

Jewish Socialist Critique



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Graphic on page 67 by Susan Trobe.



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INTRODUCTION**Blacks and Jews**

Blacks and Jews: Class and Ethnic Consciousness by Michael Cholden-Brown and David Forbes is an initial attempt to present a socialist analysis of the complex relationship between ethnic groups in the United States. The authors outline the essential reasons for the current tensions between the major sectors of the two groups, emphasizing the crucial role that class differences play in the conflict. They also criticize the bourgeois leadership of both communities for accepting the limited terms of survival offered by capitalist society.

The article suggests a socialist strategy centered around the issues that can unite people across ethnic and class lines. Although not offered as a comprehensive analysis of the black-Jewish controversy, it does challenge on several points the current left analysis of ethno-national identity in United States.

Bessie at 85

This monologue from Larry Bush's forthcoming biography of his grandmother, *Bessie at 85*, vividly portrays this lively and politically astute woman who dedicated her life to acting on her political beliefs. Her comments and penetrating analyses of past and present social issues are earthy and free of jargon, as well as surprisingly accurate and refreshingly powerful.

Socialist-Zionism

In his historical and theoretical critique of Socialist-Zionism, Gary Ruchwarger attempts to demonstrate that its socialist principles were necessarily sacrificed in pursuit of colonizing aims. He argues that contrary to Socialist-Zionist claims, Zionism is not a national liberation movement and that given its goals, it is inherently linked to imperialism. *Socialist-Zionism: the Untenable Synthesis* analyzes the Histadrut and Kibbutzim as institutions devoted primarily to state-building and only secondarily to socialist and labor principles.

The article does not directly address the issue of the possibility of an integration of socialism and nationalism in any context, but deals solely with the specifics of Socialist-Zionism. What remains to be explored is to what extent the failure of socialism in Israel paralleled the degeneration of the socialist movements in other countries.

Woody Allen

Samuela Evans, in her article "Class, Culture, and Woody Allen," critically addresses important aspects of Woody Allen's films. She focuses on the interplay of culture, sex and class portrayed in his work. Evans argues that Allen's critique of society is limited by his failure to place personal relationships in their social and political context. While giving Allen credit for his ability as a filmmaker, she thus explains the ambivalence some of us feel after viewing his films.

Bibliography on Jewish Socialism

Many people have only a vague awareness of the rich Jewish Socialist heritage which developed in eastern Europe in the late 19th century. Those of us interested in the topic are often at a loss as to where to locate introductory and scholarly texts. Daniel Soyer's annotated bibliography is a valuable guide for learning about the Bund (the Jewish Workers' Party) and the Jewish labor movements in Poland and Russia in general. The bibliography includes major books on broad historical developments and articles on crucial political events of both the pre- and post-revolutionary periods. We hope to publish an annotated bibliography on Jewish Socialism in Western Europe and the United States in a future issue.

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BLACKS AND JEWS: CLASS AND ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS

by Michael Cholden-Brown and David Forbes

Blacks and Jews have maintained an increasingly uneasy liberal coalition over the last decade. The battle for middle strata positions in civil service, education, medicine and law — occupations which contain a relatively high proportion of Jews — has intensified under severe conditions of inflation and government cutbacks. Now, major sectors of the two groups have turned against each other, thereby reinforcing a competitive system that relies upon minority group rivalry for its continued existence. The controversy between blacks and Jews which followed the resignation of U.N. ambassador Andrew Young is an ugly example of class and ethnic divisiveness under capitalism.

Of course, a good deal of the responsibility for the current tensions must be borne by those black and Jewish leaders who purport to speak for their entire communities. As Jews, we are particularly critical of the conservative outpourings of much of the established Jewish leadership and its press. Spokespersons for the major Jewish organizations have assumed a defensive, self-serving attitude vis-a-vis blacks. By choosing this posture, the Jewish establishment continues to identify itself with the dominant forces in American society.

There are three major areas of concern in which this conservative Jewish position is expressed: 1) progressive domestic issues, 2) antisemitism, and 3) Israel and the Palestinians. Let us briefly examine these issues.

The Jewish establishment has, through its media, demonstrated the bankruptcy of its liberal position toward blacks. In the wake of the Young affair, local and national Jewish publications trotted out their musty civil rights credentials in a patronizing attitude of "after all we've done for them. . .!" At the same time, these papers have

taken explicitly conservative and self-protective positions on issues ranging from affirmative action and busing — where blacks have been on the front line — to anti-Klan and anti-Nazi demonstrations. The official position of many local Federations and Hillels regarding anti-Nazi rallies has been: ignore the Nazis and they'll go away. Thus we find no official Jewish involvement in broad anti-racist coalitions such as the National Anti-Klan Network. Such a policy on the part of Jewish leaders reflects a failure to see that increased Nazi and Klan activity comprises far more than isolated incidents; rather, this activity is representative of insurgent right-wing forces in general, forces which must be exposed and combatted. In addition, it is apparent that conservative sentiment is growing among a sizeable portion of the Jewish community itself. In Los Angeles, for example, a large part of the Jewish community is being identified with opposition to busing and anti-black sentiment in general. The most prominent figure is the president of the Board of Education, a Jewish Republican elected solely on an anti-busing platform.

The Jewish leadership's attitude toward antisemitism in the black community is exposed in the October 1979 issue of *Commentary*. This issue includes an article which glowingly cites a 1978 Harris poll which shows a rise in negative stereotypes of Jews held by blacks. At the same time, it questions the methodology of the *same* poll when it shows a higher level of anti-black racism among Jews than among any other white group. And, of course, the author never questions the assumption that "lack of sympathy with Israel" and "opposition to providing Israel military aid" are anything *but* expressions of antisemitic sentiment. It appears that the standard response of the Jewish community's leadership to any group which challenges or questions them is to claim that their critics are antisemitic or simply acting in "bad faith." Considering the absence of official Jewish involvement in progressive movements, one might well wonder just *who* is in bad faith.

Unquestionably, antisemitism is an extremely complicated, emotionally charged, social phenomenon. And a sophisticated sensitive and socialist analysis of it has yet to appear. Even the more intelligent observers of the black-Jewish controversy tend to fail when it comes to explaining antisemitism. For example, Ellen Willis, in her piece in the *Village Voice* (September 3, 1979), relegates people's feelings about Jews to the status of the "unconscious," a "chronic disease that exists mainly under the surface." Consequently,

she reduces antisemitism to "impulses" connected with our "deepest guilts and anxieties." Willis correctly recognizes that antisemitism has become endemic to the cultural patterns embedded in American society. However, this limited analysis leaves her neither willing nor able to enter into collective political action against the "disease". Surely it is necessary to challenge the specific social, political and economic forces which contribute to antisemitism.

The position of the official Jewish community on the Palestinian question is one of the key factors behind the black-Jewish tension last Fall. Jewish spokespersons accused black leaders, veterans of the non-violent civil rights movement, of "hypocritically" seeking dialogue with PLO "terrorists." Now, there clearly was a strong element of opportunism in Reverend Jesse Jackson's trip to the Middle East — and his insensitive comments at Yad Vashem certainly deserve censure. But blacks definitely have grounds for criticizing Israel's continuing oppression of the Palestinian people. And American Jews' uncritical support for Israel's policy toward the Palestinians and Israel's increasing trade with and arms sales to South Africa continue to anger many in the black community.

Why does the Jewish leadership react so strongly to blacks who criticize Israel and American Jews who zealously support it? The operative assumption guiding the Jewish leadership is that sympathizing with the Palestinians and criticizing Israel puts one in league with those who seek Israel's destruction. As a result, Jewish establishment leaders react harshly when dissenting American Jews, let alone blacks, question current Israeli policy.

And what of the black leadership? Obviously, we believe that certain established leaders of the black community serve neither the interests of their people nor the working class by their opportunism. Under these leaders, some of the black civil rights groups act as the functional equivalents of the Anti-Defamation League—strictly ethnic self defense organizations. Jesse Jackson of PUSH, Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP, and Vernon Jordan of the Urban League are barely progressive, let alone socialists. They all accept the limitations set by the structures of capitalism — settling for an equal chance to hustle for "success" along with the other groups. But such a strategy is bound to fail since a capitalist society is inherently incapable of meeting the needs of all its members. Equally important, because racism is a cornerstone of capitalism, the more they accommodate themselves to capitalist demands, the less they contest racist forces.

Above all, the lack of a class analysis by ethnic minority leaders may contribute to both reactionary ethno-national impulses *and* an attack on Jews as one of the most visibly successful ethnic minorities. In other words, because the system is mistakenly perceived as a plurality of minority groups competing with each other, the groups with the least power will feel the need to assert their ethno-national *identity* against that of more successful groups. Those on the bottom will resentfully see those Jews who are in the middle strata, not in class terms but as a more powerful ethnic group which stands in the way of their nationalist interests. In addition, some blacks, as well as members of other ethnic groups, mistakenly regard Jews as controllers of real (corporate) power precisely because they often occupy the most visible — but nonetheless *middle* — positions in society. The fact is that Jews both in feudal and capitalist societies have been allowed and, at times, been encouraged to attain intermediate positions, but *not* ruling ones. It is, therefore, unquestionably true that, contrary to the antisemitic myth, Jews (as an ethnic group) do not wield the real power in capitalist society. Without a class analysis of the United States, as well as an understanding of the particular socioeconomic role played by Jews and other ethnic groups, many blacks are prone to antisemitic beliefs. Meanwhile, the corporate forces are no doubt delighted at the mutual hostilities, as they chuckle all the way to (their) banks.

The Battle Over the Middle Sector

For obvious reasons, blacks have been strong supporters of affirmative action programs. Studies clearly show systematic discrimination against blacks in almost every sector of American society. It is also true that many Jews have attained precisely those positions in occupations to which blacks now seek entrance. These facts helped set the stage for the ongoing tension.

Much of the recent controversy between blacks and Jews is thus a struggle for securing the middle sector positions in the economy. Middle level jobs — won by entry into professional schools in law (the DeFunis case), medicine (the Bakke case), and upper-level skilled trades (the Weber case) — are becoming increasingly competitive and restrictive as the economic crisis deepens. This

conflict has drained efforts away from organized leftist demands for full employment and has diminished real opposition to professional interest groups and corporate control. The left has been drawn into a battle over who shall sit on the thrones of professional privilege rather than an attack on privilege itself.

In their efforts at gaining entry into the middle strata thirty and forty years ago, many Jews opposed the use of quotas. They were sensitive to de facto antisemitism among the ruling interests who used quotas to keep Jews out of desirable occupations. Many Jews fought against the use of racial categories and photographs in application procedures for jobs and schools as a civil liberation issue as well as on the grounds of objective discrimination.

The systematic oppression of minority groups and women has meant that concerted efforts are required to overcome its debilitating effects. Rejecting sole reliance on “objective” criteria such as civil service exams and aptitude test scores, disenfranchised groups have sought affirmative action and goal setting programs. Jews must recognize that, under current conditions, “quotas” have a different meaning than before. It should be clear that organized Jewish opposition to quotas, without a full understanding of these differences, engenders hostility from those groups with whom Jews must continue to ally in order to preserve and expand progressive victories.

Nevertheless, Jewish opposition to quotas, although often seen as reactionary in this particular context, points to inherent weaknesses in programs as presently formulated. The truth in this position is that every slot won by one group simply means one less slot for someone else. And many Jews, who have historically been sensitive to ethnic and racial exclusion, now question how the use of racial categories which they opposed on a *principled* basis, is now being supported as progressive on pragmatic grounds. We too are unwilling to accept this tradeoff.

Quota programs are necessarily limited given the dictates of a system which restricts the number of positions to be filled in professional schools, occupational training programs, etc. The number of these slots are not based on social need; rather they are artificially limited by the economic interests of corporations and professional groups.

Moreover, quota programs by themselves can only result in a liberal reform. This strategy enables only a few members of the oppressed

groups to enter a limited number of positions. But the fundamental conditions which create social and political inequity themselves remain unchallenged.

A two-part socialist strategy must be developed in this realm. First, we must build a coalition of forces that crosses ethnic and class lines. This coalition must give priority to democratizing educational, occupational and social service programs. Second, we must fight for programs which choose people on the basis of material needs and demonstrated economic and cultural disadvantage, not solely on ethnic grounds.

Racism is a cornerstone of capitalism. Consequently, the abolition of racism is a specific goal of a socialist strategy — one based on working class interests and not on ethnic divisions. The shift in this strategy is precisely to identify the basic unity across ethnic groups and along class lines, but with the realization that ethnic consciousness is a progressive force when it is *class* conscious.

Threats to Jewish and Black Survival Under Capitalism

There are a number of specific threats to the social and economic survival of Jews and blacks, two groups for whom "survival" has a particularly charged meaning. Jews, heavily concentrated in middle strata occupations, are often resented by those below them in the economic structure, especially in times of crisis. Thus Jews are faced with a number of threats to their security: the shrinking number of middle sector positions, the challenge from other upwardly aspiring groups, and the emergence of a newly organized right-wing.

In addition, the foundations of the Jewish nuclear family have been eroding due to forces which are affecting the nuclear family in society as a whole. Evidence of this erosion includes a growing rate of inter-marriage, an exceptionally low birth rate, and a rise in the previously low divorce rate. All of these factors constitute a perceived threat to Jewish survival itself: gradual downward mobility and group disintegration is sensed as imminent under capitalism.

But if capitalism is harmful for Jews, it is devastating for blacks. Blacks did not come to the Golden Land to escape oppression; they were brought here to experience it. And the black family, torn apart from the outset, has faced persistent assaults on its ability to form a stable configuration for success even in capitalist terms. Blacks, like

Jews, are intimately acquainted with threats to personal survival. They have a lower life expectancy than whites under capitalism. In the event of war, they are sent in disproportionate numbers. When police in cities such as Oakland, New York, and Miami shoot "suspects" the victims almost always are black. When forced sterilization is practiced on women, it is most often black and third world women. And, because many blacks are poor, they bear the deadly consequences of the crimes which arise from poverty: murder, rape, and heroin addiction. And blacks are continually subject to economic displacement. In some cities the perceived "priority" treatment for South Vietnamese immigrants has engendered racist sentiments because some black leaders portray them, perhaps correctly, as rivals for blacks' jobs.

To make matters worse, blacks frequently encounter Jews on the front line of capitalism, precisely in day-to-day situations involving survival: paying the rent, receiving health care, making it through the welfare bureaucracy, doing well in public school, and applying for the better middle level jobs. The tensions and frustrations which both groups experience in these situations, especially under worsening economic conditions, may significantly contribute to antisemitic and racist feelings. This situation has been aggravated during the last few years.

And things could get worse. Without an understanding of the effects of class on Jews' and blacks' daily experiences and of how the two groups have come to be pitted against each other, there may well continue to be reactionary and chauvinist expressions among both blacks and Jews based on their short-term interests of survival under capitalism. What we are arguing is that genuine ethno-national liberation depends on struggling for socialism, not on maintaining capitalist social relations. And of course, socialism does not mean "socialism for just one group"; it requires cooperative efforts across ethno-national bounds. It also means struggling to overcome oppressive social relationships such as racism, anti-semitism, and sexism.

This position does not mechanically reduce all ethno-national issues solely to class issues. Nor does it claim that experiences of antisemitism and racism will be eliminated the day after the means of production are socialized. Instead, it seeks to understand the economic and social conditions in which experiences of antisemitism and racism arise. It also seeks to emphasize that the question of class

is not an abstract, externalized category but is an integral part of personal experience, reflected in the very relationships of our lives. The implication is that Jews, blacks, and other groups, aware of their particular relationship to the capitalist means of material production and social reproduction, can struggle together to create more liberating conditions for real survival in a classless, non-racist, non-sexist society.

Reviving the Old Liberal Coalition

The New Deal coalition between labor, blacks, Jews and other minorities which helped to save American capitalism has now all but disintegrated. To the extent to which it still exists, its leaders have moved to the right and support conservative Democratic policies and candidates. Yet, the left-wing element of that coalition is still alive and is dealing with local issues. Rank and file caucuses and municipal coalitions exist on a small scale in many areas, working on labor disputes, rent control, health care, occupational safety, economic reforms, gay rights, anti-nuclear and anti-racist campaigns. Led by members of the women's movement, they are organizing to fight cuts in daycare, to protect abortion and other reproductive rights, and to develop local projects for battered women and rape victims. These coalitions and projects which include multi-ethnic groups of both men and women can serve as the basis for broader and stronger alliances. An understanding of the relationship between reform policies and socialist strategy must be developed by us all, as we oppose the reactionary positions of bourgeois ethnic group leaders—including those of Jews and blacks.

If Jewish establishment leaders were truly concerned about the long-term welfare of the Jewish community they might plan now for the upcoming day when a new "Pharoah" (read: ruling class) arises who "knows not Joseph." Joseph was perhaps the paragon of the successful middle level Jew who assisted the Pharoah in handling his financial and political affairs. After Joseph's death the new Pharoah became concerned lest Jews make alliances with other groups hostile to the imperial rule, and punished them mightily.

But we're not about to hold our breath for the day Jewish leaders turn socialist and ally themselves with anti-imperialist forces. Instead, we encourage those Jews who feel unrepresented by such "leaders" to join us in speaking out against their empty rhetoric. It is

imperative that Jews and non-Jews inform themselves about each other's struggles — not out of liberal guilt, but out of a real need to do so. Finally, we call for developing a socialist coalition between Jews, blacks and other people who recognize that true "survival" depends on abolishing the capitalist hierarchy on both a political and personal level.

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'AND TOMORROW WILL BE EVEN NICER'

Larry Bush

"The last time I took a New York subway to go someplace was three years ago, when I was 82 years. Where was I going? To a meeting, where else? Fact of the matter is I was handing in my resignation to the Communist Party after being a member for more than fifty years, can you imagine? It was like burying a child that you raised a whole life. But this child was in a coma, so there was relief, too.

"We'll save this for later — you got time?"

"I was determined to make that trip by myself, with no help from anyone. I took the bus and then the F-train, which is the best one, air-conditioned — it goes to places like Rockefeller Center, y'see, not to Harlem! But it was difficult for me in spite of this, mostly because of the stairs. I can't climb into the bathtub anymore, never mind stairs! And the worst part was the frustration, same like I always felt, that here you had all the working people of the city, old and young, women and men, you had blacks, whites, the Puerto Ricans, every kind of a color, all in one place, and they sit with nothing to do a whole ride but stare at each other — and nobody calls a meeting! You may laugh, but believe me, when the revolution comes to America, the subway will be one of the most important places to do your organizing. Who isn't ready for a revolution after a ride in the rush hour?"

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"And then will come the good part, the pay-off. In a Socialist America, if we can have our spirit going towards making happiness instead of money, the subways will be a joy to ride. Like once I had in a dream: you had Charlie Chaplin standing in the train, making everyone laugh, and instead of the advertisements you had beautiful artwork, posters with wisdom, and hanging plants, and pictures of great people so that people should be inspired: leaders like Martin Luther King and Lenin, all kind of a good people who lived the way they saw the truth to be.

"Yeah, in my dreams I go travelling! But in real life I can't go anywhere, now, except if my daughter or my grandson takes me out, if I'm feeling well enough. Or once in a while our community organization hires a bus to take us to the country for a day. But this is the way of life, and I'm not lonely. I did enough good work in my life to make an impression, and people know where to find me. It's when you don't follow what your mind tells you, maybe you get scared or you lose confidence, so you do what someone else says — that's when you get lost and you end up lonely. Self-respect is what lasts the longest in your life, I think.

"Now, I have friends, even ten years younger than me, who complain about the subways, how it's dirty and they don't like the blacks to sit next to them and it's too slow, too fast, they don't know what they want. Me, I wish I could take the subway again. To see all the faces, all the immigrants, it's like reliving my past. I tell you this, anyone who has immigrated to the United States or is the son or the daughter of an immigrant and who is prejudiced against different kind of a people, well, they haven't learned a single thing from their whole rotten life. I know how these people think: they're afraid. But if they would think, when they see, for instance, a Puerto Rican, if they would just say to themselves, 'There goes an immigrant,' instead of 'Here comes a mugger,' they would have their eyes opened up. What difference is there between the Jewish pushcart peddler when I was young and the men in the African clothes who sell jewelry and clothing on the street today? You think the Jew was less obnoxious with what he said or that he took up less room on the sidewalk? You think herring on a hot day smelled any better than that smelly stuff they burn?

"What else does it really mean to be Jewish in this day and age than to feel this kind of solidarity — what's the word? Empathy. To feel empathy with the poor, the oppressed, based on your own history as

a Jew. To be honest with you, the rest of what people say makes them Jewish is a lot of *kreplakh*. It's nostalgic, romantic foolishness. Not for the religious, maybe, but how many pious Jews are there remaining in America?

"You take my grandson—excepting I won't let you, he's mine. But I'll give you a frinstance. He doesn't speak Yiddish, maybe he understands a word here and there if I say it with the right tone of voice, but for him as a Jew there's no language, no *shul*, no ghetto. Israel's not so important to him and he can't afford to go. And there's no real persecution for him as a Jew, at least nothing that he can see right in front of his face. But he's a progressive guy, my grandson, I can tell from how he talks. His Jewish identity means a different set of values, a different way of life, from our crazy government and the television set and the whole system by itself would give him. Capitalism says he should make a success of himself and keep a policeman between his door and the people. But Jewish life says he should keep the door open for Elijah to come and eat.

"Now, I was talking about this with my neighbor, a black woman, Mrs. Corey. I said how when I escaped from Siberia, it was exactly like the Underground Railroad for the slaves. So I have a special appreciation of that. It's true, every step of the way there were people who took risks to help me so that they could have been named Harriet Tubman. I don't even know who was in the movement and who wasn't, but I was passed from one hand to another and never, not once, was a finger raised against me.

"First, Anna. She gave me identification papers, her own papers, and a big kiss. And then we drove to Yakutsk to find out what happened to our 'doctor' from the Social Democratic party. She even visited with Dr. Brezhnev, remember, who was supposed to get poisoned? And from his house she brought me down some hot rolls and tea! Then she said I should take from her the pony and the sleigh and she would say I had stolen them and she would send the police on a wild goose chase. Now, why did she do this for me, a Catholic girl with no knowledge of the world? I don't know. One berry is sweet, one berry is bitter, both in the same backyard. Marx says a lot about why people are the way they are, but ideology comes from more than just your economic class.

"The problem was I didn't know how to drive a horse and I was really very sick. So Anna found a fur trapper to take me to Oleminsk, that's about three hundred miles. I paid him thirty roubles and he

didn't touch me, he was a kind man. All I remember was he looked like an Eskimo. And he he shot a wolf during our trip. And he gave me a coat to wear, a fur that as worth more than the thirty roubles.

"So that's how it started. I was amazed how all through Siberia there were revolutionary people. You think they had a telephone to tell one to another that I'm coming? It wasn't Babushka who spread the word — she had her hands full in Ysyakh.

"Babushka survived, you know. Oh yes. She was tough, like rubber, like the rubber-band balls I used to make for my children and for my grandchildren after that. You build rubber bands around a core of paper—it bounces wonderfully. And on the paper I used to write something, a slogan or a little poem I made up. And I would say to my children, either you take the ball apart now to find out the wisdom, or you use it until it's worn out—but first you might lose it and never read the message. It's a real something to ponder! The kids always played first, looked later, and usually they lost it. What do a few words of wisdom mean to a child? Would you tell philosophy to a bird or to another kind of a beast? No, you wouldn't, and children are the same way. But once, just once, my son decided to read the message. He took the whole ball apart. He was always taking things apart and putting them back together. Now, I remember what it said in his ball. 'Eugene' — he was named for Eugene Victor Debs, my son, it's too bad he didn't live up to it — 'Eugene, your heart gives you life, so do like it says, you'll find a nice wife, you'll always think "red"' — something like that, some foolish poetry. I wrote it in Yiddish and in English, and I wrapped inside it a little piece of candy. He ate the candy and then he stole his sister's ball, my son.

"The reason I tell you this is that whenever I made this kind of a ball, I would start to think about Babushka Breshkovskya. She lived to see the Revolution, y'see, but her party, the Socialist Revolutionaries, had a split and a lot of them came out against the Revolution. They supported Kerensky and were bitterly against the Bolsheviks. So I don't know if Babushka got lost, like my kids would lose their ball, or if the message inside actually changed. Fact of the matter is she became a Social Democrat.

"Now I'm confusing you, so let me explain. Lenin's party was the Social Democrats, with two groups, the *Menshevikii* and the *Bolshevikii*, but after the Revolution the term Social Democrat came to mean, like, social fascist. Today, f'rinstance, the Social Democrat Party in America has people like Senator Monihan, whatever his

name is, and also the president of the teacher's union, who's such a right-winger they shouldn't allow him to be near children! Lenin's party became the communists, y'see. But I never heard the word 'communist' until Jacob Smulevitch said it. His last word to me.

"It doesn't really matter the name, 'cause you can't tell who's what by their name. The Nazis were socialist, too — National Socialists. Anyone can wear any kind of a uniform. I learned that the only way to know is to look at the shoes, and where they put their feet. Do they take a stand with you or against you?

"But you want to get out of Siberia, already, yes? So here's how you do it. You stand on a train platform in Irkutsk and a man will ask you, Nice day, isn't it? And you're supposed to say, Yes, and tomorrow will be even nicer. When you say that, he gives you a ticket and new identification papers.

"The train goes from Irkutsk all the way to Warsaw. It has one passenger car, the rest are filled with coal, so the train moves very, very slow. But you don't talk to anyone. You just sleep and try to wake up calmly from your dreams.

"In Poland there are not so many comrades, but you have money to pay for your way and a cross to make you kosher. In a week's time you're on a boat leaving for Belgium. Now you're not a fugitive with a hundred people helping you; you're an immigrant with a hundred people crowding you! That's how it is in steerage, it's like the basement of the boat, all those who can't afford first-class or second-class are there. Half of them are seasick. The other half are praying. The only way to get away from the noise and the bad air is to spend your time on deck. So there you are, looking at the water, and suddenly you're liable to scream, because what do you see? Siberia! We were surrounded by icebergs. The way they reflect the sun, they could make you blind. I suppose this is exactly what happened to the captain, because the next minute, bang! We smack right into an iceberg and the whole boat tips over. I had to hold onto a beam so as not to go sliding off into the ocean. Then the S.O.S. goes out and a boat from England comes to save us. To England they took us for safekeeping, and there I met Alexander Berkman, the famous anarchist.

"I'm going too fast? This is so you can feel like I felt. My whole body was with pins and needles. My mind was like a book that the wind blows loose the pages. I was not a sophisticate like some of the revolutionaries of Russia that they came every so often to the United

States to raise money for their cause — like Babushka did this, and Zhitlovsky, and Trotsky. They were celebrities already, and they had been to Europe and all over. But I was still like a peasant girl in my thinking, in my ways I was still like I'm twelve years, because in Siberia life wasn't real, it was too monotonous to grow in. So to me, everything that happened from the moment I escaped was like a revelation. If I had believed in God by then, I really would have become a fanatic.

"Now, Berkman was a boyfriend to Emma Goldman and I myself think he helped her to develop many of her ideas. That's just my opinion. His nickname was Sasha, and he was a very intelligent man and very good-looking. Berkman tried to assassinate the head of the Carnegie Steel, Frick, during a strike in Pittsburgh — this was in the 1890's, y'see — and for a long time he was in jail. I was with him only a couple of days until another boat came to take us, but he thought I was the real article because I came from Siberia, so he took me under his wing. He prepared me in many ways for what I would find in America.

"It's not like we believed that the streets had gold on them like you have birdseed on the grass. The year I came was 1910, remember, and by then nearly every Jew in Russia had at least one relative or someone from his town in America. The pogroms and the bad conditions made more than a million Jews to emigrate between the turn of the century and the First World War, so we all had someone to write letters saying how it goes in America. But a certain reputation for being a place where you can make a living it had, you couldn't avoid this impression. First of all, in New York there was the garment industry, and manufacturing the clothing for women on a mass scale was getting a start, so a good tailor, who in Russia couldn't make *bubkes* and had to work day and night, in America he could make twenty, maybe twenty-five dollars a week. He still had to work fifty, sixty hours, but that was the working life back then, you had no time for rest.

"But that was just for the tailors, all skilled workers, all men. For a girl or for the unskilled it was different. You worked piecework and you came home with three dollars at the end of a week. Piecework means you get paid by the piece—like if your job is to roll cigars, you get paid a few pennies per dozen. The result is you never stop working if you want to make a living—you take cigars to bed with you and you roll them in your sleep.



"Now, if you think that my age is showing, if you know what I mean, that what I tell you is ancient history, then you go ask some of the modern immigrants, and especially the ones without papers — what do they call them? Aliens, yeah, like they come from the moon. You go ask them how they make a living. You'll hear plenty about sweatshops and piecework and taking work home. Right here in New York City! This tells you something about reform, y'see. All you do when you win a reform is you manage to push the boulder that's crushing you, you manage to push it off your chest, but usually it means that it rolls onto someone else. What we want to do, my friends, is to turn that boulder into powder, into *matzoh* meal.

Now, Berkman filled my ears with stories about sweatshops and tenements, just like I'm telling you. He gave me an economic explanation why we came to America — not to be loved, but to be exploited. It might be better for us than Russia, but—I'll never forget how he said it—if we eat grass it's better than eating dirt, but we must never begin to think of ourselves as cattle.

"I figured out right then that I should get a kind of a job that if a depression came like Sasha said they had in 1907—never mind, 'if,' it would come as surely as a tail on a horse!—so I would need a job that

I could keep even in hard times. Well, I had been through the hardest of times in Siberia, and I had kept a job right until the end. I made up right there to become a nurse, a real nurse.

“Berkman also showed me a copy of the *Forward*, the Yiddish paper from New York. It says that my boat has gone under. So I write a letter to the editor saying I’m alive and headed for America, so they should please inform ‘Mrs. Marcus from the Bronx’ that soon I’ll arrive. What a joy to write a letter without the guards looking over your shoulder!

“You know, when I remember about Berkman and all the insight he gave, I start to think that maybe a lot of people don’t like those who are radicals because we’re always criticizing the ideas — the myths — about America. Y’see, a leader must not only criticize. Ideas are precious to people, sometimes it’s all they have to make them feel that they belong to some kind of a group or a community. Under capitalism our lives get divided into such bits and pieces, like a car on an assembly line, and there’s nothing that we can feel as a community. Under these kind of a circumstance ideas become ideology, and people get fanatical—like, for instance, nationalist or racist. A radical must understand this, she must understand the relationship between people’s lives and their ideas. And we’ve got to be creative to develop new ideas.

“I’ll never forget how my grandson—this was fun!—he saw on the television an advertisement for a certain kind of a hot cereal. ‘I want this.’ ‘No,’ I tell him, ‘It’s no good.’ Then he gets mad and starts to nag, so finally I give in. I buy, I cook, he eats, it’s rotten, and then he starts to cry. He could not believe, y’see, that the television would lie to him, he felt frustrated that he had argued for this cereal. So first I explained to him about the advertisements, and then I taught him to cook oatmeal for himself. From this he learned.

“People like Berkman and Emma Goldman were not so good at this. They did not take the people as they were and move them a little further, they ran way ahead and said, ‘Catch up to us, now.’ They had radical ideas, but of the kind that only people with education and some leisure time could follow. For instance, Emma Goldman refused to be married, she talked about ‘free love.’ Now, I as a woman may have too many children and work like a slave a whole life, but I’m not ready to reject the whole thing because this is what I know of life. Maybe I can work for better jobs, better schools, or today you have abortion as an issue, for instance, but I’m not going to throw out the

baby with the bathwater or the husband with his whiskey bottle just because you say so. Morality, working class morality, it’s like an anchor on a boat. It keeps us from moving ahead, but it also prevents us from getting washed up on some rocks and getting wrecked.

“But let’s not race ahead! These are the kinds of questions that were debated for years in different parts of the radical movement. We had all kind of a split. But right now I’m telling about Ellis Island—give myself a chance to feel young again.

“So we go back into steerage. The trip from England takes about ten days. Mostly on board we got Russian Jews, also some Italians, real peasants, and English. Me, I was still thinking like I’m a fugitive and I keep to myself until the boat reaches the harbor of New York City. There we put down the anchor outside the harbor, near where you have now the Verrazanno Bridge. Comes to us a tugboat with doctors from the Immigration Service, and they give a look at the passengers in first and second class. We down in steerage have got to stay downstairs, but we know what’s going on and start to talk about our fears. We know that those that they got money, unless they’re very sick with tuberculosis or another contagious disease, they’re permitted to go straight to the docks and goodbye! But those of us in steerage, we’ve got to go to the Island of Tears, that’s what we called Ellis Island, ‘cause if we don’t pass the inspection we can get sent all the way home. Even a child of ten could get sent without her parents if there’s a disease in her. This didn’t happen so often, really — I think it was less than, like, two percent of maybe twelve million immigrants who really got deported. They needed workers in America! Also the steamship company had to pay your passage back, y’see, so they gave you an examination before you could even buy the ticket. Still, we had our fears, and naturally everybody’s an authority on what the rules are so you hear enough opinions to drive you crazy. One young fellow gets to talking with me, he was a baker from Lithuania — this was a poor paying trade, even in America — and he was worried because he only had a teensy bit of money. You needed twenty-five dollars or they won’t let you in. So we get to talking and all of a sudden he’s pinching me and saying that I should marry him. I pinched him right back! ‘I’ll be your banker,’ I said, ‘but not your wife.’ I told him to stay close—hey, but not too close!—so if he has trouble, I can slip him a little something.

“We all come on a barge that takes us to Ellis Island. But first, of course, we see the Statue of Liberty, and for everything that Sasha

warned me about America, I was still very, very impressed with — how do you say it? The image of America. It was a hazy kind of a day, the month was June, already it was like summer. The statue stood all green with her arm in the air and the words of a Jewish woman, Emma Lazarus, are written on the pedestal. And there's gulls and boats everywhere, and tall buildings. Here you're used to little huts and pushcarts and wide open fields of wheat. . . these buildings, so huge, you can't quite believe what you see. In fact, the whole time it feels like you're in a dream — except on Ellis Island they push and pinch you enough to know you're not sleeping!

"You feel your feet on the island and you wonder if the island is going to float out from the harbor. Then you smell the grass, only a little bit of a smell but more comforting, more native to you than the salty air. It gives you a sense that you belong. So we come in groups of thirty into a red building, an enormous building with green copper roofs and ivy all over and with statues that hang over the doorway — an eagle, a bunch of grapes, I don't remember what else. They give us a number, a tag, actually, that they put around your neck. All around there's people with their bundles, talking all kind of a language and trying to behave and look nice even though they got all the grime from steerage.

"We climb a big staircase where inspectors stand to give a look, maybe you're a cripple or you can't catch your breath after you climb. If they think there's anything wrong they mark you on the back with a piece of chalk and you get what they called 'detained' for an examination. Otherwise you come out into a great big hall — they could park an ocean liner in there. All the walls are made of white tile like you have today in a bathroom. Every room was like this so they can wash and disinfect quickly, y'see. And they have what they call a 'cattle run,' like, chains that keep you in line for inspection.

"The noise is unbelievable. You think you got rocks rolling in your skull. There's hundreds and thousands of immigrants waiting, yelling at their children, praying, who knows what? And there's signs hanging in every kind of language, Yiddish, Polish, Russian, Roumanian, Italian. Then suddenly an inspector stands and asks you questions: your name, how much money you got, where you're from, how you make a living, are you an anarchist, questions like these. And you try to answer.

"You think my baker friend had trouble? Turns out he's got a sponsor, an uncle with a job waiting for him, so he doesn't need to

have money. Me, I'm the one with trouble. Why, with such an innocent face as mine? Because I'm a young woman with no husband, and the kind of thinking that rules this world says I must be a prostitute, y'see, so unless I make a marriage right there on Ellis Island — and this happened more than once, complete strangers got married on the spot just to get to New York—either this or I must have a relative come to get me.

"Eh,' says my Litvak, 'you let a good one get away.'

"Feh,' I says, 'I'd rather burn my own biscuits, thank you.'

"But all my possessions went down with the iceberg, so I had lost the paper saying the address of my sister, I just remembered the name of the street, St. Anne's Avenue in the Bronx. So I tell the Immigration to send a cable to the *Forward* asking them to contact Mrs. Marcus. I figure that if Leah reads the first notice then maybe they'd have her address and we'd be in business.

"Off it goes while I go into some kind of a cage that they have there. I sit with my little bag that Berkman gave me and my red shawl over my head and it feels like prison all over again. But somehow, I don't know why, I felt wonderful. Sure I worried: maybe Mrs. Marcus won't come, maybe there's no one to take care of her child, or she doesn't even know I'm here, or we won't recognize each other, or she won't accept me . . . But the idea that I would have to go back to Russia was too impossible. Mostly I felt excited thinking about my life as I sat. I felt really free from Siberia for the first time. It's like you sleep late some time, you wake up to the sunlight and the birds instead of your alarm, and you remember your dreams, and then you stretch your arms and yawn and you think, Boy! I got a whole day to live!

"I've had this feeling, that you're inspired, a few times, but I think that the great people of history have it more. It's funny — you have to be alone, you have to have a moment away from all your business, but then you want to rush right back like you got hot *latkes* for the people to eat!

"But I couldn't rush anywhere. For seven hours I sat. So something else happened, and I still blush like a tomato to tell it. All this time I waited to get my menstruation. I had plenty of time. Now, I'm trying to remain neat so that my sister won't think I'm some kind of a *schnorer*, you know what I mean, and what happens? I start my period, for the very first time. It's only a little bit of a nothing, but I felt it, and I didn't know what to do with myself. When

Mrs. Marcus finally came, she first gives me a big hug, then she's slapping my cheeks for me! 'Cause she knew, y'see, hardly before we had the chance to talk. Then we hug again, and we still don't know what to do with ourselves!

"It had been eight years, you know, but I recognized her immediately. She was always a beauty, and she wore her hair piled on top with a ribbon in front and long earrings. Always she wore that ribbon, coming from around the back of her head like you expect to see on a fortune-teller. She was a religious woman, oh yes, but in America she never wore a *shietl* — this was her liberation, I suppose. And she was built, my sister, a full woman, not a little stinker like me. Ah-ha! This was my sister. 'Mrs. Marcus of the Bronx?'"

"She gives one look and recognizes me, too.

"Leah was nearly twelve years older than me, and the rest of her life she spent with me like a mother. But right from the start we had trouble. Not the slap in the face, this was just a joke. But when a woman menstruates, y'see, she's *treyf*, according to the orthodox. She can't so much as hand a spoon to her husband or he'll get contaminated. So when I met Mr. Marcus, Lester was his name, I wasn't even supposed to shake hands with him. Alright, this I can tolerate, I didn't really know him yet and I was dirty besides. But then when Yeshua walks into the apartment, and then when Shmulik walks into the apartment, I climbed all over them! Surprise! Mrs. Marcus got upset by this kind of a behavior. But everyone laughed at her, she was so foolish, even her husband laughed, and by now she was used to getting her religion watered down. In America, this was the way. My father used to say — and this is why he never came to America — that the people of the Book here just become bookkeepers.

"Talk about bookkeeping! This reminds me: on the ship from England I had left in my pocket maybe fifty American dollars — some I had left from the original money and had it changed at the steamship office, and some Berkman gave. So I handed my money to the captain to keep it safe. I didn't speak English, of course, but he had an interpreter, and I told him I got a hundred roubles, which is fifty dollars. But the captain wrote down one hundred dollars, so I came off the boat with a big profit! I didn't even know how much I had until I showed my family. Right away Yeshua wants to take and give to an anarchist newspaper, *Die Fraye Arbiter Shtimmer* — Free Worker's Voice. It was a good paper, but I never even heard of it!

Anyway, Mrs. Marcus wouldn't let him take a penny. 'This is her good luck,' she says. 'It's a sign that Buzie will become a millionaire.'

"Yeah, a million dollars worth of *tsouris*, with such a crazy family!

"I rested a couple of days, and Mrs. Marcus took me shopping for clothes that I shouldn't look like such a greenhorn. She always thought the clerks in the stores were flirting with me. I remember, she would chase them all behind their counters. Most likely they were flirting with her—she was such a good-looker, so stately! But she took my braids and stacked them on my head so I should look like I'm twelve years old.

"And I got to talk with my brothers about their activities, and they showed me newspapers and taught me my first words in English. I think they really felt mixed up about me. Here I just escaped from Siberia where I was suffering for their activities—I mean, I didn't feel this way about it, but this is how it could appear. And when I told them about Babushka Breshkovskya and Jacob Smulevitch and the others, as much as I could stand to talk about it before I would cry, they would gain a new kind of respect for me as a political woman. Yet I was still their baby sister! And a greenhorn on top of that.

"And Faige? Hoo boy, if there ever was an aristocrat born in the poor part of town, this was Faige. She could not see past my dirty face. But I liked her kid, Nat, even more than I liked Mrs. Marcus' girl, so this made a kind of bond between me and Faige—for as long as I would babysit!

"No one had much time for me, anyway, not to be nice or nasty. I had a family again, that's all, and this was a wonderful feeling, but mostly I slept and rested—I relaxed for the first time in years. And in a few days I was working.

"Lester Marcus had a little bit of a laundry business that he stayed there a whole day with his wife and Belle, but the rest of us—forget Faige, she never worked a day in her life — but Shmulik, and Yeshua, and myself, we all worked in the same umbrella factory where Leah and Lester made their start. This was owned by Lester's cousin, Ysrool — Izzy, he called himself. He was a great one for making up names, before you came to work for him you had to accept from him your American name. He wouldn't let you fill in your card with a Russian or a Hebrew name. But everybody wanted to be American as fast as they could, so they thought this was wonderful. Our name became Charloff. Yeshua was Julius. Shmulik was Sam, but everyone called him Shmulik. And me? I became Bessie. Bessie Charloff. Eh, it sounded alright.

“Faige, you remember, was a Kaminsky, married to Feivl, who worked in a die-cutting plant, and with two children, Anna and Nat. Nat was a baby still. And Leah had Belle-Brocha — she was eight years when I arrived. Believe me, if they would have let him, this cousin Izzy would have taken these children with their mothers and put them to work on his machines. There were lots of bosses like him, y’see, that they own a factory no bigger than a closet so that the only way they can make a living is to make merchandise that’s no good, which loses customers, or to keep the workers’ wages very, very low. So what they do is they hire relatives or *landsmen* and they pay their passage — a steerage ticket doesn’t cost so much if you’re getting yourself a slave in the bargain. Because that person has to pay off the ticket by working in your shop. And the class interest in this kind of a situation is not very obvious—the boss may be your uncle and often he works at a machine right next to you. But after a few months maybe you start to realize that his clothes are getting better while yours are getting holes. Still, the average workman dreams more about owning his own little shop than about forming a union. He actually admires the boss, just like the boss admires Rockefeller. Look, it didn’t take much to start out in your own business. You hire a room somewhere, you rent a couple of machines, and you walk down to the docks to find a couple of greenhorns who would work just for the smile you give them. With my hundred dollars, I could have become a capitalist.

“Instead I was a striker, a real troublemaker. Every boss called me that name before he fired me. Only with Izzy I quit first. My job was to put the cloth of the umbrella onto the frame — a ‘tipper,’ I was called. I got paid by the piece, but I was a fast worker, y’see, so at the end of the first week I made six dollars. Then Izzy starts to think, six dollars is a lot of money, why should a young girl make so much? So he puts me on salary instead, three dollars a week. Fine, I make exactly half the number of umbrellas that I made the week before and for the rest of the time I read a book and talk to my brothers. When Izzy says, What happened to your work? I say, What happened to my three dollars, and I quit, right then and there.

“My first year I went from job to job. I had nimble fingers, and I was a good worker, but stubborn like a mule about my rights. Of course, this was a time when the whole Jewish working class was stubborn — we didn’t take any nonsense from these little *parvenu* pigs that were our bosses. First we had the butchers on strike. They

were getting paid only eighteen dollars a month, and the boss gave them where to live. Big deal. After the strike, they got eighteen dollars a *week* and lived where they wanted. This was a real victory. Then the Jewish bakers made themselves a union, with a strike and a boycott, and they won, too. I even got to see my Litvak on the picket line, so he wasn’t a bad guy, after all. But the most important strikes were in the garment industry, and this is mostly where I worked before I became a nurse. Before I even came to America there was the ladies’ shirtwaist makers’ strike — some nerve they had, not to even wait for me!

“But I can’t tell you about every single strike, they happened all the time. We went on the picket line like a kid goes to the sandbox. We had to, this a struggle for our lives. Why should making a living deprive us of our youth, of our families, of anything?

“I remember once I met Morris Rosenfeld on a pcket line. Probably it was in 1912 during the cloakmaker’s strike, but I’m not sure. I’m sorry, but my head gets a little rusty. All I remember is that I saw him, or someone pointed him out to me, so I strayed close so maybe I could meet him. He was already a famous poet, he wrote ‘*Ich Hob a Klainer Yningle*,’ about how a father can’t get to see his own son because of the long hours in the shop. I had memorized lots of his verses, he was my favorite. Eventually we struck up a conversation. He asked me what I was doing there, ‘cause I looked so young, very skinny and small and with my braids stacked up. It came out that I was in Siberia, and this was my passport, we got into a really good conversation. But a couple of days later the police broke our picket lines to let the scabs into the shop. In this particular instance, we lost. So Morris Rosenfeld says to me, ‘Well, do you still want to fight?’ And I said to him, ‘If you lose, that doesn’t mean you lost your feeling or you lost your desire. We lost the fight? Let’s start a new one!’

“And I still feel this way, to this very minute.”

THE BIONIC MESSIAH

The Bionic Messiah will soon be available here, Lawrence Livermore Lab announced today. The thousand year old dream of power is near, thanks to 36 Jewish philanthropists from L.A. Under the aegis of the Department of Defense, the B.M. 1 (formal project name) is ready to assume messianic immanence by the fourth of July, informed officials claim.

An esteemed advisory board helped program the brain. It consisted of two orthodox Brooklyn rabbis, one luminous scientist of Nobel Prize fame, a graduate student in world affairs, two housewives randomly picked from the national roster of Hadassah, a scholar from the Center for the Study of Advances in Chassidic Technology at Selfserve, Ca, and the biggest donor to the temple in Passmeby, Kansas

The bris will be performed by the Chief Mohel, Bristol, England.

When asked for a description of the Bionic Messiah one project official compared his strength to a company of horses in Pharoah's army and spoke of him at length:
 His head is of the most fine gold;
 his neck is builded from an armory.
 His hands are made of gold rings set with the beryl;
 his belly is bright ivory overlaid with sapphire;
 his legs are pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold.
 Yea, he is altogether costly, altogether about 6 million dollars, the official extolled.

Local communities are preparing lists of deeds they would like the Bionic Messiah to perform, for example, better gas mileage was one of the needs of the commuter suburb of Whitebred, Califom', while "higher college board scores" was the simple request of both parents and teens in a small agribusiness town. Urbanites with an eye on the Mid-East thought it best to have the Arabs (somehow) no longer around.

Grant requests from professionals are now being filed. The AMA has asked for sole rights to the cancer cure and therapists seek the technique for maintaining a mild neurotic's sense of improvement while returning for more. The bar association has petitioned the Bionic Messiah to prepare and present a brief before the Supreme Court which assures a slot to all law school candidates with higher scores, thereby resolving an embarrassing, costly tort.

At the University, plans for the convocation are proceeding fast apace, with the key note address by the Bionic Messiah, who'll speak on "Choosing a Vocation in Times of Unemployment, Inflation and Spiritual Distress". And down in the city on this, the penultimate day, the True Messiah's eyes well up with tears. Shrugging, she flicks off the set, grinds the butt in the tray and turns over to sleep for another thousand years.

J.K. Farbstein



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SOCIALIST-ZIONISM: THE UNTENABLE SYNTHESIS

Gary Ruchwarger

"Whenever we come across a contradiction between national and Socialist principles, the contradiction should be resolved by relinquishing the socialist principle in favour of the national activity. We shall not accept the contrary attempt to solve the contradiction by dispensing with the national interests in favour of the Socialist idea."

—Y. Ben Zvi

In recent years various histories of socialist-Zionism and studies of the historical factors which shaped its ideology have appeared.¹ My intent in this essay, however, is to critique the basic assumptions and claims of socialist-Zionism.² Why such a critique at this time? The answer is simple: as a set of beliefs still prominent in Israel and popular among many leftist Jews in this country, socialist-Zionism continues to deserve critical attention. Whether proffered by Peace Now activists in Israel or Jewish leftists in the United States, socialist-Zionist arguments remain a challenge for all Jewish socialists.

Socialist-Zionism is an ideology which asserts that for the Jew, true and progressive socialism must inevitably be linked with Jewish nationalism. "The basic advantage of gaining the independence of Israel in the name of socialism," states Allon Gal, a leading socialist-Zionist writer, "is that only in the Jewish state can Jewish socialists pursue a complete and direct ascent towards socialism."³ Many Jewish socialists, however, cannot accept this assertion. It is not only a matter of rejecting the claim that a "complete and direct ascent to socialism" is possible "only" in the Jewish state. Much more, they repudiate the very notion that one can support the principle of an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine *and* be a socialist. In the view of most socialists — Jewish as well as non-Jewish — the existence of the Palestinian people has always necessitated the abandonment of true socialist principles on the part of those Jews

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attached to Zionism. A plan for a Jewish state in Palestine, conceived in 1880-1900, could only have been realized in one of two ways. Palestine being incontestably an Arab country at that time, there were only two means of turning it into a Jewish country: either expelling or subjugating the indigenous population. This is not a moral judgment, it is simple logic. Moreover, as it happened, most Palestinians were expelled and some of them subjugated. And if it is a question of maintaining the exclusively Jewish character of the state in 1980-2000, this too will inevitably involve the domination — or worse — of Palestinians. In short, the oppression of the Palestinians — which stems from acting according to the tenets of Zionism — is incompatible with the ideals of socialism.

The fact that certain Zionist beliefs have gained hegemony among American Jews — including among many Jewish socialists — must be addressed by those who challenge them. That aspects of Zionist ideology have penetrated the consciousness of American Jews — especially since World War II — is not simply a function of its political success. Its staying power has a great deal to do with the emotional processes of Jewish identity. For what Jew is not affected by the psychological boundaries created by the wounds of centuries of anti-Semitism, the incredible scale and horror of the Holocaust, and by the belief that a national homeland is the only place where Jews can ever expect to be fully secure?

These psychological realities necessarily affect our relationship to Israel and Zionism. But we simply cannot afford to be paralyzed by the deep emotional currents that flow through these issues. If we can reject the myth that it is inappropriate for Jews to criticize Israeli policies, we must then move on to a sober analysis of Zionism. In doing so, we are neither betraying ourselves as Jews nor the Jewish people as a whole. The truth is that to challenge thoughtfully and honestly basic Zionist tenets and practices — including those of socialist-Zionism — is not a malicious process. Rather, it is an endeavor which reflects the utmost concern for the fate of the Jews of Israel.

Is Zionism a National Liberation Movement?

“Until the nature of Zionism, as the liberation of the Jewish people which is part of the liberation movement of all oppressed peoples, is understood, nothing else really matters.”

—Jewish Liberation Project⁴

Some Marxists have believed that nationalism, in all its manifestations, is an irrational superstition. This attitude is a remnant

of the era when Marxists were devoted to proletarian internationalism. They viewed nationalism as interfering with the class struggle. During this century, however, the national liberation movement has become the most logical, if not the only, means of resisting colonial and semicolonial oppression. As a result, Marxists today agree that nationalism — in the form of the national liberation struggle — is clearly rational.⁵

But what about Zionism? Is it, as socialist-Zionists insist, the “national liberation movement of the Jewish people”?

One thing beyond question is that Zionism is a nationalist movement. But what is debatable is the kind of nationalist movement Zionism has been historically. From a Marxist perspective the issue is whether Zionism has played the role of a reactionary or a progressive force in the life of the Jews as well as in international terms.

At the turn of the century antisemitic oppression and Zionist agitation instilled among many Jews, mainly in Eastern Europe, a desire to become a nation, with a land of their own. Yet the massive emigration to the United States, England, Argentina, and elsewhere indicates that whatever their subjective desire, objective conditions led to the dispersal of Eastern European Jews among other nations. Even those elements of potential nationhood that existed among them were weakened.

Early Zionist leaders were well aware that their movement lacked essential elements of nationhood. That is why the political Zionists⁶ deliberately set out in 1897 to obtain them. Zionism represents the case, it has been said, of “a government that acquired a state.”

From the time of the 1897 Basle Congress, the Zionists had a government (the Zionist executive committee). They had a House of Representatives (the Zionist Congress) with a left and right wing, moderates and extremists, progressives and conservatives, religious and secular parties. They collected annual taxes (the *shekel*, whose payment granted the right to vote in the elections of the Zionist congress). Yet they had no state to govern and no citizens. The Congress was a federation of political parties which shared one common objective — to create a Jewish state in Palestine — yet quarreled on almost every other issue, including the means to achieve this common objective. All this activity was taking place in Europe while the Jewish population in Palestine numbered less than 10 per cent of the Arab population, and had nothing to do with the Zionist movement.⁷

It is easy to understand why Zionism originated and acquired its principal strength in Eastern Europe. Only there did the Jews have the characteristics of an oppressed minority people: they were oppressed by the upheavals caused by the rapid development of capitalism and the state-sponsored antisemitism that accompanied this development. In Western Europe the national question had, except for Ireland, already been solved. Only in the czarist Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, where feudal institutions had survived the feudal era, were there nationalities which had not developed rapidly enough to form independent states. These nationalities had fallen under the subjugation of the absolutist states created by the Great Russian and Austro-Hungarian nations.

Various peoples of central and eastern Europe, e.g., the Poles, Ukrainians, and Czechs, struggled for freedom from Hapsburg or Russian imperial domination. Their nationalist movements concentrated on liberating their territory from foreign control in all its forms — military, political, social, economic, and cultural.

Zionism, however, was *not* a national liberation movement in the sense of these other movements. As Ben Halpern, a leading Zionist historian, observes:

Other nationalist movements arose among peoples occupying the land where they wished to be free. Consequently, the nationalist myth of freedom, with its call to expel the foreigner, could appeal to powerful popular feelings of rage and envy arising from the continual frictions that mark the relations between peoples when one rules and the other is forced to be subject. Zionism, however, could not evoke an overpowering wave of popular emotion by a simple outcry against the foreign tyrant, for it proposed not to free the Jews in the countries where they were oppressed but to bring them into a new country.⁸

It is precisely because Zionism sought to transfer Jews to a territory already inhabited by another people that it was not simply a nationalist movement like those that emerged in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Speaking of Zionist demands at the time of the Balfour Declarations, Halpern declares:

The Zionists had a claim which made more than ordinary demands upon the imagination as well as the conscience of the world. They asked to be restored to a land on the basis not of effective occupation but of ancient historic title. The doctrine of self-determination, on the face of it, opposed rather than

supported such a demand; unless, of course, one were prepared for the effort of imagination required by the extraordinary case of a landless people whose opportunity for self-determination depended on being restored to a country of which not they but others were in effective occupation.⁹

In a political sense then, Zionism has not been the national liberation movement of the Jewish people; rather, it has been the *national transfer movement of some of the Jewish people*.¹⁰

Zionism and Imperialism

“The most pervasive and pernicious fabrication extant today is that Zionism is inherently an ideology of imperialism and colonialism and that Israel is its historical embodiment.”

—Jewish Liberation Project

Many socialists frequently reduce the Arab-Israeli conflict to a clash between Western imperialism and Third World anti-colonialism. This is an incorrect view in so far as it ignores key aspects of Zionism's historical roots — political and racial antisemitism and capitalist oppression of Jews.

On the other hand, socialist-Zionists claim that the conflict is merely one between two national movements. This argument, however, is equally superficial. It fails to acknowledge that the Zionist movement, in its struggle to gain access to Palestine and then to overcome Arab resistance to Jewish immigration and settlement, necessarily required the support of English imperialism.

It is not cricket to argue, as does the socialist-Zionist Shlomo Avineri, that “both Zionism and Arab nationalism have, in their checkered histories, relied on British imperialism: in 1917 the British supported the Arab revolt against the Turks at the same time that they issued the Balfour Declaration. The association with British imperial interests, which characterized *both* movements, cannot be taken out of its historical context and used as an argument solely against *one* of these movements.”¹¹

True, the Arabs too managed to acquire a basis for their future independence only because of British support. The same events that laid the basis for the Jewish state freed them from Turkish control. But they were bitterly disappointed. As Maxime Rodinson puts it: “Instead of the great, united independent state they had been promised, Arab territory in Asia was divided, subjected to the protectorate of two great European powers under the hypocritical cloak of the mandate, and saddled with numerous restrictions

limiting their freedom to decide their own affairs in favor of the 'rights' of a third party."¹² The British had therefore managed, for a time, to divide the Arab nationalist movement by buying off its weakest element, the desert chieftains whom the urban bourgeoisie had thought it necessary to call in as their "kings."¹³

But none of the Zionists had to be bought off by the British. On the contrary, *all* the Zionist leaders — whether they were representatives of capitalists, the petite bourgeoisie, or the workers — saw their essential task as cementing an alliance with British imperialism. As Rodinson points out:

There was a mortgage [to British imperialism] on both sides. But the conditions for lifting it were very different. The demands raised by the Arab nationalist organizations were backed up by indigenous masses who were practically unanimous in what they wanted (except, to a degree, in Lebanon). The Zionist organizations, in contrast, had against them the majority of the country in which they wanted to set up a sovereign state. In order to change this situation, they would have to increase the proportion of Jews in the country, a proportion that was only growing slowly (11.1 percent in 1922, 17.7 percent in 1931, 28 percent by the end of 1936); and to accomplish this, they would have to seek out the good offices of the mandatory power.¹⁴

So while it *is* unfair to say that Zionism alone has been linked to imperialism, Avineri is evading the central point: only one of these nationalist movements — Zionism — had to maintain its links with imperialism in order to attain its goal — the establishment of "an autonomous Jewish national entity."

This fact is either denied or explained away by socialist-Zionists. They argue that critics of Zionism are guilty of accepting the "official Zionist view that there is indeed only one Zionism."¹⁵ They insist that only bourgeois Zionists such as Theodore Herzl wished to link Zionism with British imperialism. Labor Zionists, they claim, did not share in this ideology of imperialism.

Let us examine the evidence presented by Simcha Flapan, one of the few socialist-Zionists to admit that the Zionist movement *necessarily* had to seek favor and protection from imperialist countries. Flapan affirms that "there is substantial continuity in Zionist strategy before and after statehood. Not only was Ben-Gurion in full agreement with Weizmannist strategy during the Mandatory period, differing only on questions of tactics, but some of the basic tenets of Weizmannism have remained the guidelines for Israeli foreign policy to the present day."¹⁶

According to Flapan, Weizmann's strategic concepts rested on the following first principle: "The Jewish Commonwealth would become an integral part of the British Commonwealth and guardian of Britain's strategic interests in the Middle East." (p.19) He elaborates:

As early as 1915, Weizmann suggested that Jews would finance a fleet for Great Britain to be based in Palestine in return for her [sic] support of Zionism. . . . With the weakening of the British position in other Middle Eastern countries, especially in Egypt, Weizmann saw the strategic importance of Palestine to the British Empire. Weizmann believed that the Suez Canal could be defended from Palestine and that it was of paramount interest to Britain to have 'a friendly Jewish people in Palestine which should remain friendly when the time comes for the withdrawal of the British Mandate and its setting-up as an independent state.' (p. 25)

Socialist-Zionists would no doubt argue that it is unfair to single out Chaim Weizmann — who lived and operated in the center of the British political elite — as representative of Zionist attitudes toward British imperialism. After all, his support for the Zionist labor movement¹⁷ does not merit identifying his view with its position. So let us turn to David Ben-Gurion, the "militant trade unionist and labour politician who rose to prominence through sharp conflicts both with Jewish bourgeois parties and a colonial administration hostile to the modern and democratic structure of Zionism, and even more so to its socialist-inspired labour movement." (p. 137)

But this leader of Zionism's "socialist-inspired" labor movement also recognized the vital necessity of preserving British support in order to allow the practical work of immigration and settlement to go forward. When asked in 1921 why he, a leader of the workers, followed Weizmann and insisted on co-operation with the British, he explained: 'that so long as we were few and weak, co-operation with the Mandatory Government was thus of vital importance for increasing our numbers and strength in the country.'¹⁸ Like Weizmann, Ben-Gurion regarded co-operation with the British as far more important than co-operation with the Arabs. (p. 132)

After outlining their "contrasting personalities," Flapan observes:

Yet, despite their differences, Ben-Gurion agreed with Weizmann's basic strategic concepts. Ben-Gurion, like Weizmann, believed that an alliance between the Zionist movement and a great power was the *sine qua non* for its

success. Ben-Gurion foresaw the decline of Great Britain as the decisive factor in the Middle East, and the emergence of the United States as a global superpower, and eventually switched the alignment of the Zionist movement from Great Britain to the United States. (p. 131)*

Has Zionism Been a Colonialist Movement?

"The thesis that Zionist colonisation in Palestine was a product of the surge of European imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century, and that Israel therefore originated as a colonial settler state, is inaccurate."

—Simcha Flapan

Socialist-Zionist writers usually employ two types of arguments to counter the charge that Zionism is a colonialist enterprise. Their first line of defense is to stress the "socialist" character of the Zionist movement. Herzl, Weizmann, and the official Zionist Organization are shoved under the rug and everything that derives from socialist ideologies are put on display. The ideas of the "Marxist Zionist" Ber Borochov and the Tolstoyan socialist A.D. Gordon are cited as essential to the powerful socialist-Zionist parties that had a great impact on the thousands of Jewish pioneers in Palestine. Israel's cooperative settlements are presented as models of socialist achievement. The implicit idea here is that a political movement that is so strongly marked by "socialist" influence cannot be termed colonialist.¹⁹

Their second line of defense is to point to certain secondary criteria used to describe colonialism, and then to demonstrate that these criteria do not fit Zionism:

Not one of the traits that characterize colonialism — the military lending a strong hand to missionaries in order to open up a path for merchants and to make it possible to exploit the labor of the colonized — can be found in the Jewish immigration movement in Palestine. In place of a mother [sic] country — Jews chased from one country to another in Europe;

*Ben-Gurion, at one time leader of both Mapai and the Histadrut, best exemplified the hegemony of nationalist ideology among socialist-Zionists. As Amos Perlmutter observes: "Ben-Gurion regarded all Jews as the same. He held that the Jews constituted a nation (*am*) and not a class (*ma'amad*) and that Mapai, as the party responsible for the 'state on the way', represented the nation and not an individual class" (*Military and Politics in Israel*, p. 28). And Michael Bar Zohar, Ben-Gurion's Israeli biographer, affirms: "The subjugation of socialist and party ideology to national and political objectives was to characterize David Ben-Gurion all along his political path" (*Ben-Gurion*, 1978, p. 18).

in place of soldiers — proletarians and intellectuals armed with pickaxes; merchants — there were none; as for missionaries, it would be well to recall that Zionism was a lay movement inspired by socialism.²⁰

A more sophisticated version of this argument, one put forward by Flapan, is that the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Palestine before 1948 was not that of colonizers and natives. In North African countries subjected to French colonialism, the structure of employment and land ownership reduced the native population to dependence and prevented its autonomous development. In Palestine, however, the Arab sector of the economy developed. Relatively few Arabs had their surplus labor appropriated by Jewish landowners or industrial capitalists. (pp. 194-5)

This argument, however, ignores the essential aspects of Zionist colonization in Palestine. The development and then success of the Zionist movement occurred within the framework of European expansion into the underdeveloped areas of the world. As Edward Said observes, "although it coincided with an era of the most virulent anti-Semitism, Zionism also coincided with the period of unparalleled European territorial expansion in Africa and Asia, and it was as part of this general movement of acquisition and occupation that Zionism was launched."²¹ Given the initial aims of Zionism, it could not have been otherwise. Wanting to create a purely Jewish, or predominantly Jewish, state in Arab Palestine in the twentieth century could not help but lead to a colonial-type situation.

I say "colonial-type" because although Zionism shares a number of common traits with other Western-supported colonial-settler ventures, its historical origins and specific situation have combined to give it distinctive features that set it apart as a colonialist form. The most distinguishing feature of Zionist colonization is that Jewish settlers did not come to settle in the land merely to exploit its natural and human resources; they desired the land itself *without its population*.* Most varieties of settler-colonialism — the ones to which Flapan refers — involve usurpation of land, settlement by an alien demographic element, and exploitation of the indigeneous

*Joseph Weitz, for many years head of the Jewish Agency's colonization department, commented in September 1967 that in 1940 he had made the following notation in his diary: "It should be clear that there is no room for both peoples to live in this country. . .

If the Arabs leave, it is a large and open country; if they stay, it is small and poor. Up to this point, Zionists have been content to 'buy land,' but this is no way to establish a

inhabitants of the land. Zionist settler-colonialism, however, consists of usurpation of the land, settlement of an alien demographic element, and a "transfer" of the indigenous population.²²

Here we come to the specific feature of Zionism which distinguishes it from all other modern colonization movements. The European settlers in other colonies sought to exploit the riches of the country (including the labor potential of the "natives") and invariably turned the former population into an exploited class in the new colonial society. But Zionism wanted not simply the resources of Palestine (which were not very great in any case) but the country itself for the creation of a new national state which, through immigration, would provide its own classes — including a working class. The Arabs were, therefore, not to be exploited, but totally replaced.²³

The "replacement" of the Palestinians, it should be stressed, had much the same result as direct economic exploitation: the total deformation of the Palestinians' economic and social structure. For the socioeconomic transformation of Palestine brought about by Zionist colonization (and the infrastructure investments of the British Mandatory government) led to landlessness among the Palestinian peasants and underemployment among the fast-growing urban masses. Surely the development of an exclusively Jewish economy through (1) land purchases from absentee landlords and the dispossession of the Palestinian peasantry,²⁴ (2) denying Arab employment in industries working with capital under Zionist control, and (3) a tightly enforced Jewish boycott of Arab-produced goods must be regarded as the implementation of an oppressive colonialist policy. As Flapan himself admits: "Landlessness was the major cause of the flow of population to the cities, more than could be absorbed by employment there. This ultimately provided the social base for the most extreme opposition to Zionism." (p. 212)

Zionism was in fact a *colonization of displacement*. In addition to the systematic economic and social displacement of the Palestinians, it involved the physical displacement of the population. As Berl Katznelson, the leader of Mapai before Ben-Gurion, once attested: "Situations are possible in which the transfer of population will

country for the Jews. A nation is created in one move. . . and in that case, there is no alternative to moving the Arabs to the neighboring countries, moving them all, except, perhaps, those living in Bethlehem, Nazareth, and the Old City of Jerusalem. Not one village, not one tribe must remain. They must be moved to Iraq, Syria, or even Transjordan." (In Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, p. 73)

become advisable. . . . We do not assume the right to force anybody out. This is a basic Zionist assumption. . . . But was not Kibbutz Merhavia built on a transfer? Without many such transfers, the Hashomer Hatzair would not today be sitting in Kibbutz Merhavia, nor in Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emeck, nor in any other places. . . ." (in *Bober*, p. 13)

Israel Galili, Premier Golda Meir's top advisor, responded with disbelief and presumption when confronted with demonstrations against the expulsion of 6000 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip in 1972. Their houses and wells had been destroyed and 10,000 acres were fenced off for the purpose of the establishment of a group of Jewish settlements. "Our right on Gaza," Galili argued, is "exactly like our right on Tel-Aviv. We are colonizing Gaza exactly in the same manner in which we colonized Jaffa. Those who doubt our right on Gaza should doubt our right on Tel-Aviv as well."²⁵ And when he says "right" he means what is central to Zionist colonization: an a priori privileged position and Jewish monopolistic control over available resources.*



*After participating in the protest, which he helped to organize, the leading Israeli columnist Amos Kenan wrote that if "one who believes that he has no right to Gaza must also doubt his right to Tel-Aviv," then he, Amos Kenan, "would begin to doubt if indeed I have a right to Tel-Aviv — at least to Tel-Aviv as it now is: a Jewish city, in a Jewish state with a million Arabs deprived of rights."²⁶

Misconceptions about the "socialist" nature of socialist-Zionism and the role of its cooperative and collectivist institutions are widespread in the West. This is largely due to official Israeli dissemination of what can only be called blatant falsehoods. Our critique of socialist-Zionism must therefore include an examination of its economic base — the two major "socialist" institutions of Israel, the Histadrut and the kibbutz.

The Histadrut

"The Histadrut and Hevrat Ovdim²⁷ have served as a powerful stronghold for the socialists of Palestine and Israel."

—Allon Gal, *Socialist-Zionism*

Israeli workers seem to be in an enviable position, since the Histadrut promotes the notion that it is a progressive and powerful workers' union. And indeed, in terms of influence and power in the economy, the Histadrut and its institutions are impressive: it has 1.3 million members out of a total population of over 4 million; a quarter of Israeli wage earners work in enterprises belonging to the Histadrut; and for many years the Histadrut accounted for around 22-25 per cent of the Israeli Net National Product.

How did a trade union federation manage to capture such a large sector of the economy? The answer is to be found in the specific conditions of Palestine and in the fact that the Histadrut is primarily a Zionist institution and only secondarily a labor organization. As Gerhard Mueunzer, the historian of the Jewish "labor economy" in Palestine, wrote in 1947: "*Histadrut's main task is the realization of Zionism. Histadrut identifies itself with the primary elements in Zionist work: immigration and settlement. The whole economic, trade union and cultural edifice of labor is built on these two pillars of its ideology.*"²⁸

The Histadrut was not the creation of a mass workers' movement; rather it was always an essential part of an avowedly nationalist movement. As we will see, its role was not only to subvert working class struggles, but to remove an entire sector from the working class — the Palestinian Arabs — from labor market competition. Only then could it fulfill the Zionist goals of "conquest of the land" and "conquest of labor." As Flapan affirms:

The struggle for "100 per cent of Jewish labour" in the Jewish sector of the Palestine economy occupied the energies of the labour movement for most of the Mandatory years and contributed more than any other factor to the crystallisation of the concept of territorial, economic, and social separation

between Jews and Arabs. The principle itself of the exclusive right of the Jewish worker to the Jewish economy implied the complete separation between the two economic sectors. (p. 199)

The Histadrut was a crucial factor in the development of a capitalist state in Israel. In incorporating and organizing immigrant labor, the Histadrut did not regard its main function as supporting the imported workers' class interests. All class struggle, it held, took a back seat to the task of building a Jewish state.²⁹

When Israel was established in 1948, the merger of the Histadrut with the ruling Zionist system³⁰ became total. The economic sector of the Histadrut, with its business establishments and vast financial resources, formed part of the public sector. This became increasingly important with the rise in immigration and the large amounts of capital flowing into the new state.³¹ According to the myth elaborated by Histadrut leaders, the Histadrut economic sector represented the foundation for the construction of socialism. Another specious claim was that the Histadrut economic sector belonged to the workers. Both of these mystifications dissolved with the emergence of the state of Israel. Haim Gvati, one-time Minister of Agriculture and a member of the Histadrut leadership, had to concede during the 1964 Histadrut conference:

We have not succeeded in transforming this immense wealth into socialist economic cells. We have not succeeded in maintaining the working-class nature of our economic sector. Actually there are *no* characteristics to differentiate it from the rest of the public sector, and sometimes even from the private sector. The atmosphere, work relations and human relations of our economic sector are in no way different from any other industrial enterprises. (*Bober*, p. 128).

A look at the official description of a key Histadrut corporation — Tadiran — shows that the economic structure of what is often hailed as the nucleus of the so-called socialist effort in Israel is in fact a multi-national, profit motivated capitalist venture, which follows the pattern of equivalent concerns in other countries.

Tadiran, now a leading international industrial enterprise and Israel's largest electronics manufacturer, barely exceeded workshop size only a short dozen years ago when it was founded, in 1961, through the merger of two small Israeli companies, Tadir and Ran. Tadir, producing quartz crystal products for communications, was owned by Koor Ltd., the industrial concern of the general federation of labor, whereas

Ran, producing batteries for civilian and military use, was owned by the Ministry of Defense. Through this merger they became equal partners in Tadiran. Tadiran, under Mr. Caspi's continuous leadership, has since expanded into other products and new markets, and has achieved an ever increasing sales volume and continuous profitability. . . .

Growth has continued especially in international operations and in foreign sales around the world. Tadiran's exports now approach 25% of its total sales.

With this international trend, Tadiran's ownership itself became increasingly international. In 1969 the Ministry of Defense sold 35% of Tadiran's shares to General Telephone and Electronics International Incorporated (GTEI), an international USA corporation, with whom Tadiran had previously concluded significant know-how agreements. In 1972 GTEI acquired the remaining shares held by the Ministry of Defense. Thus, Tadiran's shares are now held as follows:

Voting shares — 50% by Koor Industries Ltd., Tel Aviv, and 50% by GTE International Inc., New York. Preferred non-voting shares — IL 7.7 million by GTEI; Employee shares — partly paid 280,000 shares of IL10 each.

Principal officers of the Company are: Board Chairman — since 1970, Meir Amit, general manager of Koor; Managing Director — since 1961, Elkani Caspi.

Tadiran produces four major product lines: tactical communication systems, telecommunication equipments, electric & electronic consumer products, and power sources & electronic components.³²

As Davis' research shows, Tadiran's ownership structure and business history is typical of the Histadrut Worker's Company-owned corporations.³³

What about claims that the Histadrut copes perfectly well with the real needs of the worker and that labor and management (in Histadrut affiliated firms) exist in great harmony? Consider the response of Georges Friedmann, the French sociologist who has extensively studied Histadrut operations:

The claim that conflicts between labor and management in a Histadrut factory are essentially different from those in the private sector, because in the former there can be no opposition of interests, but only a "temporary failure in the federal machinery of the Histadrut" cannot be taken seriously. Such claims are an irritating reminder of Soviet propaganda in the Stalin era, which held that there could never be economic

conflicts for workers in Soviet factories, or human problems resulting from technical changes, because "they were the masters now."³⁴

But most revealing is what Israeli workers themselves say about the Histadrut. According to the 1966 Histadrut Yearbook: "A very considerable number of workers are hardly aware of the Histadrut's trade union activities and they believe that nothing would change if there were no union."³⁵ An enquiry undertaken for the Histadrut demonstrated that a growing number of workers believe that the local trade-union branches in their shops (called "workers committees" in Israel) should be independent of the Histadrut. Twenty percent of all wage earners reported that strikes have broken out in their workplaces against the advice of the Histadrut; 47 per cent thought that in certain situations it was worthwhile for the workers to strike without Histadrut sanction.³⁶

Finally, how does the champion of Israeli "socialism" relate to the Arabs from the occupied territories? After 1967 reliance on low-paid Arab labor from the West Bank and Gaza Strip steadily increased throughout the Histadrut economic sector. The following report on the Histadrut-owned *Hishulei ha-Karmel* — the largest forging plant in Israel — is enlightening:

Hishulei ha-Karmel, at Tirat ha-Karmel near Haifa is owned by the Koor Industrial concern jointly with a Finnish Company. It is one of the plants which expanded after the Six Day War because of orders from the Ministry of Defense. Its smooth running and its increased production are possible, to a large extent, because of the relatively large increase of workers absorbed from the West Bank who have succeeded in integrating the plant.

At the beginning the Jewish workers objected to the employment of Arabs at the plant, and there were some slight scuffles. The local (trade union) Labour Council significantly assisted in changing the Jewish workers' attitude and they came to realize that the Arab workers do not replace them, and in reality even relieve them to some extent, in that they do the unskilled, hard and dirty jobs. This is largely because they still lack a sense for industry, except for a few who worked in Germany. . . . But in fact this is only one of the reasons that the West Bank Arabs are employed exclusively in "black jobs." They are very disciplined, says the management. They are obedient, there is no truancy from work. One can assume that an important reason for this is that they have no trade union

defense and backing and they can be dismissed from their job today or tomorrow. . . The overhead on their wage with social benefits just slightly exceeds half of the overhead on Jewish workers wages. . . Nevertheless, their wage is by far higher than the wage they used to get in the past. This is the labor pool that the plant can expect to have in the future (excluding the possibility of political changes), and the plant's continued development depends on these workers. But by all indication, if this situation becomes permanent, it will not be possible to maintain for long the different (wage) levels; one for Jewish workers and one for the workers from the (occupied) territories.³⁷

The Kibbutz

The kibbutz is not and has never been, as Martin Buber claimed, an "all-out effort to create a Full Co-operative which justifies our speaking of success in the socialist sense."³⁸ The truth is that the Jewish rural collectives did not and indeed could not escape the fate of all utopian communal schemes: incorporation into the dominant capitalist environment.

While the co-operatives in Israel have certain unique characteristics, in principle they resemble those in other countries. Co-operatives originated in England during the rise of industrial capitalism at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. They were established by workers or small producers in order to resist high prices and market domination by private capital. Successful in augmenting consumers' real income, co-operatives become subject to reformist illusions that the contradictions of capitalism could be surpassed without overthrowing the system. Since they represented, in the words of Engels, "practical proof that the merchant and the manufacturer are socially quite unnecessary," they fed utopian illusions that through the mere expansion of co-operatives, capitalism could be eliminated and socialism established.

The co-operatives in Jewish Palestine differed from those in other capitalist countries in two main respects. First, they arose not as a result of the advance of capitalist industry, but, on the contrary, because of its absence. The lack of private capital for the development of agriculture and industry (especially the former) and for the employment of Zionist immigrants required the mobilization of public capital and its co-operative use by groups of workers and

workers' organizations. The funds were contributed mainly by Jews in other countries. Second, rather than being formed to ease some of the burdens of capitalism, the purpose of the co-operatives in Palestine was to develop and settle an economically underdeveloped country. They therefore in fact served to *introduce* capitalism into Palestine.

In short, the kibbutz

proved to be the cheapest, quickest, most efficient way of settling immigrants on the land — and settling them where Zionist plans required, without regard for profit or loss. This type of farm also proved most suitable for defensive purposes. At the same time the most idealistic elements among the settlers, those who sought a synthesis of Zionism and socialism, welcomed the opportunity to work in a setup which conformed to their own petty-bourgeois socialist concepts.³⁹

Martin Buber, ignoring totally the concrete conditions in which the kibbutz developed, regarded it as "a signal non-failure" in the history of socialist settlement. In fact, however, its essential accomplishment lies not in socialist practice but in the fulfilment of nationalist aims. As the founding elite institution of the envisioned state of Israel, its signal non-failure was precisely in its success in aiding the establishment of the Jewish state. As Magil asserts:

It is no exaggeration to say that those co-operative farms planted the seed of Jewish nationhood in Palestine. They fixed its territorial framework and created the domestic market for its future history. In other words, they became the foundation on which a *capitalist nation* arose in an area characterized by semi-feudal backwardness. This is the objective role they played. Subjectively, however, in the minds of the co-operative farmers and their ideologists, this has appeared as a process of building socialism.⁴⁰

Let us examine concretely the "socialism" built by the kibbutzim. Ninety-two percent (548 out of the total of 597) of the co-operative agricultural farms (kibbutzim and moshavim) are affiliated to the Histadrut Workers' Company. The Kibbutz Federation industries make up a substantial segment of Israeli industry. From 1960-1972 the number of kibbutz-owned industrial plants increased from 108 to 197 and the number of employees in these industries increased from 4,860 to 9,944. Around 30 percent of kibbutz productive humanpower is currently employed in industry. In some kibbutzim industrial production constitutes 80 per cent of total kibbutz production.

When we examine the financial structure of specific kibbutz industries we find that they do not depart from the general Histadrut pattern, typified by the ownership structure of Tadiran. As Davis notes, "We are literally facing a Utopia Incorporated. In fact, the legal identity of the spearhead of labour Zionism — the kibbutz — is registered with the Israel Register of Companies as none other than 'A Group of Workers for Cooperative Settlement Ltd.!' (p. 90)

A revealing account of the patterns of kibbutz industry ownership and an example of their corporate nature is offered by Eliezer Levin, the economic analyst of *Ha-aretz* (Israel's most prestigious newspaper). In an article entitled "Mapai and the Labour Party Properties" he writes:

The Kor-Oz refrigerator factory produces thousands of refrigerators every year. Its turnover in 1973 was IL9 million, and it has since increased considerably. . . Who is the owner of this successful plant? It is not easy to answer the question, because the ownership is held by companies, whose shares are owned by companies and so on several times. But the person who will have the patience to examine the files of one company after the other will finally discover that Kor-Oz is owned by. . . 71 kibbutzim of the Ihud ha-Kevutzot ve-ha-Kibbutzim Foundation. The properties of the 70 kibbutzim include. . . other businesses as well. The Foundation owns 18% of the shares of the plywood factory Taal. . . 34% of the shares of a company called "Yitzur u-Pituah" which owns a plant for vegetable dehydration, Deco, at Kibbutz Brur Hayil. . . and 25% in the canned good factory Pri ha-Galil at the Hatzor development township in the Galilee. . .⁴¹

What about the question of hired labor employed by the kibbutz? Fifty-two percent of the labor force employed in kibbutz industries is hired labor. Most of the kibbutz hired labor force is found in industry: 21% in the Ha-Kibbutz ha-Artzi Federation and 76% in the Ihud Federation. But kibbutz agriculture employs hired labor as well: 6.5% in Ha-Artzi and 20% in Ihud.⁴²

As for labor conditions for hired employees in kibbutz industries, the evidence shows they are in no way better than those prevailing in the private sector. In fact, they are sometimes worse. Atallah Mansour writes of labor conditions in Pri ha-Galil:

The director of the plant admits that the workers do not have a decent dining hall. . . half of the workers in the plant are members of minorities [Arabs]. Most of them are recruited to the place through labour contractors, but one does not get the

impression that the manager of this Histadrut publicly owned plant, or the Histadrut officials. . . mind in any way that these workers are exploited by "middlemen" who suck their blood and take a share of their meager income. On the contrary, I got the impression that the manager is satisfied with the arrangements with the labour contractor since the latter is under obligation to supply a regular number of hands, and when a woman workers is sick or pretends to be sick he is under obligation to provide a substitute. These women labourers receive after the subtraction of legal and illegal deductions from their income a net daily wage of some IL20.⁴³

Other problems confronting kibbutz socialism arise from having a non-Jewish volunteer labor force on the kibbutzim. As we noted, the kibbutz volunteer labor force is concentrated in undesirable jobs. But some kibbutzim have discovered that their presence is problematic. In 1976, *Yediot Aharonot* (a conservative daily) reported:

By tacit agreement concluded some years ago at the kibbutz Netzer Sireni General Meeting it was decided that the kibbutz will not accept non-Jewish volunteers or Ulpan students. The kibbutz which was then in favour of promoting "common understanding" was badly affected by a number of instances where kibbutz members married Danish (non-Jewish) girls [sic] and left the kibbutz. The "Danish trauma" moved the majority at the General Meeting to decide in effect on introducing prior selection of foreigners coming to the kibbutz, the guiding criterion being whether or not they are Jewish.⁴⁴

It must be acknowledged that kibbutzim have established a communalist life style — one with many attractive features. Even on the least egalitarian kibbutzim — those which permit a relatively greater amount of personal property — all production and ninety percent of total consumption is collective. And during the early years of Jewish settlement, the kibbutz way of life served as an ideal. But as Israel developed along capitalist lines, the kibbutzim, too, followed the bourgeois path. As David Mandel summarizes:

Even for those kibbutzim that do not hire outsiders, material well-being is the mark of success. This requires intelligent production and consumption decision-making within the national and international market places, clearly fostering a bourgeois mentality, albeit for the good of the community as a unit. The Kibbutzim's relatively high standard of living, their elitism, favored treatment and, in many cases, capitalist relations vis-a-vis hired workers, have caused resentment on the

part of the masses of urban Jewish workers and many of Afro-Asian background (kibbutzim are still Euro-American dominated). And when the kibbutz is labeled as the best example of "Israeli socialism," then socialism becomes unpopular among these sectors too. The Likud made very effective demagogic use of this resentment in its 1977 election victory.⁴⁵

Socialist-Zionism and the Palestinians

"The Arab peasants in Palestine and those from surrounding countries found the newly evolving economic relations and conditions of production a basis for their own development. . . The Zionists organized Jews and Arabs into trade unions and helped forge a class consciousness among Arab fellahin (peasants)"

—Jewish Liberation Project

The socialist-Zionists did not see themselves as colonialists in a foreign land; they thought of themselves as pioneers returning to their homeland to build a new society for their people. Nevertheless, Zionism, by virtue of its goal, was compelled to be a colonizing movement, seeking to establish a Jewish entity in a land already inhabited by another people. Like every colonizing society, then, the Zionist settlers had to forge a definite policy toward the indigenous population. They chose the path of separate development.

The creation of a Jewish community in Palestine that would be as independent as possible of the existing Arab community (in terms of land, labor, and production) required a struggle on three fronts: for "conquest of the land" — establishing Jewish ownership and use of as much of the land of Palestine as possible for "conquest of labor" — forcing Jewish employers to hire only Jewish workers, rather than cheaper Arab labor, and thus creating a Jewish-working class; and for "produce of the land" — boycotting cheaper Arab-made goods in order to promote Jewish agriculture and industry.

These Socialist-Zionist policies certainly conflicted with the widely-held socialist principles of class solidarity and opposition to national discrimination.⁴⁶ But Mapai and other socialist-Zionists defended them by pointing to the special circumstances of the Jewish situation. David Hacohen, a major Mapai figure, detailed the practical implications of "socialist-Zionism":

I remember being one of the first of our comrades [of Ahdut Ha'avoda] to go to London after the First World War. . . There I became a socialist. . . When I joined the socialist students —

English, Irish, Jewish, Chinese, Indian, Afridan — we found out that we were all under English domination or rule. And even here, in these intimate surroundings, I had to fight my friends on the issue of Jewish socialism, to defend the fact that I would not accept Arabs in my trade union, the Histadrut; to defend preaching to housewives that they not buy at Arab stores; to defend the fact that we stood guard at orchards to prevent Arab workers from getting jobs there. . . To pour kerosene on Arab tomatoes; to attack Jewish housewives in the markets and smash the Arab eggs they had bought; to praise to the skies the Keren Kayemet [Jewish National Fund] that sent Hankin to Beirut to buy land from the absentee effendi [landlords] and to throw the fellahin [peasants] off the land — to buy dozens of dunams [one dunam = .23 acres] from an Arab is permitted, but to sell, God forbid, one Jewish dunam to an Arab is prohibited; to take Rothschild, the incarnation of capitalism, as a socialist and to name him the "benefactor" — to do all that was not easy. And despite the fact that we did it — maybe we had no choice — I wasn't happy about it.⁴⁷

In 1920 the Histadrut, or General Federation of Jewish Workers in Palestine, was founded. It excluded Arab workers and was in fact as much an institution for colonization as it was a trade union. It fostered the various plans to replace Arab with Jewish labor.⁴⁸ After all, the argument ran, the unorganized and low-paid Arab workers were a threat to the organized Jewish workers, and a trade union must protect its members. Aharon Cohen, a long-time member of the socialist-Zionist Hashomer Hatza'ir (The Young Guard) movement, states what these Histadrut policies meant for Arab workers:

Arab workers, the great majority of whom came from a rural society, found themselves at a double disadvantage in their contract with Jewish employers. For the same work, the Jewish employer paid the Arab less than he paid organized or even unorganized Jewish labor;* and on the other hand, the Jewish worker regarded employment in his sector as his exclusive patrimony, to the exclusion of the Arab worker.⁴⁹

Yet the concept of "Jewish labor" did not seem to be inconsistent with the outlook of the socialist-Zionists. As Flapan explains:

As class-conscious socialists and as Zionists, the Third Aliyah immigrants believed it was their duty to eliminate the exploitation of cheap unorganized Arab labour by Jewish settlers; otherwise Zionism would become a socialist phenomenon. The exploitation of cheap Arab labour was incompatible with their vision of a socialist society. They

thought that by forcing Arab workers to seek employment in the Arab sector, they would stimulate the class conflict in Arab society and prevent the Jewish-Arab national conflict from attaining as well a class dimension (p. 201).

But Cohen rejects these rationalizations:

However eloquent the explanation of the moral, nationalistic, and socialist motives that impelled the Jewish labor movement to take this stand it could not remove the sting from the fact that the Jewish Labor Federation made no effort to organize the Arab workers, even those who worked in the Jewish sector. Jewish labor developed no sort of trade union association or solidarity with the Arab workers in order to improve their working conditions.⁵⁰

Cohen's sharp words clearly reflect Hashomer Hatzair's opposition to Mapai's Jewish labor policy. "As early as 1927," Flapan tells us, "Hashomer Hatzair demanded the joint organization of Jewish and Arab workers during its electoral campaign to the Histadrut" (p. 185). But neither Cohen nor Flapan reveal Hashomer Hatzair's true position vis-a-vis the "conquest of labor" policy.

Since the rank and file membership of Hashomer Hatzair lived on kibbutzim, and was therefore spared direct competition with Arab labor, it risked little in attacking the anti-Arab practices of the social-democratic Mapai. It appealed for but rarely practiced joint organization of Arab and Jewish workers in urban and rural areas. Its relationship to the "conquest of labor" policy was ambiguous, and even hypocritical: a resolution of the 1934 conference of *Hakibbutz Ha'artzi* declared that the fight for "Jewish labor" should be carried out "on the basis of the principle of the priority of the Jewish worker for work in the Jewish sector — on condition that this does not damage the rights of permanent Arab workers (maximum Jewish labor as opposed to the Mapai slogan of 'one hundred percent'). . . ." Obviously, the differences between Hashomer Hatzair and Mapam on this issue concerned tactics more than principle. As Flapan is forced to admit:

In the years of wage labour, members of the Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim were the chief carriers of the attempt to set up joint Arab-Jewish trade union and supported and encouraged the few Arab strikes. But once in the collective farms, facing a hostile environment and harassed by problems of security and self-defense, the actual possibilities of creating contacts with Arab villages were very limited. Hashomer Hatzair tried to

solve this dilemma by an intense ideological indoctrination of its members and a courageous struggle for the defense of the bi-national idea, in the realm of politics, but was unable to match this ideological struggle in the Jewish community with efforts in the field of contacts with the Arab population (p. 186).

For a period of two decades prior to the establishment of Israel, Hashomer Hatzair called for a policy of socialist bi-nationalism in Palestine. The cornerstone of this position was the right of the Jewish people to return to their homeland and the equal right of its Arab inhabitants. Yet the Hashomer Hatzair also stressed the necessity of advancing the Zionist task, of allowing unlimited Jewish immigration and settlement. Here lies the basic contradiction in its bi-nationalism: it criticized the Mapai goal of a Jewish majority, but it obviously assumed that the Jews would become a majority when it called for the concentration of the majority of the Jewish people in Palestine. In Flapan's words: "Hashomer Hatzair professed 'maximal Zionism': the ingathering of the majority of the Jewish people to their homeland and the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine. What distinguished it from the Revisionists was that it combined this belief with the vision of a 'bi-national socialist society in Palestine and its environs.'" (pp. 183-84).

Khalil Nakhich draws the following conclusion from Hashomer Hatzair's bi-national policy:

The question of the sovereignty of the Palestinian people then, even though it was under British colonial and capitalistic rule was not raised. At the time, therefore, the lowest common denominator for the precursors of the contemporary Zionist Left was *not* a Zionist state for the Jews. The preoccupation was in reconciling ideologically the waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine with the desires of the indigenous population. Since Hashomer Hatzair refused to consider limitation on Jewish immigration to Palestine, a bi-national policy became a "progressive" stand.⁵¹

When the United Nations voted in November 1947 to approve the partition of Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state, Hashomer Hatzair abandoned its bi-national platform and championed the creation of the Jewish state.

With the establishment of Israel in 1948, the various socialist-Zionist movements in Palestine realigned themselves to form Mapam — the United Workers Party. Mapam was composed of the Hashomer Hatzair Workers' Party, the left wing of Mapai, and the

left Poalei-Tzion. For the first time, the Zionist workers' movement to the left of Mapai was united in one party. With considerable urban and kibbutz support, its prospects appeared good. Its program attempted to synthesize Zionist and revolutionary socialism:

A. The party is united in seeing Zionism as the solution to the Jewish question by means of the ingathering of the exiles of the Jewish people and their territorial concentration, national revival, social renewal and political, social and cultural independence in Eretz-Yisra'el. . .

B. The party is united in seeing the historic task of the revolutionary-class struggle and of the establishment of a workers' regime as the elimination of capitalism and of all forms of national and social slavery, the creation of a classless socialist society and a world of brotherhood among peoples. (Lockman, p. 10)

The record of Mapam between 1948 and 1967, however, shows its constant shift to the right. On the one hand, the party opposed the military administration over the Israeli Arabs that lasted from 1948 to 1966; it admitted Arabs as members, as long as they accepted the party's Zionist program; it advocated a non-aligned Israeli foreign policy, and a conciliatory attitude towards the Arabs; it claimed to oppose Mapai's reformism and trade-union policies and its failure to carry out its socialist principles. But, on the other hand, when key actions had to be taken, Mapam chose its commitment to Zionist nationalism over its loyalty to "socialism and the brotherhood [sic] of peoples." Mapam kibbutzim do not hesitate to take over and use land expropriated from Palestinian Arabs who fled or were expelled in 1948.⁵²

The 1967 war produced three major developments which became problematic to socialist-Zionists in Mapam and to the left of Mapam: (1) military occupation of densely populated Arab territory, (2) establishment of Jewish settlements on occupied Arab territory, and (3) the rise in the prestige and influence of the PLO. As Nakhleh argues, the response to each of these developments by the socialist-Zionists demonstrates that their stance is "situationally and tactically 'left' and ideologically 'right'." (p. 92).

To determine their position on the occupied territories, some members of *New Outlook's* ⁵³ editorial council met in September 1967. The position which emerged from this meeting on "Peace and Security" were as follows: (1) The June 1967 war was a defensive one for Israel. (2) A position was adopted against the annexation of

territories, but also against their return until there were assurances for secure borders and real peace. (3) The Palestinian refugees should be settled in the Arab countries. (4) Annexation of the territories would create two problems: (a) the "demographic problem," and (b) a colonial image. (5) The State of Israel existed by right and should be recognized as such. (6) The only possible solution for Palestinian statehood was through the "Jordanian solution," namely an Arab state combining the West and the East Banks of Jordan.

For several years following the occupation, socialist-Zionists failed not only to recognize that the Palestinians had the right to self-determination, but they published streams of comments and editorials against the legitimacy of the PLO. Flapan for example, described Fateh as representing "the most intransigent, reactionary, and chauvinistic trend within the Palestinian people" (1969:36). Three years later, Matty Peled (1972:5) challenged the mass following of the Palestinian revolution. "What masses?" he asked. "There are none. If it had mass support perhaps the 'Palestinian revolution' would be a political movement. It has no pretensions of being one; it is a terrorist movement."

In recent years, numerous socialist-Zionists have changed their attitudes toward the Palestinian question. They not only recognize Palestinian rights to self-determination, but openly call for a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Some even insist that Israel negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization. And on the question of Israeli security, Socialist-Zionists — Meir Pa'il for one — share the rational view forcefully expressed by Noam Chomsky: "it must be stressed that security for Israel lies in political accommodation and creation of bonds of unity and solidarity with the Palestinian population, not in military dominance, which will at best only delay an eventual catastrophe, given the historical, political, and economic realities."⁵⁴

Now surely socialist-Zionists who advocate a two-state solution deserve support. For this proposal — despite all its defects⁵⁵ — has, as its paramount principle, the survival of both peoples, and not of one at the expense of the other. And this possible outcome — an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel — may well be the least intolerable under present circumstances. Nevertheless, essential contradictions remain in the socialist-Zionist position, all of which can be attributed to their unwillingness to question basic Zionist tenets.

The key non-negotiable ideological premise for socialist-Zionists is the exclusively Jewish nature of the State of Israel.* This ideological premise has become very troublesome to the socialist-Zionists for two reasons: (1) they must reconcile ideologically the presence of an Arab population which, formally at least, comprises a segment of the state's citizens; and (2) they must acknowledge the relationship between the Arabs in Israel, whose Palestinian identity cannot be denied, and Palestinians elsewhere, especially in the occupied areas after 1967. The socialist-Zionists' response to these problems is explicit. It is that (1) the Arabs in Israel are a cultural minority which should be integrated fully in the political body of Israel through equal treatment. (2) In any discussion of the general Palestinian problem, attempts are made to separate the Arabs in Israel from the Palestinian problem, and to discourage links between them and the Palestinians in the territories, and elsewhere.

My view here [writes Nakhleh] is that the Zionist Left in Israel attempts to partition the Palestine question by focusing their efforts only on certain segments of the Palestinian people. At present, and in my discussions with certain well-entrenched members of this camp, the mere suggestion on my part that Palestinian identification of the Arabs in Israel had to be considered in any discussion of a Palestinian state was rejected on the grounds that it would play into the hands of the Israeli

*The following critique of the Zionist nature of Israel is offered by Abdelwahab Elmessiri, an Egyptian professor: "Israel, founded as a state for the Jews and determined to maintain and perpetuate this Jewish identity, has incorporated discriminatory laws into its very legal framework. Israeli-Zionist discrimination as such is not merely a matter of personal bigotry or *de facto* segregation; it is primarily a matter of *de jure* discrimination. . . . One of the most discriminatory Israeli laws is the Law of Return. Promulgated on July 5, 1950, it grants automatic citizenship to any Jew upon his arrival in Israel, even though he may never have set foot in the Middle East. This same right is denied to a Palestinian Arab born and raised in Palestine who wishes to return to his homeland. This law has no parallel in any other country; it is based on the unique Zionist concept of pan-Jewish peoplehood and can be construed as racist in that it denies non-Jews their inalienable rights in their own homeland" (*The Land of Promise: A Critique of Political Zionism*, p. 147). And Noam Chomsky has written: "To be sure, Israel is not white Africa. Far from it. But the principle of exclusive rights for the settlers who displaced the native population, and now form a majority, is deeply embedded in the institutional structures of the state, almost to the point of lack of awareness. This is a serious matter. The actual record, and the failure to comprehend it, indicate that far-reaching and quite radical changes will be necessary if the system of discrimination is to be dismantled" ("Israel and Palestinians," *Socialist Revolution*, no. 24, pp. 72-73).

Right. Such a suggestion, it was claimed, created unnecessary hurdles in the path to the solution of the problem. Further, it was claimed, whatever problems the Arabs in Israel have can be solved within the framework of a Zionist-Jewish Israel. (p. 94).

Finally, socialist-Zionists fail to realize that a nationalist solution to the Palestinian question is ultimately inadequate. Many socialists — including many Jewish socialists — believe that Zionism as an ideology and an exclusively Jewish state as its political expression can never allow a just solution to the Palestinian problem. As Sabri Jiryis explains:

[The] anti-Palestinian Israeli attitude is not merely emotional or theoretical; it has extremely practical implications. To recognize the existence of a Palestinian people with national rights and legitimate representatives could lead to old files being reopened and the Palestine problem being raised from its earliest origins. There is nothing to guarantee that the representatives of the Palestinians, once they were recognized as such, would not bring up the problem in all its aspects including, for example, the right of the Palestinian refugees to return or to receive compensation.⁵⁶

But the intransigence of the Israeli position masks increasingly complex attitudes towards the Palestinians. Many Israelis who cannot yet overcome their hostility toward them are beginning to understand the Palestinian condition. This shift in awareness is exemplified in the words of a young Israeli woman on military service in Upper Galilee: "Arafat is a murderer. I hate the Palestinians and everything they're doing, but their cause is just."⁵⁷ It is also apparent in a recent poll showing that while 89 percent of Israelis are against the creation of a Palestinian state, 50 percent of Israel's population believes its eventual existence "inevitable."⁵⁸ That more and more Israelis are beginning to question the Zionist "ritual of nonrecognition of the existence of a Palestine national entity" (Flapan, p. 19) is a significant omen for Zionism.

Another indication of change in Israeli attitudes is the emergence of the Peace Now movement. This movement — until now made up mostly of middle-class Jews of western origin — acts as a pressure group against the political and ideological objectives of Begin and Likud government. It has carried out a number of massive demonstrations against West Bank settlements and has even assisted the Palestinians against Gush Emunim harassment. Moreover, the fact that Black Panther and other Oriental Jewish leaders in Israel are

now urging their followers to participate in Peace Now rallies against West Bank settlements is significant.

Nevertheless, the limitations of Peace Now must be acknowledged. Most of its members support the Labor Party program — basically a “territorial compromise” on the West Bank creating a number of Palestinian “Bantustans” under Jordanian jurisdiction. And the pragmatic, “nonideological” leadership of Peace Now is unwilling to employ the militant tactics of Gush Emunim. As Uri Davis declares:

In order to be a counterbalance, the Peace Now movement would have to make precisely the same kind of statement that was made by a hundred or so of its members recently, that they will not defend Gush Emunim settlements in times of war and publicly refuse to obey orders to that effect. The hundred people who made this statement were immediately ostracized and officially “excommunicated” by the Peace Now leadership, and they now represent a group of a hundred individuals. They have no public echo whatsoever within the movement or support within the general Israeli body politic. And that shows you the asymmetry: Peace Now will not go to the barricades in order to defend even its own objectives. It might be an embarrassment to the Begin government, but it is not a factor that has to be taken into serious consideration.⁵⁹



Socialist-Zionists in Israel never fail to stress that the ideological locus of their position is Zionism. They repeatedly point to their Zionist credentials in order to counter attacks from the right and to distinguish themselves from the anti-Zionist socialists in Israel. The determinant aspect of their stance is the factor of Zionism, rather than socialism. Characterizing Zionism as a Jewish national liberation movement, they support the Law of Return and the *de jure* provisions which guarantee exclusive rights to Jews in Israel. Their commitment is to Jewish domination in the Jewish state.

As a result, socialist-Zionists who support a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip envision it as the *permanent* solution to the Palestinian question. They refuse to consider the establishment of a socialist republic in Palestine as an ultimate answer to the problems of both the Israeli-Jewish people and the Palestinian-Arab people.⁶⁰ But commitment to such a long-term solution is necessary if one seeks socialist aims: the internal democratization and further integration of both peoples. Paradoxically, it is unrealistic to dismiss such long range proposals as “utopian”: “They may provide the only basis for the “simpler and more immediate steps that will reduce tension, permit the growth of mutual trust and the expression of common interests that cross national lines — specifically, class interests — and thus lay the groundwork for an eventual just and peaceful settlement.”⁶¹

The inescapable conclusion, then, is that socialism and Zionism cannot be reconciled. To embrace one necessarily means rejecting the other. If Jewish socialists eschew Zionism, however, it does not at all follow that they do not recognize the legitimate rights of Israeli Jews. Nor does it mean they are insensitive to ethnic group rights for Jews in the United States or elsewhere. As Chomsky observes:

In many parts of the world, socialist movements must seek a way to combine a commitment to socialist revolution with a recognition of national and ethnic bounds within complex multinational societies. In the advanced industrial societies as well, ethnic and racial conflicts stand in the way of movements for social change, and are often manipulated and exacerbated for the purpose of preserving privilege and oppression. Ultimately, socialist movements must be internationalist in their orientation, but “internationalism” does not imply opposition in principle to national ties or to other forms of voluntary association among individuals.⁶²

Notes:

1. For an excellent historical overview of socialist-Zionism from a Marxist perspective, see Zachary Lockman, *MERIP Reports* 49 (July 1976).
2. Although this paper discusses some of the basic issues concerning Zionism in general, my aim is not to deal with *all* its essential aspects. For a provocative debate on key questions regarding Zionism, including the claim that the Jewish people as a whole form a nation, and the relationship between antisemitism and Zionism, see Roger S. Gottlieb, "The Dialectics of National Identity: Left-Wing Antisemitism and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," and "Ahistorical Dialectics: A Response to Roger Gottlieb," *Socialist Review* 47, September-October 1979.
3. Of course, socialist-Zionists — like all other Zionists — also argue that a Jewish state is a necessary condition for ending antisemitism.
4. The Jewish Liberation Project was formed by a group of radical Jews in 1968. The quote is taken from *Arab-Israeli Debate: Toward a Socialist Solution* (New York: Times Change Press, 1970). At the time of the debate, the JLP felt closest to SIAH Israeli New Left, a socialist-Zionist group to the left of Mapam.
5. Actually, as Christopher Hill reminds, Marx backed movements for national independence in Europe in the nineteenth century: "So long as a national movement would have the effect of freeing a people from foreign oppression, Marxists supported it: thus in the nineteenth century Marx was an advocate both of German and Italian national unity, and of the independence of Poland and Ireland. *Lenin and the Russian Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 103.
6. Those Zionists, like Herzl, who sought political recognition for Jewish nationalism from the great powers and from the Turks.
7. Arie Bober, ed., *The Other Israel: The Radical Case Against Zionism* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 55.
8. *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 23.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
10. It is necessary to point out that only in recent years have the socialist-Zionists — in an obvious attempt to make Zionism more appealing to the international left — called Zionism a "national liberation movement." As Edward Said notes: "it is important to remember that in joining the general Western enthusiasm for overseas territorial acquisition, Zionism *never* spoke of itself unambiguously as a Jewish liberation movement, but rather as a Jewish movement for colonial settlement in the Orient." And Paul Jacobs observes that "the socialist movement *never* perceived Zionism as a movement of national liberation, as that concept was generally understood during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, since in the formative years of the Zionist movement its adherents did not seek to justify it as such a movement." Response to Shlomo Avineri, in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era? Reflections on the Holocaust*, ed. Eva Fleischner (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1977), p. 258.
11. "Radical Theology, the New Left, and Israel," *Auschwitz*, p. 250.
12. *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (New York: Monarch Press, 1973), p. 57.
13. But the British were unable to suppress Arab nationalism for long: "Within the Arab kingdom or republics placed under mandate, political organizations were able to develop with greater or fewer restrictions depending on the period and the area. Their national character, and their call for independence in a more or less distant future, were acknowledged. This also provided a basis on which a struggle around the demand of total independence could be built." *Rodinson, Israel*, p. 57.
14. *Ibid.*
15. JLP, *Arab-Israeli Debate*, p. 35.
16. *Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1979), p. 18. Hereafter all page references will appear in the text.
17. According to Flapan, "Weizmann encouraged the labour movement to build a society unique in its innovative organization of economic activity. In turn, the labour movement acceded to Weizmann's political strategy for achieving this aim." (p. 18)
18. Of course, Zionist co-operation with the British — in pursuit of "increasing our numbers and strength in the country" — benefitted the British as well. As Glenn Yago elaborates: "Throughout the Yishuv, the pre-Statehood period, Jewish investment and immigration were continuously related. Furthermore by taking the form of infrastructural investment (services, communication, and transportation), the development not only aided immigration but also mirrored the economic plans developed by the British Empire, Palestine was rapidly becoming of critical importance to the British colonial defense system. With growing independence movements in Iraq and Egypt, Palestine became for the British a crucial location for bases from which operations could be launched. Not only new immigration, but the British military strategy favored infrastructural investments. There was a commonality (not an identity) of interests between the British Empire and the Zionist state-building effort. The Mandate occupation sheltered and directed Jewish interests. Hence, during the boom period, 1932-39, construction and infrastructure development represented 46.6% of all Jewish investments." "Whatever Happened to the Promised Land," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXI, 1976-77, p. 122.
19. This is a favorite ploy of Shlomo Avineri whose constant complaint is that "The suppression of the socialist aspect of the dominant element in Zionism and Israeli politics is a recurring theme in many of the left-wing writings on Israel." *Auschwitz*, p. 250.
20. This is part of a reply written by the Union of Jewish Students in France (UEJF) to a talk given by Maxine Rodinson (at the Mutuality on March 5, 1964). Quoted in Rodinson, *Israel*, p. 31.
21. *Palestine*, p. 69.
22. In his extremely revealing discussion of "The Debate on Transfer," Flapan writes: "The concept of transfer was as old as the beginnings of Zionist colonisation. Even before the First World War, leading Zionists had toyed with the idea. . . In 1912, Leo Motzkin suggested that the Arab-Jewish problem was soluble if considered in a wider framework; if the Arabs would be willing to resettle in the uncultivated lands around Palestine, using the money they had received from the sale of land to the Zionists." (p. 259) Far more telling, however, are the following words of Ben-Gurion (which Flapan takes from *New Judea*, Aug.-Sept. 1937, p. 220): "if it was permissible to move an Arab from the Galilee to Judea, why is it impossible to move an Arab from Hebron to Transjordan, which is much closer? There are vast expanses of land there and we are overcrowded. . ." (p. 261) Flapan asserts: "In private debates over partition in 1936-37, and at the Eighteenth Zionist Congress at Zurich in August 1937, Ben-Gurion emerged as one of the most energetic advo-

- cates of transfer, which he justified morally and ethically as nothing more than a continuation of a natural process already taking place. Ben-Gurion secretly but actively promoted the idea of transfer with the Peel Commission and participated in securing Abdullah's support for the plan." (p. 261) For Flapan's entire discussion of Zionist transfer proposals, see pages 259-266.
23. Bober, *The Other Israel*, p.
 24. Noam Chomsky observes: "it may be true that the absentee landlords and feudal proprietors were willing to sell their land, but there is no lack of evidence that peasants were forcibly displaced. The Zionist leadership always understood this. Arthur Ruppin, who was in charge of land purchase, . . . wrote in 1930 that it was illusory to believe that Jewish settlement could be carried out without damaging Arab interests, if only because 'there is hardly any land which is worth cultivating which is not already being cultivated, [so that] it is found that wherever we purchase land and settle it, by necessity its present cultivators are turned away, whether they are owners or tenants. . . . The advice we tend to give Arabs — to work their land more intensively, in order to manage with a smaller allotment of land — may appear as a joke at the expense of the poor' since the peasants have neither the requisite capital nor agricultural knowledge." "Israel and the Palestinians," *Socialist Revolution* 24, June 1975, pp. 73-74. For a discussion of the various scholarly estimates of displaced Palestinians, see Elia T. Zureik, book review of *The Palestinians*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol VI, No. 3, Spring 1977, p. 122. Zureik's conclusion is that "In spite of the fact that land was sold mostly by Arab landowners, and not peasants, to the Jewish National Fund, this resulted in a sizeable strata of displaced peasants."
 25. Quoted in Uri Davis, *Israel: Utopia Incorporated* (London: Zed Press, 1977, p. 15).
 26. Quoted in *ibid.*
 27. The "Workers' Company" — the Histadrut holding company. Every Histadrut member is automatically a member of this co-operative association, and its directing bodies are identical with those of the Histadrut.
 28. Quoted in A.B. Magil, *Israel in Crisis* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), p. 86.
 29. Bober says of the Histadrut and its "Labor Bureaucracy": "It actually functioned as a state mechanism, continuously and directly intervening in all aspects of the colonization process and subordinating 'sectoral' interests and short term considerations to the 'general' long term interests of the Zionist colonial movement as a whole. . . . Moreover, the 'Labor Bureaucracy' used the embryonic state machine to make long-range investments, particularly in infrastructure, that no private capitalist would have made. It established banks and other credit and distribution facilities, subsidized private capitalists and farmers, and employed Keynesian instruments as early as the beginning of the thirties to protect the Yishuv's economy." Quoted in Yago, "Promised Land," p. 127. In short, the Histadrut fit into the classic pattern of a "state capitalist" structure. For an important discussion of state capitalism, see Karen Pfeifer, "State Capitalism and Development," *MERIP Reports* 78, pp. 3-11.
 30. I use "Zionist system" in the sense of a practical system "for accumulation (of power, land, ideological legitimacy) and displacement (of people, other ideas, prior legitimacy)," Said, *Palestine*, p. 57. As difficult as it is for Zionists — who

- naturally perceive it in utterly different ways — Zionism, from the standpoint of its victims, the Palestinians, can only be seen as a political, juridical, and ideological system intent on displacing them from their homeland. For a brilliant — and sensitive — presentation of the Palestinian point of view, read Said's chapter, "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," *ibid.*, pp. 56-114.
31. See Yago, "Promised Land," pp. 132-143.
 32. Davis, *Israel*, pp. 81, 84.
 33. See Davis, *ibid.*, pp. 78-84.
 34. *The End of the Jewish People?* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968), p. 100.
 35. Bober, *The Other Israel*, p. 128.
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. Davis, *Israel*, pp. 93, 95.
 38. *Paths in Utopia* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 141.
 39. Magil, *Israel in Crisis*, p. 89.
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. Quoted in Davis, *Israel*, p. 90.
 42. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
 43. Quoted from *Ha'aretz*, 10/27/75, in *Israel*, p. 95.
 44. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 96.
 45. "Making the Connections: Ideology, Consciousness, and the Left in Israel," *Socialist Review* 39, May-June 1978, p. 103.
 46. The practice of "Jewish labor" only, in particular, made inevitable the surrender of any socialist convictions they might once have sincerely held.
 47. *Ha'aretz*, 11/15/69 quoted in Bober, *The Other Israel*, p. 12.
 48. "In 1933," writes Flapan, "the Histadrut launched, for the first time, a campaign to remove Arab workers from the cities. Specifically formed mobile units moved from place to place to identify and evict by force, if necessary, Arab workers from construction sites and other Jewish enterprises. This campaign in the cities, especially in Haifa and Jerusalem, which had a mixed population, assumed dramatic dimensions and had a devastating effect on public opinion. Every single case of removal of Arab workers — and in many cases the operation took the form of ugly scenes of violence — was reported in the Jewish press and reverberated in the Arab media creating an atmosphere of unprecedented tension." (p. 206)
 49. *Israel and the Arab World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 4. In her study on *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939*, Ann Mosely Lesch writes: "the British government in 1931 explicitly sanctioned 'the principle of preferential, and indeed exclusive, employment of Jewish labor by Jewish organizations.' In fact, the policy negated Zionist claims that Jewish immigration and economic projects would directly benefit the Arabs, and it deeply embittered Arabs against Jewish residents. The secretary of the Arab Labor Federation of Jaffa asserted resentfully in 1937: 'The Histadrut's fundamental aim is 'the conquest of labour' . . . No matter how many Arab workers are unemployed, they have no right to take any job which a possible immigrant might occupy. No Arab has the right to work in Jewish undertakings. If Arabs can be displaced in other work, too. . . that is good. If a port can be established in Tel Aviv and Jaffa port ruined, that is better.'" (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 45.
 50. *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 4.

51. "Israel's Zionist Left and 'The Day of the Land,'" *Journal of Palestine Studies* vol VII, No. 2, Winter 1978, p. 91.
52. For an interesting discussion of MAPAM's position vis-a-vis Palestinian Arabs in Israel, see Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 172-177.
53. *New Outlook* is the English-language journal of Israel's doves. It describes itself as "dedicated to the search for peace in the Middle East and to co-operation and development of all the area's peoples."
54. Chomsky, "Israel and the Palestinians," p. 82.
55. For a brief, but pithy analysis of the pitfalls involved in the two-state solution, see *ibid.*, pp. 56-57.
56. "On Political Settlement in the Middle East: The Palestinian Dimension," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. No. 1, Autumn 1977, p. 15. This article documents the change in the PLO position from that of advocating a "secular, democratic state" in all of Palestine to the "demand for their own independent state." Since Jiryis is the head of the Israel section of the PLO Research Center in Beirut, this article deserves serious attention.
57. Quoted in Frederic Jameson, "But Their Cause is Just," *Seven Days*, Vol. III, Number 11, September 28, 1979, p. 19.
58. *Ibid.*
59. "Settlements and Politics under Begin," *MERIP Reports* 78, June 1979, p. 18.
60. See the debate in Fouzi el-Asmar, Uri Davis, and Naim Khadr eds, *Towards a Socialist Republic of Palestine* (London and Israel: Ithica Press and Miftah Publishers, 1978), pp. 1-139.
61. "Israel and the Palestinians," p. 83.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

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CLASS, CULTURE, AND WOODY ALLEN

Samuela Evans

After the release of Woody Allen's most recent film, *Manhattan*, major commentaries and analyses of his work appeared in many publications. Clearly, Woody Allen has become a serious director and writer whose work attracts attention not only from the general movie-going public, but from leftist, Jewish, and feminist critics as well. This attention comes from his personal treatment of what have become his trademark topics—relationships, intellectuality, and Jewishness.

Allen's comic/serious portrayals of such emotionally-laden subjects evoke strong and conflicting reactions to his films. Those who identify as Jews or as intellectuals or are from New York may often find aspects of their lives reflected in his works. Yet his intense self-absorption becomes tiresome and repetitious; the use of his Jewishness to carry his films' comedy and themes sometimes repels us as it approaches self-denigration.

Some feminists have managed to find redeeming value in Allen's portrayals of male/female relationships because they reveal vulnerabilities and strengths in both partners. But his treatment of women—particularly the characters played by Diane Keaton—leaves much to be desired. Jewish feminists are especially offended by the continual appearance of classical WASP "beauties" as female leads. While it is nothing new for popular movies to use these

I would like to thank the Berkeley editorial collective and associates for their assistance with this article

stereotypes, the fact that Allen, as a Jewish man, largely ignores Jewish women, reveals a great deal about his attitudes toward them.

From a class perspective, Allen's screenplays have little to do with the everyday lives of working people. They deal exclusively with one particular social group and its cultural milieu—an elite minority of white independent intellectuals and artists who live in the rarefied atmosphere of New York and West Coast literary and cultural circles.

Yet, it is Woody Allen's examination of relationships between a distinctly Jewish man and distinctly WASP women who are economically and socially privileged that makes his films complex and controversial. He is the only prominent filmmaker whose Jewishness is a major aspect of all his screenplays. In addition to using aspects of "Jewish humor," he introduces cultural and psychological traits which have come to be associated with American Jews.

More importantly, his leading male appears to come from lower-middle class origins. He is a second generation New York Jew who, through artistic work, moves into a social stratum very different from the one into which he was born. He now shares the status of this group.

Allen himself expresses the conflicts he feels as a member of this elite. Through his male character, he mocks the intellectual snobbism and self-satisfaction of these pretentious culture-makers. In addition, Allen deliberately sets him up with WASP women not only to explore male/female relationships, but also to examine the relationship between dominant, i.e., WASP, cultural values and his own Jewish background.

Diane Keaton, the female lead, typically plays a character who stands in opposition to Allen's role. In "Play It Again, Sam," the Keaton character, in spite of her superficiality, represents what is missing from Allan Felix's life—creativity, sensuality, adventure and the ability to take risks. In flashbacks, we learn that Felix believes his wife left him because of his failure to meet her needs in these areas.

Felix, meanwhile, may appeal to us because he is a warm, sincere, honest intellectual. But he is also a bumbling, insecure, and compulsively neurotic person who would be unbearable to live with. We are left with no illusions about him. His character contrasts sharply with that of Keaton's husband—a confident, secure hustler who is oblivious to the problems developing in his marriage. While

this couple is clearly WASP, California in-culture, Allan Felix is a transplanted New York Jewish intellectual. Although these three characters are somewhat simply drawn, they represent Allen's initial efforts to portray the personal relationships and elite social milieu of his world.

Although the lines in "Annie Hall," the next film to carry on these themes, may be funnier, the over-all tone is more serious; "Annie Hall" has a depth which is missing from "Play It Again, Sam." For one thing, Annie, Keaton's character in "Annie Hall" presents Allen's male lead, Alvy Singer, with greater challenges than she did in "Play It Again, Sam." In this movie she is intelligent, talented, and sensitive.

After introducing her to such elements of New York life as adult education classes and psychoanalysis, Alvy is surprised to discover that Annie has opinions and ideas of her own. She no longer complacently soaks up everything he says. Alvy becomes increasingly threatened as Annie begins to develop her singing career. It is clear that here Allen is making an important comment on men's inability to cope with "their" women's independence.

Annie makes the final challenge to Alvy's New York intellectual life-style when she moves to southern California. While Alvy attacks the superficiality of Annie's Los Angeles entertainment crowd, Annie criticizes Alvy's pretentious New York intellectual life and friends. Rather than indulging in the usual geographical rivalries, Allen chooses to indict the social stratum as a whole.

From the few significant scenes of Alvy with his two ex-wives (Allen is a genius at communicating a range of nuances in a small detail or short exchange), we discover other shortcomings in his relationships with women. With his first wife — one of the few Jewish women in Allen's movies — he seems to share intellectual and political interests. But when Alvy's obsession with politics over-rules his other obsession, sex, we know the marriage is through. While Allen here suggests the possibility that men can have consuming interests other than sex, the way he treats this idea trivializes it. Fittingly, Alvy later complains that he never has enough sex in his relationship with Annie. In this way, Allen attempts to re-assert Alvy's masculinity through his sexuality.

Alvy blames the failure of his second marriage on his wife's need to pursue the social contacts she feels are necessary for her writing career. He dismisses them as superficial. This pattern is continued

with Annie as he objects to her hob-nobbing for the sake of her singing career. Alvy self-righteously condemns hypocrisy and superficiality in general, which serves his chauvinism well when he applies this attitude specifically toward women. Allen again uses such scenes to elaborate his criticisms of this circle.

Alvy Singer is an honest, sincere, warm guy who is also manipulative, opinionated and controlling of the women to whom he relates. The women Allen depicts in *Annie Hall* are as intelligent and as determined about their own needs as Alvy is about his. Their relationships with him stagnate — largely because of his need to dominate. “*Annie Hall*” is funny, but with a seriousness and sophistication that require a second look without laughter.

Allen develops his comparison of WASPs and Jews by directly contrasting Annie’s mid-western family with Alvy’s New York family. Her family is cold, repressed, and psychotic; his is chaotic, excitable and neurotic. Yet, in spite of the chaos and craziness shown in Alvy’s childhood scenes, his home, with its liveliness and warmth, seems more attractive than does Annie’s.

The use of women as representatives of WASP culture in Allen’s films is significant. Through them he creates an important power dynamic and tension. As a WASP, Annie represents the dominant group in this country, which puts her one-up in relation to Alvy, the Jew. At the same time, as a woman, she is one-down in relation to Alvy, the man. Allen then plays out his fascination with and ambivalence toward WASP culture through his male and female leads. It is therefore difficult to differentiate his attitude toward women from his feelings and attitude toward WASP culture. We never know if Alvy is attracted to Annie because of who she is sexually—a beautiful woman—or who she is culturally—a mid-western WASP.

What Allen is depicting fits a classic pattern of men from oppressed groups attempting to further their entry into a dominant class through the women of that class. The stereotypes of these women are dangled before lower-status men as key symbols of success. Consequently, they feel they must “obtain” upper-status women if they are to secure their newly-achieved positions. Of course, relationships founded on such a basis — sexism and class ambition — cannot succeed. Alvy, and men like him, endlessly seek the embodiments of “fantasy women,” only to be repeatedly frustrated when the real women they encounter have wills and lives of their own.

Allen pursues the Jewish/WASP comparison again in “*Interiors*.” Because “*Interiors*” is not a comedy and he does not appear in it, he is able to explore the same themes from a more detached perspective. While there are many couples in this film, the main focus is on a family—a family which is not Jewish. For the first time, Allen concentrates primarily on upper-class New York WASPs.

Women do not fare well in “*Interiors*” under the burden of Allen’s WASP family roles. In his intent to portray the emotional web of a cold, upper-class family, Allen creates obnoxious, spoiled females. Only one of the male characters (the oldest daughter’s husband) comes across in the same way. The mother and the oldest and youngest daughters are neurotic and selfish. Their cold, well-bred snobbism makes it difficult for us to empathize with them, despite the emotional anguish they claim to endure.

The other two women—the middle daughter and the father’s second wife—are more appealing characters. The middle daughter, who is viewed by her family as an aspiring actress, expresses no illusions about her talents or her future. Because she acknowledges her weaknesses, it is easier for us to like her. In addition, having left New York for the West Coast she is also removed from the destructive emotional family games which warp the lives of the other women.

Pearl, the woman who marries the father, provides the Jewish element in this film. Again, Allen displays the contrast between WASP and Jew in extremes. While everyone else wears bland, neutral colors, Pearl appears in a red dress. She is loud and unabashedly frank. While the rest of the family pretentiously discusses a play, she freely expresses her unsophisticated opinions.

Although in *Pearl*, Allen creates a positive Jewish female character, she is neither young, intellectual, nor beautiful — in short, not the counterpart of Allen’s previous female leads. In any other setting, in fact, she would seem loud and vulgar. But compared to the members of this family she is a cheerful, independent Jewish matron. Through *Pearl*, Allen expresses his feelings about this WASP family. Her role is not to give another portrait of male/female relationships, but of nouveaux-riche Jew/upper-class WASP differences. She represents a warm, forgiving and devoted Jewish woman in the midst of a cold, embittered family.

In his most recent film, “*Manhattan*,” Allen returns to his eternal theme of himself—this time as Isaac Davis, writer—pitted against

women. This time he faces three characters—not just Diane Keaton's, but also Mariel Hemingway's and Meryl Streep's. They are again all beautiful WASPs and both Keaton and Hemingway are obviously from upper-class families. Allen continues to look at class and culture through male/female confrontations and again fails to deal with social and economic questions in a larger context.

In Manhattan, Isaac is forced to contend with an equally intelligent writer, Mary (played by Keaton). He shows that though their class positions are identical they still disagree on everything: art, culture, philosophy, and literature. Isaac's righteousness about his intellectual beliefs clashes with Mary's own stubbornness. Her tastes are faddish, and thus seem more pretentious than his. While Isaac sticks to the classics, still pursuing purity and moralism, Mary follows the latest cultural trends.

Again, Isaac over-intellectualizes his entire life and it is Tracy (played by Hemingway) whose directness and forthrightness challenges his well-established defense system. Her youth and candor place her outside the competitive intellectual realm of the other characters. She is by no means naive and deserves to be taken seriously. But Isaac's ageism prevents him from realizing this. Not surprisingly, he has no response to her final words: "You have to have faith in people." Someone at last stops him; Tracy literally has the last line in "Manhattan." Isaac is confronted, but, typically, Allen has reduced the impact. For he plays on widespread condescension toward "adolescents," allowing viewers to dismiss Tracy as unimportant and unimportant.

Allen's treatment of Isaac's interaction with his ex-wife is also very revealing. In contrast to Isaac, she is forceful and determined, and Isaac is unable to cope with her strength. But Allen minimizes her role as a serious character by having her write a distasteful expose' of their marriage. While Allen's portrayal of her lesbianism may avoid the usual offensive stereotypes, he places the emphasis on the humiliation it holds for Isaac.

The relationship between Isaac's friend Yale (Allen uses such choice WASP names!) and his wife is also examined. She is an understanding, devoted, selfless woman who patiently deals with her husband's desires to write a (never-to-be-finished) book and buy an expensive car. She would like a home in Connecticut and a baby, but these are secondary to his desires. Only such an understanding woman—one who is caught within the confines of her traditional

sexist role—could sustain relationships with Allen's self-absorbed male characters.

Like Allan Felix and Alvy Singer, Isaac Davis makes faux-pas at social events, bumbling jokes when he is uncomfortable, and jabs at accepted values. Allen portrays Jews in WASP society as almost Chaplinesque characters. Many of us like these characters for this. We appreciate Allen for his realistic and honest portrayal of vulnerabilities and neuroses. And we like the way he mocks the dominant cultural values with which we are continually confronted.

Nevertheless, Allen's critique is quite inadequate. He has created in Isaac, Allan, and Alvy characters who are purists, men in pursuit of intellectual honesty and ethical behavior, who claim detachment from the elite with which they associate. Yet they are caught in a contradiction. They can't truly attack this stratum because they are also members of it and the resulting discomfort permeates their lives. They are therefore reduced to adopting a morally superior attitude to keep from completely identifying with this group. It is clear that the posturing of these characters represents Allen's own dilemma. So long as he is unable to understand the real nature of his situation, Allen will be incapable of developing a meaningful critique of the social and cultural elite in this country. For the only way Allen could transcend the fragmented presentation of this elite would be to grasp the economic, social, and political system in which its members are enmeshed. Rather than developing a radical analysis of the social and ideological roles played by this cultural elite, he is limited to criticizing the hypocrisy, superficiality, and conspicuous wealth of individuals. As a result, Allen remains encapsulated within the perspective of the social stratum he portrays. Relationships never work; things always look hopeless.

To be sure, Allen has conveyed well the difficult position of the intellectual man he represents—the warm, sincere, bumbling Jew, uncomfortable with his own place in society and facing the consequences of his manipulative attitudes toward women. And he shows women who are growing toward independence and control of their own lives; they will continue to leave Alvy and Isaac and Woody until he acknowledges their autonomy. But to do this he would have to reject the values that stem from both his male privilege and class position. The blinders that come with this privilege and position have prevented him from acknowledging and overcoming his limitations, and, also, from developing a major social and cultural critique through his films.

YOU WANT ME TO BELIEVE

You want me to believe
 there is a man living on 170th Street
 in a two-room apartment, with his bed
 in the kitchen, and books piled in stacks
 that reach almost to the ceiling.
 You want me to believe
 he keeps books on the back
 of his toilet; books stored in the oven.
 You want me to believe
 that when you were hungry
 and opened his refrigerator
 there were books in the vegetable bin,
 books wrapped in plastic in the freezer.

You want me to believe
 there is a man living on 170th Street
 who doesn't have any money,
 and doesn't care.
 You want me to believe
 this man is 68 years old,
 healthy,
 and generous.

You want me to believe
 that Delmore Schwartz still lives,
 still shifts in his naked bed.
 O impossible life,
 as strange and necessary as our own lives!
 Everything I hear tells the story
 I most want to write:
 his other life,
 his possible day —
 an old man drinking coffee from a peanut-butter jar,
 the light in his Bronx apartment growing
 brighter, brighter. . .

JEWISH SOCIALISM IN EASTERN EUROPE: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Daniel Soyfer

The idea for this bibliography arose when the Jewish Socialist Community of Oberlin attracted a number of new members who not only thought that Jewish socialism was a good idea, but that we had invented it. There is a wealth of published material in English about the history and theory of the Jewish labor and socialist movements. By providing this annotated bibliography, I hope this history will be more accessible.

Abramovitch, Raphael R., "The Jewish Socialist Movement in Russia and Poland 1897-1917," *The Jewish People, Past and Present II*, CYCO, New York, 1948.

Written by an important Bundist and Menshevik leader, this is a good summary of the history of the Bund, particularly in the 1897-1905 period. It includes a sympathetic but critical discussion of the development of the Bund's national program, and its conflict with the government. Abramovitch also gives a sketchy account of the beginnings of the other Jewish socialist movements (Poalei-Zion, SERP, etc.).

Abramsky, Chimen, "The Jewish Labor Movement: Some Historiographical Problems," *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, n.1, June 1971.

Abramsky discusses historiographical problems of studying the history of the Jewish labor movement. He suggests looking at its

development in the context of Jewish history (rather than labor history). He sees certain factors (Jewish traditions, community structure, living conditions, economy) as keys to understanding the differences between the Jewish and other labor movements.

Brym, Robert J., *The Jewish Intelligentsia and Russian Marxism: A Sociological Study of Intellectual Radicalism and Ideological Divergence*, Schocken, New York, 1978.

This is a study dealing with Jewish intellectuals who joined one of four social democratic groups in Tsarist Russia: Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Bund or Poalei-Zion. Brym covers the relevant history of the Jewish community in Russia, the Jewish intellectual's position in society and the social and economic conditions of the Jewish community. He relates the factors which led many students, and especially Jewish students, to join revolutionary movements. Brym is concerned particularly with discovering what led some Jewish activists to one movement and others to another. He examines the extent of Jewish education, the degree of "embeddedness" in either Russian or Jewish culture, region of upbringing and political activity, etc., as factors which would turn an individual toward one or another movement. He also discusses the ideological differences between the factions, and their consequent divergent appeals.

Gitelman, Zvi, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics*, Princeton U., Princeton, 1972.

In this very important book, Gitelman traces the history (and pre-history) of the Yevseksia, the Jewish section of the Communist Party in Russia, from its origins to its dissolution in 1930. He describes the building of the Communist Jewish institutions following the revolution, e.g. the commissariat, efforts at colonization, etc. He discusses the ambiguous role of the Jewish Communists, and the factional squabbles among them, the Soviet government's attitude toward the national question and the Jewish question in particular, and the final downfall of the Yevseksia. Also included is a large section on pre-war Jewish revolutionary politics, with particular reference to positions on the Jewish question. He covers the Bund, SERP, Socialist-Zionists, and the Poalei-Zion. Gitelman also deals with attitudes within the Jewish community toward the revolution and specific Jewish concerns.

Goldstein, Bernard, *The Stars Bear Witness*, Viking, New York, 1949.

The author was a long time activist in the Bund, and the book includes a biographical sketch. This book is essentially a memoir of the holocaust years, dealing specifically with life in the resistance movement. Goldstein covers the attitude of the Bund toward the approaching war and its initial reaction to the Nazi invasion of Poland. There is an especially interesting account of the regrouping of the Bund as an underground party. Also valuable is the author's description of the relationship between the Jewish underground and that of the Poles (especially with the PPS).

Harap, Louis, "The Jewish Bund Revisited", *Jewish Currents*, February-June, 1974.

This is a critical history of the Bund from its origins to the 1970s. There is a strong discussion of the Bund's conflict with Lenin (by an author with leanings in favor of Lenin), and its implications for later Soviet and even American nationality debates. It is especially interesting for its account of post-WWII Bund history.

Hertz, J.S., "The Bund's Nationality Program and its Critics in the Russian, Polish and Austrian Socialist Movements, *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, XIV, 1969.

This article covers the development of the Jewish labor movement, with particular emphasis on attitudes toward the national question. It also discusses the Bund and the development of its national program. Hertz concentrates on the Bund's relations with other socialist parties in Russia, Poland and Austria. He examines the different types of motivations for socialist opposition to the Bund's program.

Johnpoll, B. K., *The Politics of Futility*, Cornell U., Ithaca, 1967.

The premise of this book, as the title indicates, is the futility of politics for a party which cannot gain state power on its own. Johnpoll covers the political context in which the Polish Bund operated (the Internationals, Polish parties), and the background of the Russian Bund. He discusses the founding of the Polish Bund as an independent body and its position on the First World War. He

devotes much space to an interesting discussion of factional disputes within the Bund in the '20s revolving principally around the question of relations with the Communists and the Third International. He also covers government repression of the Bund, the reaction to Pilsudski's coup, relations with the PPS, the rise of the Bund as the largest Jewish party in Poland, and its role in the resistance to the Nazis.

Levin, Nora, *While Messiah Tarried: Jewish Socialist Movements 1871-1917*, Schocken, New York, 1977.

Levin's book covers the parallel histories of the three major branches of the Jewish socialist movement before the Russian revolution: the Bund Socialist-Zionism and the American Jewish labor movement. Her coverage of the American movement deals with the early attempts at organization, the role of Yiddish culture, the ideological debates of the '90s, and the rise of an established movement. Her section on the Bund includes the transition from the circle movement to agitation, the founding of the Bund, the struggle with Lenin, the 1905 revolution and cultural work after 1907. Levin's discussion of socialist-Zionism includes chapters about Syrkin, Borochoy and Ruppin, the early kibbutzim in Palestine and the Zionist attitudes toward the Arab question. This book, if used carefully, can serve as an introductory text.

Mendelsohn, Ezra, *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formation of the Jewish Workers' Movement in Tsarist Russia*, Cambridge U., Cambridge, 1970.

Mendelsohn's excellent book is a social history of the Jewish labor movement in Russia from the 1880s to 1905. It contains much information, including statistics, on economic and social conditions among Jews around the turn of the century. He describes the process of proletarianization and pauperization of the Jewish masses, the development of worker-intellectual contact and the transition from "propaganda" to "agitation." Mendelsohn also discusses relations between the worker rank-and-file and the intellectual leadership of the movement. He concentrates on the economic struggles and organization of the Jewish worker.

Mendelsohn, Ezra, "The Russian Jewish Labor Movement and Others", *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, XIV, 1969.

This is a comparison of the development of the Jewish Labor movement in the Northwest provinces with that of the Russian movement. Mendelsohn discusses the strength and staying power of the "kasses" and the factors that contributed to that strength. The appeal of Marxism over anarchism for Jewish revolutionaries is also discussed.

Mendelsohn, Ezra, "Worker Opposition in the Russian Jewish Socialist Movement from the 1890s to 1903," *International Review of Social History*, 10, 1965.

This interesting article deals with a little discussed issue and strips away some of the mythological qualities with which the Bund is frequently endowed. The conflicts discussed include the differences between the worker-students and the intellectual-teachers of the circle movement. The shift to agitation met with resistance among many workers, who objected to the new tactics and distrusted the intellectuals. Another episode involved the debate over the use of terror and the Lekert affair. Other schisms include the call of the rank-and-file for more democracy in the movement, and the Zubatov (police-socialism) movement.

Mendelsohn, Ezra, "The Jewish Socialist Movement and the Second International", *Jewish Social Studies*, 1964.

In this article Mendelsohn discusses the attempts of the Jewish socialist groups to gain recognition by the international socialist movement. He covers the approach of the International to delegations of national groups without political independence and its ambiguous attitude toward the Jewish question. Early Jewish representation is mentioned, as well as the Bund's representation through the Russian section. Also discussed are the attempts by the Poalei-Zion, SERP and S.S. to gain access to the International as the representatives of the Jewish nation.

Mendelsohn, Ezra, "Jews and Christian Workers in the Russian Pale of Settlement," *Jewish Social Studies*, n.4 1968.

Mendelsohn's article concerns the important issue of cooperation

between workers of different nationalities. He discusses the separation of the Jewish and Gentile workers, the conflict between the internationalist ideals of the Jewish social democrats and the national organization to which they had resorted, and the attempts of the employers and the police to split apart the workers of different nationalities. Mendelsohn also mentions attempts of Jewish social democrats to organize Gentile workers and examples of cooperation.

Menes, Abraham, "The Jewish Socialist Movement in Russia and Poland 1870s-1897", *The Jewish People, Past and Present II*, CYCO, New York, 1948.

Menes' article is a good history of the Jewish labor movement up to the founding of the Bund in 1897. Especially interesting is his discussion of attitudes toward labor, worker-employer relations, and property in halakha and traditional Jewish society. He also describes the social position of the Jews and the structure of Jewish society in the late 19th century. Menes gives an account of the major episodes in the development of the Jewish labor movement including Lieberman's activities, the 1881 pogroms' effects on the Jewish intelligentsia, the circle movement, and the agitation movement.

Mishinsky, Moshe, "The Jewish Labor Movement and European Socialism," *Journal of World History*, v.XI, n.s 1 and 2, 1968, also reprinted in Ben Sasson and Ettinger, eds., *Jewish Society Throughout the Ages*, Schocken, New York, 1971.

This essay includes an interesting description of Lieberman's Hebrew Socialist Society and the ideological turmoil within that early socialist group. Mishinsky describes the assimilationist trends as well as the "nationalization" of the movement. The Second International's attitude toward the extra-territorial Jewish movement and the movement in the U.S. are also dealt with.

Mishinsky, Moshe, "Jewish Socialism at the Turn the Century," *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, v.III, n.2, 1973.

Although actually a review of Tobias' work, this article makes many interesting points dealing with the historiography of the Jewish socialist movement, especially of the Bund. Mishinsky examines different approaches to studying the history of the Bund. He also discusses the Bund as an outcome of Jewish history, and posits the

tension between national and class loyalties as the most important factor in Bund history.

Mishinsky, Moshe, "Regional Factors in the Formation of the Jewish Labor Movement in Czarist Russia," *YIVO Annual*, XIV, 1969.

This essay covers the pre-Bund period to 1903. Again, Mishinsky examines the development of the Jewish labor movement within the context of Jewish history, particularly regional differences in Jewish social organization and economic position. He shows the importance of Vilna as a Bund center and how activity spread to other regions. Factors contributing to the predominance of the "Northwest" region include more Jewish involvement in industry, less assimilation among the intelligentsia, and compactness of population. Also mentioned are the motivation behind the Bund's choice of name, and relations with Russian and Polish socialists.

Patkin, A. L., *The Origins of the Russian Jewish Labor Movement*, F. W. Cheshire Pty., Melbourne, 1947.

This is an early study of the Jewish labor movement and can serve as a good introduction to its history. Patkin deals with earlier movements in Jewish life, such as Hasidism and the Haskalah. He summarizes the history of Jews in the Russian empire and the economic development of Russia. He covers the rise of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia, its attitude toward the Jews and its social and political concerns. He then examines the rise of the Jewish revolutionary intelligentsia, its involvement in the Populist movement and its conversion to Marxism, as well as its attitudes toward Jewish issues, the nature of the Russian revolution, etc. Patkin proceeds to describe the rise of the Vilna "pre-Bund" group, the founding of the Bund and the development of the new organization's national program. The work includes chapters explaining the theories of individuals and groups which had an influence on the Bund, including Zhitlovsky, Dubnow, and the Austrian social democrats. There are also chapters on the S.S., SERP, Poalei-Zion and the Yiddish-Hebrew controversy

Pinson, Koppel S., "Arkady Kremer, Vladimir Medem and the Ideology of the Jewish Bund," *Jewish Social Studies*, v.VII, n.3, July 1945.

This may be the first scholarly article on the Bund to appear in English. It was originally published on the occasion of the publishing of memorial books in honor of Arkady Kremer and Vladimir Medem (in Yiddish). It gives a rather sketchy account of Kremer, describing his role as a practical leader of the Bund and his important pamphlet "On Agitation" which greatly influenced the entire Russian revolutionary movement. The bulk of the article is devoted to the explanation of the development and content of Medem's theories on the national question and therefore of the Bund's program.

Portnoy, Samuel, translator and editor, *Vladimir Medem: The Life and Soul of a Legendary Jewish Socialist*, KTAV, New York, 1979.

This is a translation of Medem's two-volume autobiography originally published in Yiddish. It includes an introduction by Portnoy summarizing the history of the Bund and Medem's own involvement with it. Medem was the most important figure in the ideological development of the Bund as well as one of its major political leaders. His autobiography is especially interesting for many young American Jewish radicals. Medem came from a highly assimilated family and was baptized at birth into the Russian Orthodox church. His father was a doctor in the army. Medem first became involved in the revolutionary movement, and was only then drawn to the Jewish people. He then became immersed in Jewish culture and the political problems of the Jewish people. He learned Yiddish and eventually became one of the most revered leaders of the Bund. This is a valuable addition to the stock of information on the Bund in English.

Scherer, Emmanuel, "The Bund," in Gross and Vlavianos, eds., *Struggle for Tomorrow*, Arts, New York, 1954.

Scherer was an important leader of the Bund for many years. This article has a rather partisan, but good, account of the history of the Bund. It also constitutes the most complete statement and explanation of Bundist ideology, both as it relates to the national (Jewish) question and to socialism. Written in the early '50s, this article represents an application of Bundist ideology to the post-Holocaust and post-1948 era.

Schwartz, P., "Revolutionary Activities of the Jewish Labor Bund in the Czarist Army," *YIVO Annual*, 1965.

This is part of a larger work written in pre-war Warsaw. Schwartz discusses the importance attributed to the army in Russian revolutionary strategy. He also describes the rise of revolutionary agitation within the army up to the Russo-Japanese war. Schwartz details the Bund's work in the field, and its suppression by the state.

Szajkowsky, Zosa, "Paul Nathan, Lucien Wolf, Jacob Schiff and the Jewish Revolutionary Movements in Eastern Europe 1903-1917," *Jewish Social Studies*, n.s 1 and 2, 1967.

Szajkowsky examines the relations between the most important (rather bourgeois) Western Jewish leaders and the Jewish revolutionary movement in Russia. Topics covered include the change in Western attitudes toward Russian Jewry following the Kishenev pogrom. Western leaders support for revolutionary groups including their ambiguous relations with the Bund (given their assimilationist and liberal leanings), and their efforts to influence the foreign policies of their own countries.

Tobias, Henry Jack, *The Jewish Bund in Russia*, Stanford U., Palo Alto, 1972.

Tobias' book is probably the most important work on the Bund. It covers the period from 1897 to 1905. He gives the necessary background, including the living conditions of the Jews in the Russian Empire, and the effects of the dissolution of the old order on Jewish life. He then relates the early history of the labor movement, going into the backgrounds of the pioneer organizers, the circle movement, as well as the factors which led to a more Jewish orientation. Tobias describes the founding of the Bund and the issues it faced in the first years. Included in this discussion are the relations between the Bund and other Socialists (RSDWP and PPS), the issue of economism, the confrontations with the Zubatov movement, and Zionism. There are also interesting sections on the development of the Bund as an organization and its role in the 1905 revolution.

Tobias, Henry Jack, "The Bund and the First Congress of the RSDWP: An Addendum," *The Russian Review*, n.4, 1965.

This article discusses the role attributed to the First Congress of the RSDWP by Soviet historiography. Tobias points out the relationship between the Soviets' view of the Congress and the Bund's important role in it.

Tobias, Henry Jack, "The Bund and Lenin Until 1903", *The Russian Review*, n.4, 1961.

This interesting article details the important struggle between the Bund and the *Iskra* faction, led by Lenin and Martov. It includes background material on the Bund and a summary of the development of both the Bund and *Iskra* between 1898 and 1903. Tobias presents the Bund's national program and requests for certain organizational forms and also *Iskra's* (Martov's) response. Also interesting is the account of Lenin's machinations leading up to the Second Party Congress in 1903.

Wildman, Allen K., "Russian and Jewish Social Democrats," in Rabinowitch and Rabinowitch, eds., *Revolution and Politics in Russia*, Indiana U., Bloomington, 1972.

This is an interesting article which deals with the role of the Jewish social democratic movement in the All-Russian movement. Wildman shows how the Vilna Jewish social democracy not only formed the nucleus for the Jewish movement, but the general movement as well. This is shown by the importance of Vilna "colonizers" in organizing the movement in other areas. Also, Kremer's pamphlet, "On Agitation," is shown to have had widespread influence.

Woodhouse, Charles E. and Tobias, H. J., "Primordial Ties and Political Process in Pre-Revolution Russia: The Case of the Jewish Bund," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, v. VIII n.3, April 1966.

Woodhouse and Tobias use the Bund as an example of the problem of "primordial ties" in the development of nationhood in emerging countries. They posit the problem of minority political movements in reconciling political and economic assimilation with cultural autonomy. They then discuss the Bund, its background and responses to the problems of Russian Jewry—especially how the Bund served as a new definer of Jewish identity, in a previously highly traditional society. They discuss Bundist cultural work as well as the Bund's conflicts with the advocates of other concepts of Jewish culture.

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Letter to the Collective:

Dear JSC:

Enclosed is a subscription to your journal. I liked the tone of your editorial statement, and agreed with much of its content, particularly the section on the historical role of Jews on the left, and the one on the middle east and Zionism. I have some reservations on the way you approach Bakke, but that's a relatively minor matter.

The main problem I have with the editorial statement is something that is missing: the absence of any discussion of the rise of anti-semitism in the "socialist" states of Eastern Europe and the impact that this has had on American and World Jewry, and the Jewish socialist community. Jewish radicals played a heroic and quite substantial role in the Russian Revolution, the formation of the Soviet state, and the Communist parties of all the Eastern European countries; but after World War II they were purged from leadership positions, and the Jewish radical cultural institutions were suppressed or severely constricted. The impact of this phenomenon on Jewish socialists in the United States, England, France, and Israel should not be underestimated. For nearly thirty years (1917-1947) the Communist left had seemed (whatever its other faults) to be in the vanguard of the struggle against anti-semitism and national chauvinism. Its role in this regard had ungirded the powerful emotional commitment many Jews had felt to the socialist ideal, even those who were moving out of the industrial working class.

But when "socialist" countries suddenly turned around and began systematically suppressing Jewish culture and excluding Jews from positions of political power and prestige in their societies, it removed much of the luster of the socialist dream for a whole generation of Jewish anti-fascist radicals. This issue is, of course, a central concern of Jewish Currents; it is their generation who felt the tragedy of this turnaround most intensely. But it can not be avoided, as a theoretical and political issue, by radical Jews who come out of the New Left.

I think that we have to look very closely at how Soviet-bloc societies approach the Jewish question and how Communist parties in capitalist countries approach it as well. The issue goes to the heart of socialist theory on the national question. To give an example: during the late thirties and most of the 1940's, the Communist Party and its affiliated organizations made anti-semitism a major political issue both internally and in its public propaganda.

But once the Soviet Union began adopting, explicitly or implicitly, anti-semitic policies, it deemphasized this aspect of its propaganda, and has done so to this day. One consequence has been that the left-Jewish subculture once attached to the party has broken ties with it. Another has been that anti-semitism has not been a major issue for the American Left as a whole.

I know that this is a difficult and potentially divisive subject. I work closely with many people in the CPUSA and a discussion of this issue makes them profoundly uncomfortable and defensive. In addition, it can, if not done carefully, reinforce the the anti-Soviet hysteria currently propounded by some right-wing Jewish organizations. But it must be discussed and analyzed, if any kind of credible approach to the Jewish question is to be developed by the American left. Why has "anti-Zionism" so easily overlapped into anti-semitism in Eastern Europe? Why have so-called Communist and socialist regimes in that part of the world collaborated in the destruction of a rich, proletarian Jewish culture? Was this done by violence or administrative measures? And what does it say of the character of the Soviet state that it was done at all?

This is not only an academic issue. The American left should take a principled stand on the Jewish question — emphasizing the right of Jews to form their own cultural institutions free of harassment and to attain all positions within a society free from ethnic and religious discrimination (a position, of course, which we should adopt for all nationalities, including Arabs in Israel); that in turn would have some impact on the Soviets, the Poles, the Hungarians, etc. This is something which Jews — and non-Jews — must struggle for as a way of giving socialism a renewed moral legitimacy.

We shouldn't be embarrassed about it at all. In raising it as Jews, from our own particular historical perspectives, we also speak to the problems of all oppressed nationalities and submerged ethnic groups.

One final comment. I like the absence of guilt and of tortured soul-searching in the journal. Left-wing Jews have nothing to apologize for to anyone. Whether we approach Right-wingers in the Jewish community (often in our own families), Palestinians, black activists, or other leftists, we can do so with the knowledge that our own concern cuts to the heart of the fundamental theoretical issue on the socialist tradition and central moral concerns in the world society as a whole.

So keep up the good work, and hang tough. There are quite a few of us out there who appreciate it.

Mark Naison

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