor in his proclamation that the only suitable place for a Jewish national homeland was Palestine. However, unlike most Zionists, who chose Palestine for its historical significance, Solotaroff selected the place because of his perception of Palestine as a country with an underdeveloped economy and a primitive social order. To justify his choice, Solotaroff draws an analogy with the mass migrations of antiquity. Solotaroff observes that after a conquest, quite often the conqueror assimilates into the local population, losing in the process its customs, language, and sometimes even its religion. The iron rule of history, says Solotaroff, is that a folk whose social and cultural structure are more advanced

absorbs the less advanced folk, even if the culturally inferior people happens to be the militarily stronger.[35] The same rule applies to modern times, and is especially pertinent to the massive Jewish emigration from East European countries to the West. Jews usually emigrate to countries where political freedom and social equality are guarded by law. These countries are also highly industrialized, which facilitates the integration of the immigrant into the economy of his new country. Solotaroff agrees with Kropotkin's characterization of Jews as city dwellers, unfamiliar with the basics of agriculture and farming. Thus, he claims, it is only natural that most Jewish immigrants chose highly developed countries as their destination. But, the newly arrived Jews are incapable of creating and nourishing the Jewish cultural life in their adopted country. This incapacity results from the fact that in the United States and in Western European countries Jews are culturally inferior. As a consequence, they usually assimilate culturally into their new surroundings. Nevertheless, their assimilation is never complete. In their desperate attempt to preserve even traces of their past traditions, they became peculiar hermaphrodites, hovering between their Jewishness and the cultural charms of their host society.[36]

Solotaroff perceives the situation in Palestine as fundamentally different. Whereas the emigration to the United States consists of large masses, only a few Jews move to Palestine. These are the idealists, who strive to build a "Jewish national household." In this economic backwardness called Palestine, urban life has not yet developed, and neither has industry nor commerce. Such a situation, maintains Solotaroff, is ideal, because only in an economically backward country, does there arise the option of going back to the roots, of creating agricultural settlements and tilling the land, of finally shedding the stereotypical image of merchants and money lenders. The most important thing, however, is that in that semi-wilderness, the few Jewish settlers would not assimilate into the local Arab population, for the Arabs are the culturally inferior.

After deeming Palestine as the ideal place for cementing a Jewish national entity, Solotaroff went on to describe the political system that would suit best the newly created nation. Solotaroff accused the Zionists of deliberately enshrouding their ideas concerning the future political order of the Jewish people in Palestine in a thick veil of ambiguity.[37] Unfortunately, Solotaroffs suggestions for the future government of Palestine are not clear either. He proposes what seems to be a synthesis of nationalist and anarchist principles. According to his synthesis, the future social and political structure in Palestine would consist of independent territorial units, or communes, which would dramatically incorporate within the framework of a federative republic, much like that existing in Switzerland. This federation would be a part of a world order, in which communes organized along national lines would join together to create a multinational federation.

VI

The issue of an international versus a national world order was at the backbone of anarchist theory. Most anarchists proposed that a federation of communes would substitute for the existing world order which is divided into competing nations. Proudhon, in his book *Du Principe Fédératif* (1863) presented a federalist alternative to a nationalistic Europe. Proudhon suggested that each nation in Europe be replaced by a geographical confederation of smaller regions, and Europe would, thus, become a confederation of confederations. Rudolf Rocker, too, supported the idea of a unified Europe along federalist lines, a unification, which he thought, would rid Europe of its national rivalries. Rocker's federations, though, would not be only geographical units as were Proudhon's. Each federation would also represent an alliance of workers in the same trade. In contrast to Proudhon and Rocker, Peter Kropotkin did not view nationalism and internationalism as conflicting theses. Rather, he regarded them as complementing each other. He maintained that true harmony between nations would be attained when each nation had the chance to develop its faculties freely and separately. The full development of each nation will secure the comfortable existence of all humanity and will see to its progressive development. Kropotkin emphasized the importance of the individual for the achievement of internationalism, as true harmony between nations and national

freedom would only be possible as a result of the free development of the individual within his nation.

Giuseppe Mazzini once remarked that the only way of belonging to humanity is to belong to a specific nation. In contrast to Mazzini, Landauer maintained that an individual can entertain commitments not only to one nation but to various national groups, without one commitment necessarily coming into conflict with others. As Landauer regarded nationhood as a form of spiritual fulfillment rather than a concrete expression of national feelings, and as his idea of a nation did not presuppose the need for a political and territorial framework, Landauer's synthesis between nationalism and internationalism could still fit into the framework of anarchist dogma. The first anarchists to challenge the concept of internationalism and to demand not only a spiritual but also a concrete, territorial basis for the Jewish nation were Bernard Lazare and Hillel Solotaroff. As a consequence, they were often subjected to severe criticism from their fellow anarchists, some of whom maintained that those who support a separate solution to the Jewish national problem should stop calling themselves anarchists.[38] And indeed, an apologetic note can occasionally be detected in Lazare's and Solotaroffs writings, as if they felt the need to prove that despite their nationalistic sentiments they did not in fact renounce their basic anarchist convictions. Thus, in their schemes for a future world order, they tried to combine the two seemingly incompatible theses of nationalism and anarchist internationalism. Hillel Solotaroff, whose Serious Questions wrecked the ideological unity of the Jewish anarchist movement in the United States, advocated an anarcho-communist world in which anarcho-communist principles were applied to societal structures larger than intended by the originator of anarcho-communism. Nations would not disappear, but would live harmoniously together according to Anarcho-communist principles applied to an international scale. Solotaroff, like Bernard Lazare, regarded the unification of all mankind as an unnatural process designed to rob humanity of its diversity. They believed that nationalism can coexist with internationalism, viewing the latter not as the destruction of nations, but as a state of affairs where autonomous nations are linked by solidarity and a spirit of fraternity into a multinational federation. This in itself was not a breach with anarchism as Kropotkin himself thought along these lines. Bernard Lazare agreed with Kropotkin that in order for internationalism to take root it is necessary that folks should first gain autonomy. But unlike Kropotkin, whose autonomy was merely cultural, both Lazare and Solotaroff understood the futility of such an autonomy without a form of territorial sovereignty.

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First published in Modern Judaism 14 (1994).

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On Zionism

Emma Goldman

To the Editor,

"Spain and the World".

Dear Comrade,

I was interested in the article, 'Palestine and Socialist Policy', by our good friend Reginald Reynolds in 'Spain and the World' of July 29th. There is much in it with which I fully agree, but a great deal more which seems to me contradictory for a Socialist and a near-anarchist. Before I point out these inconsistencies, I wish to say that our friend's article lends itself to the impression that he is a rabid anti-Semite. In point of truth, I have been asked by several people how it happens that 'Spain and the World' printed such an anti-Semitic article. Their surprise was even greater that Reginald Reynolds should be guilty of such tendency. Knowing the writer I felt quite safe in assuring my Jewish friends that Reginald Reynolds has not a particle of anti-Semitic feeling in him, although it is quite true that his article unfortunately gives such an impression.

I have no quarrel with our good friend about his charges against the Zionists. In point of fact I have for many years opposed Zionism as the dream of capitalist Jewry the world over for a Jewish State with all its trimmings, such as Government, laws, police, militarism and the rest. In other words, a Jewish State machinery to protect the privileges of the few against the many.

Reginald Reynolds is wrong, however, when he makes it appear that the Zionists were the sole backers of Jewish emigration to Palestine. Perhaps he does not know that the Jewish masses in every country and especially in the United States of America have contributed vast amounts of money for the same purpose. They have given unstintingly out of their earnings in the hope that Palestine may prove to be an asylum for their brothers, cruelly persecuted in nearly every European country. The fact that there are many non-Zionist communes in Palestine goes to prove that the Jewish workers who have helped the persecuted and hounded Jews have done so not because they are Zionists, but for the reason I have already stated, that they might be left in peace in Palestine to take root and live their own lives.

Comrade Reynolds resents the contention of the Jews that Palestine had been their homeland two thousand years ago. He insists that this is of no importance as against the Arabs who have lived in Palestine for generations. I do not think either claim of great moment, unless one believes in the monopoly of land and the right of Governments in every country to keep out the newcomers.

Surely Reginald Reynolds knows that the Arab people have about as much to say who should or should not come into their country as the under-privileged of other lands. In point of fact our friend admits as much when he states that the Arab feudal lords had sold the land to the Jews without the knowledge of the Arab people. This is of course nothing new in our world. The capitalist class everywhere owns, controls and disposes of its wealth to suit itself. The masses, whether Arab, English or any other, have very little to say in the matter.

In claiming the right of the Arabs to keep out Jewish immigration from Palestine, our good friend is guilty of the same breach of Socialism as his comrade, John McGovern. To be sure the latter makes himself the champion of British Imperialism while Reginald Reynolds sponsors Arab capitalist rights. That is bad enough for a revolutionary socialist. Worse still is the inconsistency in pleading on behalf of land monopoly, to which the Arabs alone should have the right.

Perhaps my revolutionary education has been sadly neglected, but I have been taught that the land should belong to those who till the soil. With all of his deep-seated sympathies with the Arabs, our comrade cannot possibly deny that the Jews in Palestine have tilled the soil. Tens of thousands of them, young and deeply devout idealists, have flocked to Palestine, there to till the soil under the most trying pioneer conditions.

They have reclaimed wastelands and have turned them into fertile fields and blooming gardens. Now I do not say that therefore Jews are entitled to more rights than the Arabs, but for an ardent socialist to say that the Jews have no business in Palestine seems to me rather a strange kind of socialism.

Moreover, Reginald Reynolds not only denies the Jews the right to asylum in Palestine, but he also insists that Australia, Madagascar and East Africa would be justified in closing their ports against the Jews. If all these countries are in their right, why not the Nazis in Germany or Austria? In fact, all countries. Unfortunately, our comrade does not suggest a single place where the Jews might find peace and security.

I take it that Reginald Reynolds believes in the right of asylum for political refugees. I am certain he resents the loss of this great principle, once the pride and glory of England, as much as I do. How then, can he reconcile his feelings about political refugees with his denial of asylum to the Jews. I must say I am puzzled.

Our friend waxes very hot about national independence for the Arabs and for all other peoples under British Dominion. I am not opposed to the struggle for it, but I do not see the same blessings in national independence under the capitalist régime. All the advancement claimed for it is like the claims for democracy, a delusion and a snare. One has to point out some of the countries that have achieved national independence. Poland, for instance, the Baltic States or some of the Balkan countries. Far from being progressive in the true sense, they have become Fascist. Political persecution is not less severe than under the Tsar, while anti-Semitism, formerly fostered from on top, has since infested every layer of social life in these countries.

However, since our friend champions national independence, why not be consistent and recognise the right of the Zionists or the Jews at large to national independence? If anything, their precarious condition, the fact that they are nowhere wanted, should entitle them to at least the same consideration that our comrade so earnestly gives to the Arabs.

I know of course that a great many of the Jews can lay no claim to being political refugees. On the contrary, most of them have remained indifferent to the persecution of workers, socialists, communists, trade-unionists and anarchists, so long as their own skins were safe. Like the middle-class in Germany and Austria, they have exploited labour and have been antagonistic to any attempt on the part of the masses to better their condition. Some German Jews had the temerity to say that they would not object to driving out the ‘OstJuden’ (Jews coming from Poland and other countries). All that is true, but the fact remains that since Hitler’s ascendancy to power all Jews without exception have been subjected to the most fiendish persecution and the most horrible indignities, besides being robbed of all of the possessions. It therefore seems strange for a Socialist to deny these unfortunate people a chance of taking root in new countries, there to begin a new life.

The last paragraph in ‘Palestine and Social Policy’ caps the climax. The author writes: “What does it matter who makes a demand or why it is made, or who pays the bill if that demand is just? To reject a just demand is to brand ourselves as friends of tyranny and oppression; to accept it and to work for it is not only our duty but the only policy that will expose the pretensions of our enemies.”

The question is, dear Reginald Reynolds, who is to decide what is a ‘just demand’? Unless one makes oneself guilty of the charge the writer hurls against the Jews, “the intolerable arrogance of people who regard their own race as superior”, one cannot very well decide whether the demand of natives for the monopoly of their country is any more just than the desperate need of millions of people who are slowly being exterminated.

In conclusion, I wish to say that my attitude to the whole tragic question is not dictated by my Jewish antecedents. It is motivated by my abhorrence of injustice, and man’s inhumanity to man. It is because of this that I have fought all my life for anarchism which alone will do away with the horrors of the capitalist régime and place all races and peoples, including the Jews, on a free and equal basis. Until then I consider it highly inconsistent for socialists and anarchists to discriminate in any shape or form against the Jews.

Emma Goldman

26th August 1938

[reprinted in 'British Imperialism & The Palestine Crisis: Selections from the Anarchist Journal 'Freedom' 1938–1948' (London: Freedom Press, 1989), pp 24–27] Text online at http://contested-terrain.net/emma-goldman-on-zionism

RESOURCES

There is a large amount of material available on antisemitism in general, particularly on historical antisemitism. Below are a few of the texts (almost all available online) and blogs that present useful starting points for different aspects of the ongoing debates around 'new' antisemitism. Note, there is much that is to be disagreed with in some of them, so they come with a health-warning.

Unfortunately there is not room to include the many informative websites that discuss the practicalities of the occupation and which inform debates around the BDS movement or the use of the term apartheid. For discussions on anarchist approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, see the work of Uri Gordon, Wayne Price, Bill Templer and others

TEXTS

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici, *We are all Anarchists against the Wall!*

Steve Cohen, *Funny, you don't look like an Anti-Semite.*

Fredy Perlman*, Anti-Semitism and the Beruit Pogrom.*

Moishe Postone, *Anti-Semitism and National Socialism.*

Moishe Postone, *Zionsm, Anti-semitism and the Left (a Workers Liberty interview).*

Werner Bonfeld, *Anti-Globalisation and the Dangers of Nationalism and Anti-Semitism.*

Werner Bonefeld, *Antisemitism and the (modern) critique of capitalism.*

David Hirsh, *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections.*

Mark Gardner, *'The Zionists are our Misfortune': on the (not so) new Antisemitism.*

Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *Progressive Jewish Thought and the New Antisemitism*. From pro-Israeli perspective, it is also worth looking at the criticisms of this work.

Ben Saifer, *Campus Israel advocacy and the politics of "dialogue".*

Uri Gordon & Ohal Grietzer (eds.), Anarchists Against the Wall: Direct Action and Solidarity with the Palestinian Popular Struggle, forthcoming book, 2012.

BLOGS & OTHER WRITINGS

Some interesting writing from the mostly centre-left on issues of 'new' antisemitism and anti-semitism within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Contested Terrain – *contestedterrain.net*

Engage Online – *engageonline.co.uk*

David Hirsh - *commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/david_hirsh/*

+972 Magazine – *972mag.com*

Mondoweiss – *mondoweiss.net*

The Magnes Zionist – *jeremiahhaber.com*

Independence Jewish Voices (Canada) – *ijvcanada.org*

Independence Jewish Voices (UK) – *guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/series/independentjewishvoices*

MuzzleWatch (Jewish Voices for Peace) – *muzzlewatch.com*

Antony Lerman – *antonylerman.com*

Ilan Shalif (an Israeli anarchist) *ilan.shalif.com/anarchy/articles/articles.html*

Black Laundry (Israeli radical LGBT group), *blacklaundry.org/eng-index.html*

“As anarchists supporting the Palestinian popular struggle for freedom and justice, our most powerful asset is informed, compassionate and nuanced language. The alternative – rehearsed phrases, dehumanization, and black-and-white imagery – not only contradicts our uncompromising belief in human equality, but also plays directly into the hands of the Israeli government. It is therefore crucial to clarify and dispell the often-insidious manifestations of antisemitism in today's heated debates, and the present collection does so incisively.”

Uri Gordon

Dysophia is an imprint publishing pamphlets and zines in order to explore issues around green anarchist thought with the aim of makes the issues accessible to everyone. We try to avoid dense theory, but give the knowledge to empower and make up your own minds.

For us, green anarchism is a powerful tool for analysing much of the world around us, from interpersonal relationships to how we take on the big problems standing between us and our ideal society. We want to educate and encourage debate, to question everything then bring it together with solutions that take us forward. We are not interested in prolonged bickering over moot points, but celebrate our diversity and our common ambitions.

It is okay to challenge each other, it is okay to disagree. Knowledge does not have to be unified, but through honest, open discussion everyone can benefit and make up their own minds.

We are always interested in feedback, suggestions of topics to cover or even ideas of articles you would like to write for us. We will try to respond to all emails, but we cannot promise that we will. As much as we like debate what we ideally want are responses and articles we can use in future publications.

Other available issues are

Dysophia 0: Green Anarchism – A Political Toolbox
Dysophia 1: Polyamory
Dysophia 2: Population and Migration
The Crisis of Crises Pt1: The Financial Crisis
The Crisis of Crises Pt2: Peak Resources & Climate Change
Criticism without Critique: a Climate Camp reader
Dreaming Illich: An Open Letter on the Politics of Bicycles

For more information email ***dysophia@riseup.net*** or write to
Dysophia, c/o CRC, 16 Sholebroke Avenue, Leeds, LS7 3HB, UK
Copies of all our booklets can be found online at **http://dysophia.wordpress.com**