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## Preface

The main title of this book may raise a few eyebrows. To what “betrayal” is the author referring? Surely neither antisemitism nor hostility to Israel can be seen as prerogatives of leftism; and if they do exist in some quarters of the Left, is that not an example of “legitimate criticism” of Israel—a country regularly pilloried in international forums as one of the last remaining bastions of Western colonialism?

I have been hearing such arguments for over forty years, ever since (as a young radical) I myself participated in the student revolts of 1968, in both America and France. True, for most of my contemporaries (born like me after the end of World War II) the “Jewish Question” still seemed marginal at that time.

However, in my case, it was something more than mere background noise. Perhaps, because I had been born in the Muslim Republic of Kazakhstan, in Stalin’s Soviet Union at the height of the Great Dictator’s prestige, following the victory over Hitler’s hordes; perhaps because my father’s experience as a wartime prisoner of the NKVD (secret police) meant that from the outset there was great ambivalence in my own mind concerning the “fatherland of socialism.” My father, who in pre-1939 Kraków had been a fellow-traveler of the illegal Polish Communist Party, nourished some bitter memories of Soviet mendacity after the war and the cruelty of a totalitarian system that ruthlessly crushed all individuality. My mother was slightly more inclined to socialist ideas. Her negative experiences of bourgeois Catholic antisemitism in interwar Poland had been much worse than anything she encountered in Stalin’s USSR, though she, too, had no illusions about the “Communist paradise.”

I grew up in 1950s England, seemingly far removed from these totalitarian nightmares. Nevertheless, during my adolescence I was becoming radicalized at grammar school, at the very time that Great Britain was beginning to definitively shed its colonial Empire. In 1961 I first visited Israel, spending a month on a far left kibbutz—fascinated but also slightly repelled by its intense collectivist ethos. It was also the time of the Eichmann trial which made me even more intensely aware (at the age of 15) of the Holocaust—in which so many of my own relatives had been killed. I would return to Israel in 1969 after two years of study and radical protest (mainly in Stanford,

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California) against the “capitalist alienation,” racism, and militarism of the West. I had already read the Marxist classics while still a pupil at Kilburn Grammar School in London and then at Cambridge University where I found most of my fellow-students to be far more conservative than I was. My own “ideology” at that time was somewhat eclectic—a mixture of the Frankfurt Freudo-Marxist School of Sociology (especially Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse), Sartrean existentialism, the French “situationist” school, and a dose of Guevarist Third World mythology thrown in for good measure.

My first *adult* encounter with the Jewish State in 1969 was by no means easy or painless. The intellectual baggage I came with did not predispose me to any special sympathy with a country that struck me then as being dangerously intoxicated with its stunning military victory of June 1967. The result had been to greatly expand Israel’s borders from the frighteningly narrow dimensions of the ceasefire lines after the 1948 war, to something that seemingly offered secure and defensible boundaries. The other side of that coin was a certain degree of hubris which seemed to me frankly alarming. As the literary editor of the peace-oriented left-wing magazine *New Outlook* (in Tel Aviv) I found myself at the age of twenty-four suddenly and unexpectedly thrust into the internal political debates of the Israeli Left. I did not get on with the principal editor of the journal, Simha Flapan, who came from the left wing of the Mapam movement—a Marxist-Zionist party whose power base was in the *kibbutzim*. He was a strange kind of debunking “post-Zionist” before the term even existed. Though no Communist fellow-traveler, his view of the Cold War and the Soviet Union struck me as naïve. Even at the height of my own anti-American feelings in the late 1960s as a result of the Vietnam War, I had never seen the United States as being morally equivalent to the U.S.S.R. Having been trapped in Prague for two weeks as a tourist during the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, it was obvious to me, even then, that “real socialism” as practiced in the Communist bloc was the complete negation of anything resembling humanist ideals. Moreover, during visits to Poland and Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s, I had not failed to notice the cynical use by the Communist regimes of anti-semitism—under the guise of anti-Zionism—to repress any trace of intellectual or personal dissent.

By the time I left the Middle East during the month of “Black September” 1970 (when King Hussein summarily crushed the PLO challenge to his rule) I had begun to crystallize the theme of my future doctoral research on Socialism and the “Jewish Question” in Central Europe. The idea had arisen in conversations that I had in Jerusalem, earlier in 1970, with Israeli historian

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Jacob Talmon and Professor George Mosse (then a visiting professor from Wisconsin at the Hebrew University) whose courses I had been taking. They both felt that it would be better for me to do my dissertation at University College, London, where I would enjoy easier access to the relevant sources, especially those in France, Germany, and East-Central Europe. During the next three years I traveled widely, learned a number of new languages, and focused on my research. I also became aware of the Soviet Jewish self-awakening—the first real crack in the Iron Curtain. At that time, the cause of Soviet Jewry—including the demand for “repatriation” to Israel—even enjoyed some support on the non-Communist Left, which condemned the growing manifestations of Soviet antisemitism.

Forty years on, I have to say that the *classical* Marxist Left whose ideology and politics I studied during the early 1970s seems to me to belong to a very different political universe from the pro-Palestinian leftism of our own time. True, there are a number of theoretical continuities between today and the anti-Zionism of prewar European Social Democrats like Karl Kautsky or Otto Bauer. There is even a connection between the hostility to the “separatist” Jewish labor movement exhibited by Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, and the ideological negation of Israel on the contemporary Marxist Left. Outwardly at least, there is also a common language of socialist “internationalism” that still animates the radical anti-Zionist discourse.

Yet even in the mid-1970s when I became more directly involved in debates on British campuses with pro-Palestinian leftists, there was a sharp edge to anti-Israel sentiment which went beyond theory. Though I well understood Palestinian resentment towards Israel, it was more difficult to comprehend why so many on the new Left had turned against the Jewish State with such vehemence. After all, British leftists were physically far removed from the Middle East conflict, and many seemed to have not even the faintest grasp of either Arab or Jewish culture. The “progressive” take on the Middle East stuck me as extraordinarily simplistic—dividing the conflict into “good” and “bad” guys—the “oppressive” Israelis against the “oppressed” Palestinians.

At one level, this is less surprising when one recalls that much of the Western Left (especially the Communists) had for decades applauded “revolutionary” dictators like Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Colonel Qaddafi, Saddam Hussein, and Castro. Today, it still remains either supportive, indifferent, or silent about populist dictators like Ahmadinejad, Mugabe, or Chávez while rallying its militants on behalf of Hezbollah and Hamas. At the same time, the anti-Zionist Left systematically demonizes Israel—which in terms of its

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civil society, democratic norms, freedom of criticism and rule of law is light-years ahead of the Arab world. One might well ask if this is not an “anti-colonialism” of frauds and fools.

Can we seriously imagine Marx, Engels, Kautsky, or Rosa Luxemburg remaining silent about the advocacy of sharia law, censorship, female genital mutilation, honor killings, suicide bombings, or making the world safe for Allah’s rule? Can we conceive of any circumstances in which they would have envisaged an alliance with Sheikh al-Qaradawi and the Muslim Brotherhood—along the lines of British leftists like Ken Livingstone or George Galloway? The question almost answers itself. But neo-Stalinists or neo-Trotskyists—not to mention post-modern leftists—have no such difficulty. A key element in this emerging Red-Green axis is the rampant anti-Israel and anti-Jewish mythology, especially in the Muslim-Arab world and among anti-American leftist leaders like Daniel Ortega or Hugo Chávez. The type of conspiratorial thinking currently dominant on the pro-Islamic Left is, I would argue, a complete betrayal of the Enlightenment legacy and a caricature of socialist internationalism masquerading under the banner of “anti-globalism.”

In this book, I have tried to explain what went wrong while suggesting that the degeneration was already prefigured in the 19th-century seedbed of antisemitic socialism. A poisonous anti-Jewish legacy can be found in Marx, Fourier, and Proudhon, extending through the orthodox Communists and “non-conformist” Trotskyists to the Islamo-Leftist hybrids of today who systematically vilify the so-called racist essence of the Jewish State. Twentieth-century Marxism had no trouble in rationalizing the crimes of the Soviet gulag with the help of convoluted Hegelian dialectics. Similarly, the propagandists of the radical Left have in many cases proved adept at justifying the elimination of Israel in favor of the Palestinian “revolution”—whose most authentic representatives today are the Islamist antisemites of the Hamas.

From Karl Marx to Sheikh al-Qaradawi, via Ken Livingstone (former leftist Mayor of London), it would appear that the Jews (whoops, sorry, the “Zionists”) are always “guilty” of something bad. It is also worth noting that this is a language that neither the radical Right nor the Nazis and the Islamofascists have any pangs of conscience in warmly embracing. European fascists, no less than leftists, regularly identified the Jews with capitalism and western imperialism. Today, rather than denouncing the “Jewish-Bolshevik” alliance (as Hitler and the prewar fascists continually did), the extreme Right focuses on attacking the “American-Zionist axis.” This is the consensual

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point where it meets with the “anti-Zionist” Left and the Islamists; where neo-Marxists or liberal “progressives” find common cause with Islamic revolutionists from Haj Amin al-Husseini to Arafat, or from Hassan al-Banna to Khomeini, Ghadaffi, and al-Qaradawi. This is the place where “Islamofascism” merges with “Islam-Marxism” in an empty “progressivism” without progress, driven by a convulsive hatred of Western modernity, of Jews, and bourgeois liberalism.

But why are Jews still the scapegoats at the heart of this jihad? Why does a whole section of the Left—which has almost abandoned Marx (except for his “Jewish” antisemitism)—flirt with a counter-Enlightenment so fundamentally alien to its self-proclaimed core value of human emancipation? I can still remember young French students chanting “We are all German Jews” in the streets of Paris in May 1968—their way of protesting against the Gaullists, the Communists, and police brutality. Today, such a march in the streets of Europe would be more likely to echo to calls of “Death to Israel,” “End the Holocaust in Gaza,” or “ Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the Gas!” In such demonstrations, radical leftists frequently join hands with pro-Palestinian jihadists in their relentless campaign to defame, delegitimize and ultimately to destroy the Jewish State of Israel.

It is as if the Holocaust had never happened for much of the Left except as a cynically manipulated metaphor enabling it to brand Israel with the mark of Cain as *the* ultimate symbol of evil; as the “little Satan” carrying out the imperialist will of the “Great Satan” (America) or else as the conspiratorial mafia that determines U.S. foreign policy. For the European Left, still unhinged by the fall of Communism after 1989, anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism appear as the last two ideological pillars still standing in the debris of the collapsed Soviet Empire. When Leftists evoke America, nowadays they often mean “Jewish power”—“domination” of Hollywood, the media, high finance, the Congress, the Pentagon, and the White House by American Jewry. They are talking antisemitism, only now it is wrapped in the more politically correct euphemism of the “Zionist lobby.” Even a “progressivist,” more or less pro-Palestinian American President like Barack Obama, has not been able to escape the potency of such myths by which he, too, is judged. Anti-Americanism, like antisemitism, has truly become the “anti-imperialism” of fools.

This book is (among other things) an attempt to get to grips with the paranoid conspiracy-mongering on the Left, which invariably parades as a *humanitarian* endeavor and a compassionate defense of the “oppressed” or powerless against the might of the “Zionist-Crusader” axis. Already in

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September 2001, there was a foregleam of the new century in Durban, South Africa. In the streets and in various forums one could hear chants of “One Jew, one bullet,” voiced by leftist, Third Worldist, and Islamist advocates of the Palestinian cause at a UN-sponsored conference of NGOs. The UN event, ostensibly organized to condemn slavery, racism, hunger, and war, soon degenerated into an ugly hate-fest of the “new antisemitism.” The “anti-racists” of the contemporary Left had found their *chosen* target by proclaiming what they have never ceased to do ever since—that there is only one “criminal” state in the whole world—and its name is Israel.

Thirty-five years ago it had been the Soviet Union (together with the Arab states) which initiated the UN Big Lie that Zionism-is-racism. Today there is no longer any need for a totalitarian Stalinist apparatus to perpetuate such a major moral and intellectual fraud. For it is “freedom-loving” intellectuals in the West (some of them Jews) who *voluntarily* lend their hands to the “anti-racist” masquerade which declares Israel to be an “apartheid State”—whose disappearance is *the* precondition for peace in the Middle East. On campuses throughout Britain and North America “Israel Anti-Apartheid Week”—often led by publicity-conscious Israeli and Jewish leftists—has now become an increasingly institutionalized fixture for spreading the “anti-Zionist” poison. So, too, have the continual leftist and Palestinian calls for the boycott of Israel in the scientific, technological, commercial, and academic spheres. All of this radical agitation is no longer directed at the “Christ-killers,” the “Jewish usurers” of the Middle Ages, the Bourse Jews, or an inferior race of *Untermenschen*,” but against the so-called perpetrators of a (fictional) “genocide” against the Palestinians. Never mind that this grotesque libel is contradicted by all available empirical evidence, never mind that Israel is increasingly threatened by the genocidal antisemitism promoted by Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the global jihad. Such minor details do not for one moment disturb the sleep of left-wing activists (including the Jews among them) whose “humanist” posture evidently does not extend to the idea that Israelis might also be victims. In truth, the Left today is a mere shadow of its former self— not least because it is so deeply mired in the muck of antisemitic lies and anti-Zionist delusions, many of them focused on the “monstrosity” of Israel as the most racist, fascist, and criminal state on earth. This book goes to the heart of what has become a serious mental derangement in the hope that it may help the Left (and others afflicted by the same malady) to regain their sanity.

This is no doubt an uphill struggle and the prospects of a cure may seem remote. On the other hand, the Arab world is currently in the midst of a

historic revolutionary upheaval, which has exposed the emptiness of the claim (so often heard in the West) that Palestine is the eternal source of all unrest in the Middle East—for which Israel is predictably to blame. But the rising of the Arab citizenry against their corrupt and often tyrannical rulers—who have always used antisemitism as the “opium of the masses,” proves exactly the opposite. Israel is *not* the real issue except for those driven by malice, bigotry, cynical self-interest, power-seeking, or an irrevocably distorted world-view. It is still far too early to say how the Arab revolutions of 2011 will finally play themselves out. Israel, as well as the West, certainly has serious grounds for concern at the possible negative fallout for its own security. Yet a ray of light has already pierced the thick propaganda barrage of anti-Israelism and antisemitism—whether it be Muslim, leftist, liberal, or neo-fascist in origin. Much will depend on whether this small window of hope can be extended or not.

The Islamist war against Israel (spearheaded by Iran) which is itself a war for expanding the global jihad would, if successful, ultimately endanger not only the existence of Israel but of civilization itself. It would also destroy any prospect of enhanced freedom or democracy for Palestine and the Arab world. At the same time, the defense of Israel’s right to exist in peace and security is rapidly becoming a litmus-test of the boundaries between jihadists and democrats, extremists and moderates. By focusing attention so obsessively on the “sins” of Israel and its so-called crimes, most of the Left has completely missed the wider picture and will continue to condemn itself to irrelevance until or unless it awakens from its self-induced stupor.

*Robert Solomon Wistrich*  
*Jerusalem*  
*11 March 2011*



## Introduction Jews, Zion, and Revolution

For approximately thirty years after the end of the Second World War there was a widespread belief that antisemitism and the “Jewish Question” were things of the past. After Auschwitz, a repetition of the murderous Jew-hatred of the Nazis and their European collaborators seemed inconceivable. The “antifascist” consensus in Europe appeared solid. A “post-national” European community claimed to have learned the lessons of history and to be shaping its postwar identity in opposition to the evils of Nazism and fascism.<sup>1</sup> To the extent that antisemitism still existed it was treated somewhat condescendingly as an obsolescent relic of the European far Right and its imitators on other continents. In recent decades, however, it has become apparent that antisemitism has assumed multiple new forms and adopted a new “anti-Zionist” discourse, which owes much of its inspiration to the Left and its view of the conflict in the Middle East, to pro-Palestinian propaganda and the formidable rise of militant Islam.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as I have indicated elsewhere, the proposition that Jew-hatred seriously declined after 1945 is itself largely a myth.<sup>3</sup> Antisemitism has been intensely active across the Arab world for the past sixty years, was revived as a political weapon in the Soviet-dominated Communist bloc after 1948 and has found many echoes (direct and indirect) in the western democracies since the Second World War. Today it is no longer expressed primarily in the form of a direct assault upon the rights of Jews to live as equal members of the non-Jewish societies which they inhabit. Rather, the “new” antisemitism involves the denial of the rights of the Jewish people to live as an equal member within the family of nations. In that sense contemporary antisemitism above all targets Israel as the “collective Jew” among the nations.

In this book we are primarily concerned with the Left and its complex history of interaction with the Jews since the emergence of modern socialism in the 1830s. We intend to show that in its early history the European Left (especially in France and Germany) was profoundly antisemitic as part of its atheistic critique of religion and its populist anti-capitalism. Judaism was essentially treated as a fossil; its concept of “chosenness” denounced as an absurdly egoistic form of “separatism”; Jews were accused of misanthropy,

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fanaticism, and inveterate opposition to science and progress. Their religion was deemed to be trivial, clannish, and utterly “non-historical”—“utilitarian” in the narrowest sense and well suited to the exploitation of other peoples. Jews were a “phantom” people—usurious, avaricious, and materialistic, who had become influential through the power of money. For the early 19th-century socialists—like some of their Enlightenment and Young Hegelian forerunners—Judaism stood, therefore, beyond the pale of human development. It was backward, ethnocentric, vengeful, and obstinately reactionary in its rejection of universal “progress.”<sup>4</sup>

Some of these negative stereotypes have revived in more contemporary leftist claims that Judaism is intrinsically *racist*, that Zionists eagerly collaborated with the Nazis, that Israel itself is a “Nazi State,” or that a sinister Jewish/Israeli lobby currently dominates world politics. Left-wingers like the crusading journalist John Pilger write with unmitigated hatred of “the Biblio-ethnic cleansers in Israel”; Nobel Prize laureate, the late José Saramago (a veteran Portuguese Communist), denounced Judaism’s “monstrous doctrines”—which are “racist not just against the Palestinians, but against the entire world, and which it seeks to manipulate and abuse.”<sup>5</sup> Jostein Gaarder, the Norwegian author, writing in 2006, insisted like Saramago that Jewish doctrines of “election” or “chosenness” were inherently racist; and that Israel’s actions against the Palestinians meant it had forfeited its right to exist.<sup>6</sup> This is a typical offshoot of the new form of antisemitism which negates the Jewish right to an independent national existence.

On the left (and in parts of the European liberal mainstream) it has become almost *de rigueur* to vilify Zionism (the national liberation movement of the Jewish people) as a *criminal* project without the slightest proof or on the flimsiest of evidence. These denunciations often come from the same people who claim to be humanists, to repudiate (right-wing) antisemitism much as they do racism, nationalism, war-mongering, power politics, and Auschwitz.<sup>7</sup> They think they have overcome this apparent contradiction of being “anti-racist” and discriminating *against* Israel, by almost exclusively projecting the evils of racism on the tiny Jewish State and its main protector, the United States of America. At the same time, in the name of progressive “anti-racism” the anti-Zionist Left inexcusably rationalizes Islamist terror, Palestinian suicide bombers, genocidal Iranian threats against Israel, and antisemitic attacks by Muslim immigrants on Jewish targets in Europe or on other continents.

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Some of the most extreme anti-Zionist vitriol today undoubtedly has its origins among the Israeli and Diasporic Jewish ultra-Left. Many in this group of “critics” have embraced an ideology that obstinately rejects the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and statehood, while blindly accepting the excesses of Palestinian integralist or fundamentalist nationalism as well as the Palestinian “right of return.”<sup>8</sup> The anti-Zionist Israeli left, in particular, seeks not only to *de-Judaize* and *de-Zionize* the State of Israel but systematically vilifies and demonizes it. For them (and their many allies abroad) anti-Zionism is purely political and supposedly devoid of any trace of antisemitism.<sup>9</sup> Factually this is simply not true. The effects of “anti-Zionist” actions such as the attempted boycott of Israeli academics, universities, and commerce are exclusionary, racist, and discriminatory towards Jews. Actions designed intentionally to cause real damage to Israeli citizens and the Jewish people can hardly qualify as mere “criticism”; nor can the mendacious attempt to brand Israel as an illegitimate criminal entity even worse than apartheid South Africa be considered as legitimate criticism. The advocacy by a broad section of the contemporary Left of such *defamatory* propositions is a betrayal of its own egalitarian principles and supposed respect for democratic values. Worse still, by identifying with Islamist organizations like Hamas or Hezbollah which advocate and act upon an openly *annihilatory* form of antisemitism, radical leftists have in effect become complicit in what is a symbolic form of genocide.

There is an especially bitter irony in the fact that large sections of the Left today should have become so infected with anti-Jewishness as well as being anti-Zionist. For if we cast our minds back a century ago, we would see not only that Jews played a major role in the emergence of modern Socialism but that the Jewish world was itself permeated by socialist influences. A left-wing political culture forged by the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia and radical youth together with educated, politically conscious Jewish workers spread in the late 19th century from the Tsarist Empire to America, Britain, France, Argentina, and other diaspora communities. At a popular level, the Yiddish language was its lingua franca, the clothing industry and sweatshop its economic base, trade-union politics, ideologically committed socialist parties and self-defense units its hallmarks. This pattern also extended to the Ottoman backwater of early 20th-century Palestine where Jewish socialism would, however, develop in a Hebrew-speaking agricultural context. In this book I have reconstructed some of these debates among Jewish radicals before 1917, who were seeking a new identity based on a synthesis of secular Jewish nationalism and socialism. This was an unusually restless energetic

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generation of radical Jewish youth torn between the prospect of socialist revolution in Russia, mass emigration abroad (especially to America), the settlement of Zion as a national goal, and the fight for cultural autonomy in Europe. It is simply not possible to understand either the roots or the huge impact of the Bolshevik Revolution and the establishment of Israel on Jewish life without knowledge of this crucial formative period.<sup>10</sup>

Modern Socialism, whose initial *raison d'être* was the overthrow of capitalism, owed much, as we will show, to militant Jews who were among its initial creators, leading practitioners, and most fervent apostles. Jewish intellectuals, in particular, brought to the Socialist ranks their acute critical intelligence, unabashed rationalism, devotion to justice, and high ethical ideals.<sup>11</sup> As outsiders, who suffered intensely from the *numerus clausus* (especially in Russia and eastern Europe), it was natural enough for upwardly aspiring Jews to contest the semi-feudal Christian established order. Their carefully cultivated aptitude for mental gymnastics made them as well equipped for jousting in Marxist or Freudian theoretical debates as for excelling in the stock exchange wars of the era. Their secularized heritage of Hebraic messianism enabled Jewish intellectuals to provide a new sense of urgency to the fashionable liberal ideals of modern Progress.<sup>12</sup>

The American sociologist, Thorstein Veblen, writing in 1919 about the “intellectual preeminence of Jews in modern Europe,” discerned its secret in the ability to break free of dogmatic religious tradition and the dead weight of the past. Jews, he observed, were inveterate disturbers of the intellectual peace, insatiable wanderers “in the intellectual no-man’s-land”; their main advantage lay precisely in their homelessness, rootlessness and lack of patriotic attachments.<sup>13</sup> However, Zionism (which aimed to “cure” Jewry of its pathological *wanderlust*) would mean, according to Veblen, the end of this striking intellectual dominance. Socialism, he forgot to add, was no less determined than Zionism to lay Ahasverus (“the wandering Jew”) to rest in the Promised Land of “fraternal” internationalism. Nor could Veblen anticipate the brutal pathology of Hitler’s National Socialism which sought to simultaneously smash liberal capitalism, Bolshevism, and modern urban civilization by killing off millions of European Jews in a scientifically planned, cold-blooded “Final Solution.” Hitler was an ultra-nationalist socialist who learned a great deal from Marxism including organizational techniques, propaganda methods, the need for a coherent world-view, and the imperative of obtaining mass support.

Hitler’s utopian vision of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people’s community) combined Marxian collectivism with pre-capitalist *völkisch* myths into what

he believed was a true German Socialism. State control and a planned economy would be achieved without civil war on the Leninist-Stalinist model; without destroying the entrepreneurial spirit or individual initiative. National Socialism consciously aimed to transform the German people into a real community without leveling down or completely wiping out the existing social order and its class divisions. At the same time, Nazism was an unmistakably *militarized* socialism in which racial ideology and antisemitism were absolutely integral elements. In August 1920, speaking in Munich, Hitler declared: “If we are socialists, then we must definitely be anti-Semites—and the opposite, in that case, is Materialism and Mammonism, which we seek to oppose.”<sup>14</sup> German National Socialism was an anti-Jewish mutation of the socialist idea which the European Left was singularly ill-equipped to confront.

Jewish radicals, whether because of or despite repeated waves of racial antisemitism, often embraced modern Socialism or Communism with the fervour of neophytes, eager to throw off the unwanted residues of an anachronistic tribal past. Not for them the limited horizons of blood, soil, tribe, the “organic community,” the fatherland, or an antiquated religious faith. Nor would they be content with the material satisfactions of bourgeois liberalism, which in the 19th and early 20th centuries had often seemed like the most promising of all “Jewish” options for the future. The liberal system did indeed offer individual liberty, the rule of law, the intellectual appeal of Reason, science, and enlightenment. It also conjured up for a time the seductive dream of painless assimilation and a new civic religion predominantly based on human rights which would definitively disregard the claims of blood, descent, and aristocratic privilege.<sup>15</sup> But secular liberalism also had serious drawbacks, not least of which (especially in East-Central Europe) was its unavoidable “Jewish” colouring and the antisemitic *ressentiment* that it swiftly brought in its wake. In fin-de-siècle Europe, “progressive” liberalism had already become far too “cosmopolitan” for the taste of increasingly nationalistic middle-class strata whose status was threatened from within and without.

Socialism, at least, appeared after 1900 to propose a way out of this impasse for many aspiring and educated Jewish professionals. They were generally middle-class themselves, yet also conscious of the subtle discrimination which they still suffered. Jewish woes, so they felt, should be subsumed in seeking to correct the broader injustice of a class-divided society. By the turn of the 20th century, Socialism—along with Nationalism—had clearly emerged as one of the dominant charismatic

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ideologies of the New Age. This was a decisive period when the Jewish intelligentsia and an emerging Jewish proletariat (especially in Russia) sought ways to synthesize the ethical Socialist ideal with their own version of Jewish nationalism—Zionist and non-Zionist.<sup>16</sup> The hybrid national socialisms of this pre-First World War “age of innocence,” it should be stressed, did not yet have the sinister connotations they would later acquire. Rather they could best be seen as a brave effort to resolve the deep fissures in secular Jewish identity—personal or collective—provoked by the stresses of the modernization process itself and the breakdown of tradition.

Nationalism—increasingly exclusivist, organic, and *völkisch* by the turn of the 20th century—began to pose an acute dilemma for many Jews. In the West it offered the hope of social integration for patriotic Jewish citizens who passionately identified with their recently adopted homelands. But in its blood-and-soil incarnation, nationalism inevitably tended to exclude Jews as *the* strangers par excellence. Socialism, too, was not immune to the Janus-face of modern nationalism. It remained hostile towards most immigrant ethnic and religious minorities, often advocating economic protectionism in favor of the native working-class. The nationalist varieties of socialism were rarely empathetic towards “cosmopolitan” Jews. On the other hand, international socialism also had its Achilles heel, denying any legitimacy to Jews *as* Jews—looking instead to a classless future where “the Jews will have become *impossible*” (Marx).

The Jewish participation in Communism, Socialism, and revolutionary movements—whether as theoreticians, teachers, parliamentarians, journalists, orators, or propagandists—is still a controversial and sensitive issue in some parts of the world. It is also an incontrovertible fact. István Deák once noted that in Weimar Germany, “Jews were responsible for a great part of leftist literature” in their capacity as publishers, editors, intellectuals, or journalists.<sup>17</sup> They played “a decisive role in the pacifist and feminist movements, and in the campaigns for sexual enlightenment.” Not for the first or last time “Jews created the left-wing intellectual movement” whether it was in Germany in the 1920s, in Soviet Russia, Hungary or in the United States and France forty years later.<sup>18</sup> The “critical theorists” of the Frankfurt School (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, and others) all came from German-Jewish bourgeois families.<sup>19</sup> However, their skeptical, elitist theories which tried to combine Marx and Freud, lacked any strong social base or transformational dynamic in the context of Weimar Germany. They were also curiously reluctant to discuss their own Jewishness or to go beyond a highly psychologized view of

antisemitism as a “delusion” or “projection” of modern false consciousness. Horkheimer, who came from a conservative upper-middle-class Jewish background, had already moved towards socialism as a young man, during the abortive Communist revolution of 1918–19 in Munich. Influenced by German idealist philosophy as well as by Marx, Horkheimer pioneered Critical Theory at the Frankfurt Institute in the early 1930s. At that time he was still convinced that Socialism would sweep away the “relics” of antisemitism. No specialized therapy would therefore be required. Evidently, Horkheimer and his circle—armed with their socialist dogmas—had no feelings of insecurity regarding their own ethnic descent, even as late as 1932. The “Jewish” aspect of the Hitlerian menace was, in fact, grossly underestimated by them. Only in 1939, when he was already well established in New York, did Max Horkheimer finally address the issue of antisemitism in an essay called “Die Juden und Europa” (The Jews and Europe). Horkheimer now claimed that Fascism/Nazism was the “legitimate” heir to “liberalistic” society which had bred it. Moreover, he added that he “who does not want to talk of capitalism should also remain silent about Fascism”—which later became a favorite slogan of the 1968 West German student revolt. Horkheimer was extraordinarily harsh about his fellow German-Jewish refugees, implying that they deserved their fate for courting the powers of reaction “as long as they were not too openly anti-Semitic.” Jews were now paying the price for having identified with an unjust social system.<sup>20</sup> Horkheimer would substantially modify such views in the late 1940s, while working with Adorno and others, on the pathbreaking *Studies in Prejudice* series in America that gave birth to *The Authoritarian Personality*. After his return to West German academia in the 1950s, he also found his way back to a “reborn” Judaism. Abandoning his earlier opposition to Zionism, he even expressed a qualified solidarity with the State of Israel as a necessary refuge for a homeless and traumatized people.

Horkheimer’s “critical theory” seems in retrospect like a perfect reflection of Jewish social marginality and spiritual restlessness during the interwar years. Undoubtedly the social psychology of borderline existences did play a role in Jewish radicalism, much as they did in academia, journalism, and the liberal professions. Adaptability, mobility, intellectual agility, a gift for abstract thought, and the sense of being social outsiders were obviously factors potentially conducive not only to scholarly or business success but also to the Jewish affinity for socialism or Communism. The question of messianism is more controversial. Nicholas Berdyaev stressed, for example, the Hebraic messianic element in Judaism itself—which aspired to implement

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the Kingdom of God *on earth*. Socialism had simply transmuted this characteristic (according to Berdyaev) into worldlier channels in modern times. What Isaiah and the prophets of Israel had envisioned more than 2000 years ago—a universal reign of social justice and the definitive overcoming of evil—had been renewed through the secular Marxist dream of collective redemption. Only this time, the messianic idea had been transferred by Marx from the Jews (as God’s chosen people) to the industrial proletariat as History’s chosen class.<sup>21</sup> Much as the Jewish “apostate” followers of Jesus Christ had once sought to theologically *internationalize* God, so Marx and Trotsky had done the same for secular history in constructing the Communist utopia.<sup>22</sup> But neither Christ nor Marx could in practice succeed in expelling “the moneylenders” from the Temple. Analogies to Berdyaev’s messianic view of Biblical Judaism can also be found in the writings of some Jewish anarchists like the French Dreyfusard Bernard Lazare or Gustav Landauer, the short-lived commissar of culture in the Munich Soviet republic—murdered by counter-revolutionary forces in 1919. For the martyred Landauer, Judaism itself contained the seeds of permanent Revolution and the exiled Jews were destined “to be the Messiah of the nations.”

A Hebraic prophetism, derived from the Old Testament, did undoubtedly influence some modern Jewish radicals as it had the German Anabaptists of the Protestant Reformation or Cromwell’s Puritan revolutionaries in 17th-century England.<sup>23</sup> In a more subtle sense, one might perhaps add that there was also a *post-biblical* “Talmudic style” of disputation over the meaning of canonical texts—their commentary and interpretation—which often reappears in the work of “Jewish” radicals. This hair-splitting quality sometimes found in the writings of Communist ideologues of Jewish background can, however, be exaggerated. Easier to demonstrate is the youthful social revolt of Jewish sons and daughters against the tribal patriarchal and commercial world of their fathers. There were those like the famous literary critic Georg Lukaçs (later an orthodox Stalinist) who rebelled in Budapest around 1910 against his wealthy banking family and its close ties to the Habsburg Empire and official Hungary.<sup>24</sup> There was the intellectually outstanding Rosa Luxemburg, growing up in Tsarist-ruled Warsaw, who felt constantly embarrassed by her parents’ petty-bourgeois tastes and self-evident Jewishness.<sup>25</sup> The Frankfurt Marxist Leo Löwenthal also reacted sharply in Weimar Germany against what he termed the “shoddy liberalism, shoddy *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), and double standards” of his own family environment.<sup>26</sup> Then there was the anarchist leader of the American Yippie movement in the late 1960s, Jerry Rubin, who had this to say about his



Jewish background, growing up in a country (America) which he liked to spell with a “K” in order to better “Nazify” it:

I know it [Jewishness] made me feel like a minority or outsider in Amerika from my birth and helped me become a revolutionary.”<sup>27</sup>

Such examples are legion in the biographies of children from upwardly mobile Jewish families who became radicalized—whether in backward Tsarist Russia, middle-class Central Europe or ultra-modern affluent America.

A different kind of revolt against the world of their fathers (still stuck in the Russian or East European shtetls) led directly to the Hebrew-based revolutionary nationalism of the Zionist socialists.<sup>28</sup> They were secularists driven by a quasi-religious pioneering fervor to transform the “Promised Land” into a Jewish “national home.” The essence of the Zionist Revolution in their eyes was to turn Diaspora Jews away from their traditional middlemen occupations or petty commerce into becoming primary producers on the land. They revolted against the bourgeois cult of individual success in favor of building up a *national* society. From a condition of virtual powerlessness they aspired to one where Jews could again become sovereign masters of their own fate. In the Zionist socialist dispensation, this drive for Jewish national self-determination had a *pioneering* dimension that demanded physical rootedness in the land of Zion (Palestine). Zionism was intended to be a social, spiritual and political revolution against the very condition of Jewish Exile, against the predominant current of Jewish history for 2,000 years and against the “yoke of the Gentiles.” Only by redeeming the Jewish people in their own homeland could Jews hope to “normalize” their status among the nations and fully participate in transforming the destiny of mankind.<sup>29</sup> From A. D. Gordon, Nachman Syrkin, and Ber Borochov to David Ben-Gurion, the Labour Zionists saw Jewish *national rebirth* as the core-aim of their socialism; it could only be achieved, however, by a socio-economic and psychological self-transformation. Even a Marxist Zionist like Borochov insisted that proletarian internationalism would have to pass through the crucible of Hebrew nationalism, if it was ever to achieve its aims. Jewish involvement in the universal class-struggle would forever remain a fiction as long as the Jewish people lacked its own national framework and soil under its feet.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, before the First World War Russian Zionists (the numerically strongest section of the worldwide Zionist movement) found it difficult to compete with Bundism—a Yiddish-speaking Marxism which aimed its agitation at the “Jewish street” in the Russian Pale of Settlement.<sup>31</sup> Zionists felt even more blocked by the growing Russification of Jewish youth

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which seemed to be leading as early as 1900 towards world revolution rather than the Zionist national cause. The young Chaim Weizmann anxiously reported to Theodor Herzl in 1903 that

almost all those now being victimized [by Tsarism] in the entire Social Democratic movement are Jews, and their number grows every day. They are not necessarily young people of proletarian origin; they also come from well-to-do families, and incidentally not infrequently from Zionist families.<sup>32</sup>

Through revolutionary conviction, a large part of this Russian-Jewish younger generation (according to Weizmann) had already become *anti-Zionist*. He deplored this “mass-sacrifice” of Jews on the altar of the Russian revolutionary movements. It was a trend that had begun in the Jewish fold and had already consumed “much Jewish energy and heroism.” But in their attitude to Jewish nationalism, revolutionary Jews displayed “antipathy, swelling at times to fanatical hatred.”<sup>33</sup> The young Weizmann bitterly noted that the “children are in open revolt against their parents.” This was a pattern that had significantly increased with the rise of Russian Marxism in the 1890s. But even in the 1870s and 1880s Jews had already made up around 20% of the activists in the radical Populist (People’s Will) movement.<sup>34</sup>

As Chaim Weizmann’s comments suggest, Jewish radicalism in Russia (and elsewhere) involved a rejection not only of autocratic Tsarism and of parental authority but also of Jewishness itself. The embrace of internationalism meant the repudiation of tradition, religion, Jewish family attachments, “petty-bourgeois “acquisitiveness” (Trotsky), or what Marx had contemptuously derided as “practical, real Judaism” (haggling). Jews clearly did not fit into the traditional Orthodox Christian society of Imperial Russia and (as yet) they still lacked a strong ethnic nationalism of their own. Hence, social revolution around 1900 appeared as a particularly attractive option. The pervasiveness of antisemitism among Tsarist officialdom, in the native middle class and the Russian peasant masses, further reinforced Jewish motivation. Jewish urban commercial skills and their status as perennial “strangers,” to quote Anatoly Lunacharsky (Bolshevik commissar for education)—made Jews both a “natural target” of Russian hatred and transformed them into “instinctive” revolutionaries.<sup>35</sup> This view was broadly shared by Lenin, whose maternal grandfather happened to be Jewish—a tightly-kept state secret in the Soviet Union—though constantly asserted by antisemites and anti-Communists around the world. Lenin was on record as admiring the tenacity, smartness and “progressive” outlook of the Jews with whom he

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surrounded himself—so unlike the boorish, “thick-skulled” Russian or Ukrainian peasants.<sup>36</sup>

Even more than Lenin, the outstanding Russian proletarian writer, Maxim Gorky, highlighted this binary opposition very explicitly. The Jew was “almost always a better worker than the Russian” and invested more passion in his labor. He was a far “better European” and “culturally superior to, and more beautiful than, the Russians.” According to the philosemitic Gorky, the anarchic Russians were drowning in alcoholism, “in the swamp of oriental stagnation” and primitive brutality, whereas the Jews were endowed with a “heroic idealism,” energy, enthusiasm and drive for “the tireless pursuit of truth.” Maxim Gorky openly glorified the Jews as the only force capable of releasing Promethean energies in the somnolent and slothful Russians. In his eyes, Jews had unquestionably been “the greatest revolutionaries in history”; they constituted “the old, thick yeast of humanity” constantly stirring noble ideas and “inspiring people to seek a better life.”<sup>37</sup> Antisemitic antipathy to Jews ultimately arose from the envious realization of sluggish, self-satisfied Russians and Ukrainians that the Jew “is obviously better, more dexterous, and more capable than they are.”<sup>38</sup>

Jews would indeed play an important role in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. At the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets nearly one-third of Bolshevik delegates were Jews; at the Bolshevik Central Committee meeting that voted on 23 October 1917 to carry out an armed rising, Jews made up five out of the twelve members present. Three out of the seven Politbureau members (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Sokolnikov) who led the uprising were Jewish. So, too, were the first two heads of the Soviet State, Lev Kamenev and Yaacov Sverdlov. Kamenev also ran the Moscow Party, while Zinoviev was the first President of the Communist International and Bolshevik Party chief in Petrograd. According to Yuri Slezkine, over 50% of leading Party officials in Petrograd in 1918 were Jews, as well as 45% of city and provincial Bolshevik officials. In Moscow, in 1923, the figures were not much different. Jews made up 29 percent of the Bolshevik “leading cadres.” At that time Jews also represented 15 percent of all leading secret police officials and half of the top echelon of the Cheka Secretariat.<sup>39</sup> If that were not enough, many of the leading non-Jewish Bolsheviks (including Bukharin, Dzierżyński, Lunacharsky, Kirov, Rykov, Voroshilov, and Molotov) were married to Jewish women.

The bloody Russian Civil War would greatly exacerbate use of “Judeo-Bolshevism” as an antisemitic trope not only by the White counter-revolutionaries but by conservatives and nationalists across the globe. The

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notion that Jews were the backbone of the Communist Party, the Soviet state, and the world-revolutionary project would become a major demagogic slogan in Hitler’s Germany, Fascist Italy, Francoist Spain, and in various Catholic authoritarian regimes throughout the interwar period. It gave new life to the Tsarist antisemitic fabrication, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, about a Jewish plan for world conquest. It inspired incitement against Jews from the paranoid effusions of industrialist Henry Ford in America to the annihilationist rhetoric of Haj Amin al-Husseini, leader of the Arab national movement in Palestine. Long before the post-Communist hysteria of the 1990s, Jews were held responsible for all Bolshevik “crimes against humanity, for the Red Terror, the Soviet Gulag, and “genocide” against the Russian people.<sup>40</sup> The prominence of individual Bolshevik Jews like Leon Trotsky at the head of the Red Army and the unprecedented entry of Jews into the institutions of the Soviet State, provoked endless antisemitic diatribes—especially *outside* the U.S.S.R. Linking Jews with the Russian revolution and its worldwide repercussions, made the myriad enemies of Communism in the West feel greatly empowered. The fact that virtually all Jewish revolutionaries had ostentatiously left their Jewishness behind, was totally irrelevant to antisemites whether past or present.

In Soviet Russia itself, the official ideology proclaimed that Communism was determined to abolish *all* racial, religious, and class distinctions; and that it had definitively *solved* the “Jewish Question” through economic and national equality. At the same time, the Bolsheviks (especially Jewish Communist officials in the Yevseksiia) insisted that their fight to uproot Jewish tradition, religion, patriarchy, and all other residues of the *shtetl*, was indispensable both to achieving full assimilation and the Communist goal of a classless society. When viewed from this perspective, Palestinocentric Zionism seemed like an abomination to the Yevsketsiia; yet in the 1920s and 1930s labor Zionism had some resemblances to the Soviet experiment. It, too, sought to create a new world and a New Man, on a secular collectivist basis—only this time in Palestine. There was the same incorrigible romanticism, a sense of youthful adventure, pioneering on the land, a cult of muscular virility, and a veritable worship of manual labor. Both Communism and Zionism idealized the conquest of nature, advocated revolutionary Puritanism, and promoted the spirit of group self-sacrifice in the name of a higher ideal.<sup>41</sup> The Zionist effort in Palestine was, of course, on a much smaller scale than in Soviet Russia and had to confront an antagonistic Palestinian Arab national movement which sought to completely destroy the project from birth. Before 1948, moreover, the Zionist movement was still

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dependent on the British Mandatory Power, whose policies after 1939 had become increasingly hostile to its objectives. Nevertheless, the socialist Zionist experiment (carried out in the *kibbutzim* and through the trade unions) achieved some remarkable successes without any of the bloodstained purges or calculated state terrorism that irremediably blighted the Stalinist revolution from above.

However, on the eve of the Second World War, such a conclusion would still have seemed premature to many observers. In the Soviet Union, Jews were not yet subject to persecution or discrimination; and they were the most educated “nationality” within the Communist State. Though less than 2% of the total Soviet population in 1939, Jews made up 17 percent of all university students in Moscow, 19 percent in Leningrad, and just over 35% in Kiev.<sup>42</sup> Thanks to their remarkable literacy rates, and political loyalty, they still constituted a core element of the Soviet bureaucracy. In Leningrad on the eve of World War II, Jews were as prominent in the “liberal” professions as they had once been in pre-Hitler Central Europe. Jews in the city represented 69% of all dentists, 58% of all pharmacists, 39% of all doctors, 35% of all legal consultants, 31% of all writers, journalists, and editors, as well as 18% of all university professors and scientists. They stood at the apex of the cultural elite in Moscow and Leningrad, not least among the literary or artistic avant-garde. In fields like chess and classical music, Jews were often among the most celebrated of all the Soviet maestros.<sup>43</sup> For many members of the new Soviet Jewish intelligentsia, this still seemed like a time of revolutionary hope.

To this success story we must add the extraordinarily heroic role played by Soviet Jews in the Red Army during the fierce battles of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945). Half a million Soviet Jewish soldiers fought the Nazis and 40 percent died in combat—the highest percentage of all the U.S.S.R.’s ethnic groups. Nevertheless there were warning signs even in 1939 of a negative shift in Soviet policy towards the Jews. Maxim Litvinov (one of the Old Guard Jewish Bolsheviks) was replaced in May 1939 as Foreign Minister by Molotov—a signal of the coming rapprochement with Hitler Germany. In the top echelon of the NKVD (secret police) by 1939 there were only 4 percent of Jews compared to 38 percent only a few years earlier. During the war years, too, the Soviet government—aware of Nazi antisemitic propaganda and hostility to Jews among different nationalities in the U.S.S.R.—chose to play down or ignore the unique dimensions of the Holocaust.

The assault on the Jewish position in the cultural elite intensified in 1949 with the campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans” in the theater and

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literature. A year earlier, Stalin had begun to wage a parallel war against Zionism and Jewish bourgeois nationalism. Though supporting the establishment of Israel, he did not let up on his determination to purge the ranks of Soviet Jewry of all those he deemed to have “dual loyalties.” Antisemitism—in the form of “anti-Zionism”—became for the first time around 1950 a legitimate official tool of Soviet Communist domestic and foreign policy. From being an *anti-antisemitic* State in the early 1930s, the USSR would henceforth steadily turn into a powerhouse for the new-style anti-Jewishness and delegitimation of the Jewish homeland. This was linked to the fact that by the early 1970s Soviet internationalist ideology had begun to irrevocably crumble. The failed leap into Communism had produced only crude efforts at Russification and a xenophobic ethnic nationalism that literally oozed with vulgar antisemitism. For the first time in Soviet history, Jews found themselves unequivocally attacked as *ethnic* outsiders and “alien” elements. The “grand alliance” between Communism, Jewish revolutionaries, and the Soviet State had finally come to an end. Stalin proved after 1945 to be its pioneering gravedigger. Khrushchev and Brezhnev completed his work. In this new post-Shoah reality, many Jews—from America to Palestine—were also belatedly cooling their past enthusiasm for Communism. Significantly, in the United States during the 1950s, a democratic liberalism sometimes mixed with a suitably diluted Freudianism began to supplant the fashionable Marxist credo so prevalent among an earlier generation of Jewish intellectuals.

The drawn-out death-agonies of Soviet communism did not, however, mean the end of Jewish radicalism as a motivating ideology. It would revive again towards the end of the 1960s especially in Argentina, France, and the United States where young Jewish radicals became prominent in *gauchiste* (leftist) movements—whether Trotskyist, Maoist, anarchist, or new Leftist. Initially they were often split over the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries and were especially divided by the Palestinian question. Some even championed unconditionally the cause of the Palestinian guerrillas as part of their “fraternal” internationalist sympathy for the oppressed masses of the underdeveloped countries. Like the rest of the White New Left, the PLO, Third Worldists, and black radicals, they attacked Zionism as a reactionary tool of Western imperialism and Israel as a stooge for American domination in the Middle East. Anti-Zionism soon became an integral part of this anti-American New Leftist outlook. In Argentina, a significant number of the Jewish revolutionary youth from the late 1960s openly supported some version of “Third World Marxism,” “revolutionary Peronism,” or Palestinian

organizations like Al-Fatah. Unlike North America, there were virtually no organized frameworks in which radical pro-Zionist Argentine Jews could find a place within the new Left.

In the United States, some of the more radical Jewish students during the 1960s unreservedly identified with Third World causes—with the iconic Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution under Fidel Castro, with the Vietnamese Communists, or with indigenous American Indians and rebellious Afro-Americans in their own country. They opposed what they saw as an arrogant “fascistic” American Empire, despised rampant Western materialism and felt increasingly alienated from their own affluent Jewish middle-class *milieux*. In France, the red-haired anarchist leader of the 1968 student revolt, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, typically defined himself as “neither French nor German, Jewish or non-Jewish”—adopting a hybrid and provocatively “rootless” internationalist identity.<sup>44</sup> More than half of the key leaders in the Parisian revolt were indeed of Jewish descent—*gauchistes* who could perhaps be considered as existential or involuntary Jews in the Sartrean sense—their identities defined by the “anti-Semitic other.”<sup>45</sup>

There were also maverick individuals like the anarchist revolutionary, Pierre Goldman who had been imprisoned in France on charges of armed robbery. The son of Polish-Jewish antifascist rebels (he was assassinated by French neo-Nazis in 1979), Goldman—*unlike* many of his comrades on the far Left in France—supported Israel’s right to exist. Shortly before his murder he stated in an interview: “To be Jewish is to convey the past. And why is this so important? Because of anti-Semitism, because of the hatred. The only answer to the question of what it means to be a Jew is Auschwitz. The Holocaust has renewed Jewish identity for centuries.”<sup>46</sup> Goldman despised the playacting rebels of the 1968 Parisian student revolt, some of whom openly identified with the “liquidationist” anti-Zionism of al-Fatah. Their heirs today seem, at times, no less determined than the Palestinian Hamas to see an end to the State of Israel.<sup>47</sup> They have focused much of their energy on a relentless anti-Israel boycott movement in academia and within the trade unions, which has achieved some success, particularly in Great Britain. These “new” anti-Zionists indignantly deny that their pro-boycott position has anything to do with antisemitism. They insistently claim that this accusation is itself an act of bad faith, a means of deflecting criticism from Israel. They are quite unable to see anything discriminatory in their compulsive singling out of Israel for vilification while glossing over massive and infinitely graver human rights abuses like the Arab-Islamist genocide of black Africans in Darfur.<sup>48</sup> For such radical Leftists, double standards, moral

blindness, and self-righteous narcissism appear to have become a way of life. The illegal Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus, mass rapes in the Congo, the tyrannical rule of Mugabe in Zimbabwe, the repression in Iran, Chinese imperialism in Tibet, or Muslims slaughtering fellow Muslims in Iraq are totally unimportant in comparison with the “crimes” of Israeli occupation.

Left-wing antisemitism is *not* a new phenomenon as I have documented at considerable length throughout the first third of this book. It is, however, a neglected issue which has revived today through the constantly proliferating anti-Zionist discourse which includes vociferous calls for excluding Israel and the demand that Jews must dissociate themselves from the Jewish State if they wish to be part of “progressive mankind.” Conspiracy theories, too, which endlessly fantasize about “Jewish power” or secret Jewish lobbies that control America and Western governments more generally, are also back in vogue on the contemporary Left.<sup>49</sup> As with the Rothschild myth in the 19th century, the current trend on the anti-Zionist Left presupposes the existence of powerful shadowy forces in the democratic West, manipulating the financial strings which supposedly guarantee Jewish Zionist power in the international arena. In this rapidly mushrooming conspiracy literature there appears to be no limit to the insidiously manipulative and all-pervasive influence of the “Zionist lobby” which purportedly controls the mass media and world politics.<sup>50</sup> The “anti-racist” leftists who repeat such hoary myths about the Jewish “Hidden Hand” obviously regard the Zionist State as wholly illegitimate. Its iniquity and essential wickedness are as self-evident to them as was the “cursed” condition of the Jewish people in medieval Christian demonology. At bottom, the State of Israel, whatever its borders or political complexion, is perceived by many so-called critics as at best a “historical mistake” to be rectified or at worst as an intolerable and cancerous presence in the region. In the rhetoric of the current Iranian leadership, of Hezbollah and Hamas, the “Zionist entity” must be definitively cut out like a “racist tumor” in the Middle East. Radical Leftists who sympathize with militant Islam appear to take this genocidal language about the State of Israel all-too-easily in their stride.

There are also icons of the contemporary Left like the famous Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis, who claim to be “friends of Israel” even as they, too, deride its “evil stubbornness” and self-importance. Sly, masochistic, exploiting their “victimhood” to dominate and control, the Jews have, according to Theodorakis, embraced Fascism in the name of their Biblical chosenness. Their superiority complex and cultural dominance have led them (especially the arrogant Israelis) to adopt “Nazi behavior.” Such



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ravings, first uttered in 2003, are now fairly commonplace among Europe’s left-wing intellectuals and also among those Jews whose main source of pride is to loudly proclaim to the Gentiles their *shame* at being “Jewish.” Since anti-Zionism is currently *the* litmus-test of “progressive” politics for a significant segment of left-wing opinion, Israel-bashing is clearly the contemporary key to acceptance in this milieu. In Israel itself, this type of self-incrimination is a growing trend in the universities, providing the perfect alibi for antisemites and anti-Zionists outside the country to step up the pressure. Indeed, there are veteran Israeli leftists, like Uri Avnery, who have made a profession out of confirming the most insipid anti-Jewish slanders like the accusation that “the pro-Israel lobby pushed the American administration to start the [Iraq] war.” It goes without saying for Avnery and his pro-Palestinian friends that Israel as well as American Jews are mainly responsible for “the resurrection of anti-Semitism.” Indeed, he openly lambasted the Sharon government as “a giant laboratory for growing the anti-Semitism virus. It exports it to the whole world.”<sup>51</sup>

Jews themselves, it must be said, have played a central role in the framing of anti-Zionist thought ever since the time of Theodor Herzl. One hundred years ago, the Jewish leftist opposition to Zionism was especially strong in the secular socialist Bund. For the Bund in Russia and Poland, Zionism was an intrinsically reactionary movement which legitimized the demands of the local antisemites that Jews must emigrate. Moreover, as the Bund liked to insist, Palestine could never absorb the millions of Jews in the Diaspora, let alone solve the social problems of the Jewish masses. After 1917, the Soviet Union, the Communist International (Comintern) and the Communist parties under Moscow’s control, would institutionalize such ideological hostility to the Zionist project, which was branded as being “counter-revolutionary” to the core. In 1931 the Comintern further blackened Zionism as the oppressive and exploitative ideology of the international Jewish bourgeoisie—politically allied to the British imperialists in order to suppress the Arab national movement. The Palestine Communist Party in the mid-1930s went further still. It publicly called for the cessation of any Jewish immigration to Palestine and the *liquidation of all Zionist settlement* in the country. It strongly backed the Arab revolt against the British Mandate led by the pro-Nazi Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini, who had he been victorious would certainly have tried to wipe out the Jewish community in Palestine.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, for reasons of Soviet *Realpolitik* in the Middle East, Stalin did support the establishment of Israel in 1948, even as he launched a domestic antisemitic campaign against Jews living *inside* the U.S.S.R.<sup>53</sup>

Ever since German labor leader August Bebel’s definition in 1893 of antisemitism as the “socialism of fools,” there has been a disturbing complacency on the Left regarding Judeophobia, which we have subjected to depth analysis throughout this book. Equally, there has been a tendency to persistently underestimate the broad impact of antisemitism as an ideology, its uniqueness, specificity, and longevity. Rare indeed are the examples of socialists who have even attempted to address the fundamentally demonic view of the world held by Judeophobes or the mythical power of antisemitic archetypes of “the Jew” like Judas, Satan, or the Antichrist.<sup>54</sup> No less fleeting have been the efforts at deciphering the phantasmagoric conspiracy theories at the heart of so many antisemitic beliefs. This failure was a factor in the conceptual impotence with which much of the American, French, British or German Left confronted Nazi antisemitism in the 1930s. Very few socialists, anarchists or Communists (apart from isolated mavericks like Wilhelm Reich) showed much grasp of the mass psychology of fascism, let alone seriously addressed the Manichean world-view of the antisemites before the Holocaust.

This dismal failure of imagination both before, during and after the Holocaust has made it ever harder for the Left to take the ever-mutating radical or genocidal forms of antisemitism with the seriousness that they require.<sup>55</sup> In the case of the German Social Democracy (SPD), the roots of this impaired understanding, as we show in this book, go back well before the First World War and they continued unabated throughout the Weimar years.<sup>56</sup> After the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, the SPD studiously played down the issue of antisemitism in their underground and propaganda activity, generally avoiding any direct attacks on it.<sup>57</sup> This crippling paralysis of thought went far beyond mere ambivalence towards the “Jewish Question;” or the opportunistic fear of challenging the prejudices of German workers inside the Third Reich who were exposed on a daily basis to Nazi antisemitic appeals. The problem lay much deeper. Even the leading expert on Nazism of the interwar Frankfurt Marxist School, Franz L. Neumann (widely admired by “functionalist” political scientists to this day) completely failed to grasp the genocidal intent of Nazi antisemitism as late as 1942. In that same year, (writing from his American exile) when the mass murder of European Jews was already well under way, Neumann published his classic work on National Socialism—confidently asserting that the Nazis would “never allow a complete extermination of the Jews.” His reasoning was based on the deeply flawed assumption (especially common among liberals, leftists and in some mainstream Jewish organizations) that antisemitism was only a means

to other political ends—such as the destruction of free and democratic institutions.<sup>58</sup> For Neumann, like so many academic analysts, it was simply inconceivable that the “Jewish Question” could be anything but secondary to the overall Nazi project. Hannah Arendt was one of the few German-Jewish exiles in the United States to challenge this conventional wisdom during the 1940s.

It has proven equally difficult for most left-wing thinkers since that time to comprehend the centrality of the paranoid antisemitic world-view based on radical conspiracy theories which lay at the heart of Hitler’s politics.<sup>59</sup> The fact that such violently irrational antisemitism could move millions of ordinary Germans and other Europeans to follow the Nazi creed and to act upon total fabrications appears to have been altogether too much to digest for many leftists. Nor do most Marxist believers—any more than most liberals and conservatives in the West, really grasp the appeal of religious fanaticism—one of the key components in Protestant, Catholic, fascist, Nazi, and contemporary Islamist forms of antisemitism.<sup>60</sup> The Left has evaded this issue much as it sought to downplay the fact that the Nazis really did fixate their attention on the Jews. Instead, since the 1930s, leftists have preferred to de-emphasize everything unique about the Jewish fate during the Holocaust or regarding Nazism itself. The focus was generally placed on the common ground between the Nazis and other fascist regimes, while pointing to the economic roots of fascism in a decaying liberal-capitalist system. Even Arno Mayer’s important work of 1988 (the first by an American left-wing historian to deal seriously with the mass murder of the Jews) treated the Holocaust as if it were primarily the by-product of Hitler’s reactionary right-wing anti-Communism and his failed *Glaubenskrieg* (holy war) for living-space in the Soviet Union.<sup>61</sup> For Mayer, there would have been no Holocaust without the Nazi crusade to eradicate the Soviet regime and Bolshevik ideology. This ideological-political goal had to be viewed within the perspective of what Mayer problematically called the “General Crisis and Thirty Years War of the Twentieth Century.”<sup>62</sup>

Mayer’s universalist approach was not without merit, though one might with equal plausibility argue that Hitler’s anti-Bolshevism was the function of his antisemitism rather than the other way around. The work of Mayer was undoubtedly a step forward from the silence of veteran Trotskyists like the late Ernest Mandel—who had for decades conspicuously ignored the subject.<sup>63</sup> Mayer did, at least, abandon the Left’s general amnesia regarding the Holocaust and jettison its absurdly mechanical interpretations of Marxism which reduced the “Jewish Question” to a marginal offshoot of moribund

capitalism. But Mayer’s book has remained the exception rather than the rule. The Holocaust for many leftists is still what it has generally been since 1945—a mere *epiphenomenon* of capitalism—ancillary and almost incidental to the permanent “fascist” temptation that reputedly arises from the crisis of capitalist economies. This was, for example, the prevailing view in Stalinist East Germany almost until its demise in 1990.<sup>64</sup>

There have, of course, been a few exceptions on the postwar intellectual Left to this mind-boggling picture of conceptual sterility since the end of World War II. Most prominent among them was the French existentialist Marxist, Jean-Paul Sartre.<sup>65</sup> Nobody could accuse Sartre—a distinguished novelist, playwright and philosopher – of lacking imagination. His *Refléxions sur la Question Juive* (1946) was indeed a courageous and perceptive essay. Yet even Sartre’s combative opposition to antisemitism was not free of racial stereotypes.<sup>66</sup> Almost incredibly, he could still believe after the Holocaust that a socialist revolution would “solve” the “Jewish Question.” At the time Sartre was a Communist fellow-traveller. In a society without classes, he imprudently predicted, antisemitism would be definitively cut off at the roots. It was, he thought, essentially a “petty-bourgeois” and “poor white” phenomenon which had no echo in the working-class.

Sartre’s closest collaborator, Simone de Beauvoir, was much freer of such illusions and far more emotionally committed to Israel than her long-term companion-in-arms. Originally from an upper-middle-class provincial Catholic family where conventional antisemitism was almost “normal,” de Beauvoir had been profoundly shocked by the Holocaust and moved by Israel’s postwar struggle for national rebirth against an obstructive British colonialism. Her pioneering feminist engagement had made her especially sensitive to the humiliating situation of Jews in the Diaspora, subject to continual antisemitic insult and social exclusion. Even more than Sartre, she saw Israel’s battle for survival as a heroic drive for liberation from the yoke of exile. By their ceaseless labor, creativity, courage, and attachment to the land of Israel, Zionist Jews had in her eyes truly earned their indisputable right to an independent State. Although a personality of the Left and not uncritical of Israel’s policies, de Beauvoir sharply disagreed with the anti-Zionist positions of some of her more militant French comrades. Already in 1973 she expressed her consternation at a growing strand of ideological antisemitism masked as “anti-Zionism” that was taking root on the French Left. She was also fiercely critical of Arab efforts to annihilate Israel and the support they were receiving from the Soviet Union. For de Beauvoir, the *fundamental*

justice of the Israeli cause was a matter of deep personal conviction which transcended the political cleavages between Right and Left.<sup>67</sup>

Like Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir unequivocally opposed the new totalitarian “anti-Zionism” which had rapidly emerged in the Soviet bloc after the Six-Day War and was to be a valuable subsidiary tool of Soviet foreign policy in the Arab world.<sup>68</sup> Antisemitic “anti-Zionism” in the U.S.S.R. certainly appealed to latent xenophobic, ethnocentric, and populist sentiments against Jews in the lower classes as well as to the wider resentment at the prominent position of “Muscovite” (pro-Soviet) Jews during the early postwar years of Communist domination in Eastern Europe. After 1967 it also served as a valuable *demoralizing* agent used by the Soviet Communist State and Party machine to discourage liberalization, dissent and crush dissident intellectuals, especially in the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, or Poland. For example, in order to discredit the Solidarity resistance movement in Poland in 1981, its activities were blamed on the alleged machinations of “Zionists,” freemasons, and cosmopolitan liberals in the West.<sup>69</sup>

There has, of course, also been a tradition of Marxist anti-Zionism relatively untainted by antisemitism. Militants like the young Belgian Trotskyist, Abram Leon (martyred in Auschwitz at the age of 26) were fierce opponents of antisemitism while adamantly opposing Zionism as a “petty-bourgeois” utopia. Leon’s narrowly materialist analysis of Jewish history led him, however, to the wildly mistaken hypothesis (originating with the Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer) that the disappearance of the Jewish economic functions as a “people-class” had inexorably led to the demise of the Jews as a nation. Like other Trotskyists of Jewish origin, Leon blamed the cataclysmic Jewish tragedy in the 20th century almost solely on the “decay of world capitalism” which, he overconfidently predicted, would also doom the “puerile dreams of Zionism.”<sup>70</sup> Shortly before his deportation to the death camps in Poland, Leon concluded his study (written while in the Belgian underground resistance) with the poignant if pathetic words:

We still cannot foresee exactly what the “offspring” of present Judaism will be; socialism will take care that the “birth” will take place under the best possible conditions.”<sup>71</sup>

Though never overtly antisemitic, Marxists like Abram Leon all-too-dismissively assumed that any retention of Jewish cultural uniqueness or special Jewish traits was deleterious—an outlook clearly in conflict with contemporary notions of pluralism or liberal multiculturalism. Even non-Zionist or Bundist forms of Jewish nationalism (which had favoured cultural-national autonomy in the Diaspora) were consistently repudiated by the

rigorously “assimilationist” school of Marxism. Indeed, there has never been any question of orthodox Marxists recognizing a diasporic Jewish nation any more than one which was rooted in the soil of Zion. The handful of Jewish radicals in the West, like the French anarchist Bernard Lazare—who had cogently argued the Jewish autonomist case in the late 1890s—were almost totally isolated among their comrades. As for the Bundists, they were told in no uncertain terms well before 1914 by international Marxists like Lenin, Trotsky, or Rosa Luxemburg that they would have to obliterate their identity as Jews if they sought to be fully emancipated. With a truly remarkable intransigence the anti-Zionist Bundists were denounced as “separatists,” “chauvinists,” and “isolationists” for even raising the question of an autonomous Jewish culture. Georgii Plekhanov (the father of Russian Marxism) contemptuously and characteristically mocked the Bundists as “Zionists afraid of sea-sickness.”

We need to remember that a century ago, none of the founding fathers of Marxism had ever dreamed that Zionism could one day become a *major world problem*. Convinced as they were that the emancipation of the Jews meant the dissolution of any Jewish group identity, they were unable for the most part to envisage that Israel might one day emerge as a Jewish nation-state. Israel’s creation and continued survival has in effect been one massive slap in the face for the entire Marxist tradition of theorizing on the “Jewish Question.”<sup>72</sup> The current defamation of Israel as an *inherently* racist colonialist, militarist, or fascist state needs to be seen in this context of consistently *failed* Marxist prognoses—both then and now. For radical anti-Zionists the conflict has never really been about the territorial contours of the Jewish State—a land which even today is completely dwarfed in size and population by all of its Arab neighbours. But for much of the Left, Palestine has become an issue that concerns the “de-Zionizing” and “de-Judaizing” of Israel. If ever implemented, such a policy would rapidly lead to the loss of Israel’s viability and *raison d’être*. No doubt that is one goal of the perverse campaign to relentlessly stigmatize Israel with the “original sin” of Western racism.

It generally turned out to be “old Left” intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Claude Lanzmann, Max Horkheimer, or Herbert Marcuse who resisted the cruder Manichean efforts to link Israel exclusively with “imperialist” interests and the Arab States with the socialist, “peace-loving” camp. For this pre-Holocaust generation of thinkers it appeared to be self-evident that Israel was the only nation in the Middle East whose very existence was constantly threatened by its neighbours. In 1967, Marcuse—then the guru of Western radicals—recalled, for example, in a discussion with

left-wing German students, that Jews had for centuries “belonged to the persecuted and oppressed” peoples; that “not too long ago six million of them were annihilated”; and that Israel was designed as a refuge where Jews would no longer need to fear persecution. Sartre, for his part, emphasized Israel’s geo-political and existential vulnerability along with the fact that the Israeli-Arab conflict was a clash between two equally legitimate national rights. While publicly neutral and insistently refusing to offer his own solution, Sartre nonetheless regarded the 1973 Yom Kippur War as a clear-cut case of Arab aggression—animated by a desire to destroy Israel which he denounced as “criminal.”<sup>73</sup>

In the 1970s in Britain, too, there were still some older Labour MPs like Prime Minister Harold Wilson, the left-wing Ian Mikardo, Sydney Silverman, and Richard Crossman who retained a marked sympathy for Israel, though this was notably less visible among English academics and intellectuals. However, from the early 1980s the British Labour Left would come under the spell of ideologically driven anti-Zionist positions far removed from reformist Labour politics and much closer to Trotskyism.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, despite the pro-Israel instincts of former New Labour Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the “anti-racist” anti-Zionism of the present-day British Left has brought it to the edge of a nasty whirlpool of antisemitic innuendo.<sup>75</sup> As elsewhere in the West, anti-Zionist British Leftists vehemently deny any responsibility for this state of affairs, while pillorying Israel for causing Arab hatred and the rise in antisemitism. Whether the appointment of a radical English Jew, Ed Milliband, as the new Labour leader, will change this state of affairs remains to be seen. Similarly, in the United States, there is no shortage of left-wing intellectuals (not a few of them Jewish) who depict the “new” antisemitism as a straightforward and understandable response to Israeli occupation policies. In their view, the Jews themselves are most definitely to blame for the aggression against them—itsself a classic anti-semitic proposition.<sup>76</sup>

American leftist radicalism, it should be said, has retained a distinctive trajectory, featuring among its advocates some highly diverse groups of Marxists, social democrats, Communists, anarchists, radical liberals, and new leftists.<sup>77</sup> It has adopted a highly critical attitude over decades towards U.S. foreign policy, inequalities in American society, white racism, and many other burning conflicts that are the subject of legitimate debate. In the economically depressed 1930s (the heyday of the Soviet utopian myth) American academics, intellectuals, and artists were drawn in not insignificant numbers towards communism. The mass liquidations of peasants during the

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forced collectivization campaign and the murderous purges in Stalin’s U.S.S.R. during the 1930s were usually defended by American Communists on “utilitarian” grounds as being economically “necessary” or politically “progressive,” when they were not being denied outright. Even the Nazi-Soviet pact found its left-wing apologists in the United States, as it did in Europe. During the war years, a flurry of American films, books, and newspaper articles openly indulged in glorifying the Soviet Union as a “peace-loving” and democratic nation. Only after 1945, did the star of American Communism gradually begin to wane. The Cold War as well as the onset of McCarthyism and its fallout contributed to this change.

The Communists were, however, soon replaced by a new generation of leftist radicals in the 1960s whose anti-Americanism was, if anything, even more overt than that of their Old Left forerunners.<sup>78</sup> Issues like the Vietnam war, nuclear disarmament, black civil rights, free speech, drugs, and the student rebellion now assumed centre stage. A sweeping anti-American agenda took root in which the United States was relentlessly denounced *from within* as being an “imperialist” predator and accused of seeking hegemony over Third World nations. At the same time, the crimes of its communist adversaries were systematically whitewashed. Prominent in these anti anti-communist campaigns were a number of Jewish academics, among them Noam Chomsky and Richard Falk. They strongly supported the Vietnamese Communists against the United States—whose own military actions were vilified as amounting to “genocide.”<sup>79</sup> Not surprisingly, perhaps, similarly hyperbolic charges would later be laid against Israel by Falk and other left-wing academics, who identify with the Palestinian cause. Falk, however, proved to be so pro-Hamas that even the Palestinian Authority was unhappy with his role as special rapporteur to the UN on Palestinian human rights.<sup>80</sup>

This was consistent with the position taken by Falk and a number of other Western leftists after the victory of the Ayatollah Khomeini’s Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran. There was no question of condemning its repressive authoritarian theocracy or its human rights record. On the contrary, radical leftists in the West supported the Khomeinist revolution while maintaining that the U.S. remained the major global obstacle to peace and progress. Falk, for example, could find no evidence of religious and ethnic intolerance, let alone discrimination against women in the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, he did suggest that the Islamic Revolution had much to offer to Third World nations as “an example of non-authoritarian governance.”<sup>81</sup> Nearly thirty years later (while noticeably silent about Iran’s brutal repression of its own citizens) Falk proclaimed at a symposium held in



Los Angeles that America and Israel continue to practice “genocidal geopolitics.” In February 2009 he added (as a Jew) that Israel’s three-week incursion into the Gaza Strip had evoked “the worst kind of international memories of the Warsaw Ghetto.”<sup>82</sup> This utterly misleading comparison of Nazi Germany’s deliberate starvation and murder of Warsaw’s Jews in 1942 with the war between Israel and the terrorist Hamas regime in Gaza, has, however, become increasingly common in a whole swathe of the liberal-left Western media mainstream in our own day.

Underlying such perverse inversions of reality in the worldview of the radical Left there is a truly Manichean dualism. Visceral hatred for America, the West and Israel is beatifically wrapped up in a radiant vision of human rights and social justice. Belief in this utopia has not prevented the cause of the “oppressed” from being incarnated by Communist or Third World dictators like Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, Khomeini, Saddam Hussein, or Yasser Arafat. These tyrants have been worshipped as defenders of so-called Third World peoples against the yoke of Western imperialism and Zionism. International solidarity with the Palestinians has given a new and utterly bogus halo of respectability to all those—including totalitarian tyrants—who have hijacked or milked the cause of the “toiling” masses for their own ends. The Islamists are only the latest in a long line of manipulative exploiters of Palestinian or Third World misfortunes that began with the Nazis and Stalinists. All have indulged in the demonization of Israel as a “genocidal state” engaged in “ethnic cleansing from the day of its birth”—a thesis now put forward by growing numbers of self-flagellating and attention-seeking anti-Zionist Israeli academics.<sup>83</sup> Such hysterical rhetoric, totally divorced from any semblance of historical truth or geo-political realities, offers no constructive possibility of reform or redressment of genuine grievances.

There is a destructive and nihilist hatred exhibited in much contemporary left-wing discourse about Israel and the Jewish people (especially that which stems from Jewish sources) which patently lacks any credible perspective for social transformation. In the “post-Zionist” narratives of Israeli historians like Ilan Pappé (formerly an active member of the Israeli Communist Party, Hadash), the entire Jewish national project has been distorted into a nightmarish tale of occupation, expulsion, discrimination, and institutional racism perpetrated by alien and demonic Zionist invaders.<sup>84</sup> In such stunningly partisan accounts, the Palestinians are always the permanent victims, Israelis are forever the “brutal colonizers.” According to Pappé, the “Zionist” ethnic cleansing of Palestine was already in full swing in 1948. It was a long-

premeditated crime which has been escalating ever since. Since such dogmatic black-and-white views are increasingly widespread among radical left-wing Jews—in Israel and the Diaspora—it is not surprising to see these anti-Zionists so ostentatiously issuing their certificates of divorce from the Jewish state; or to find them squarely in the forefront of petitions against Israel’s “apartheid wall” (a security fence to defend against Palestinian suicide bombers) and denouncing its allegedly “racist” oppression of local Arabs.<sup>85</sup> At the same time so-called progressive Jews (like their far more numerous non-Jewish admirers) seem astonishingly indifferent to the suffering of Israeli *civilians*—the innocent victims of often savage Palestinian atrocities. The “progressives” shed tears for Palestinian children (which is certainly understandable) but they invariably turn their heads away from the dead of their own people, the Jews. This is a bizarrely selective humanism in which the systematic, bitter, and overwrought denigration of Israel coexists alongside a highly romanticized and abstract “Palestinophilism” which often seems to have taken the place of any critical thought or attempt at objectivity.<sup>86</sup>

Left-wing animus toward Israel most emphatically did not disappear with the collapse of the Communist bloc. Nor was there any rethinking or re-evaluation by most leftist intellectuals of their Marxist worldview, not to mention their attitudes towards American capitalism and Western liberal democracy.<sup>87</sup> A perfect illustration of this petrification of thought can be found in the writings of Eric Hobsbawm, the veteran icon of the British Left whose membership of the Communist Party only lapsed after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. In 1995 Hobsbawm published his much-acclaimed effort to understand the 20th century, *The Age of Extremes*—about which he proved to have been so desperately wrong in his own political choices. What emerges from this singularly overrated work and his subsequent autobiography is the “indulgence and tenderness” (*his* words) with which he still treats the murderous legacy of the Soviet Union, for which he had over many decades acted as such a tireless and dedicated apologist.<sup>88</sup> Long after the great Communist “experiment” had stained itself forever with the blood of millions of innocent victims, Hobsbawm still felt genuine nostalgia for the dream of the October Revolution which was “still there somewhere inside me.” Instead of wrestling with his own responsibility in this human debacle, Hobsbawm continued to exude a fierce unabated hostility to the capitalist democracies of the West, whose academies masochistically insisted on honoring his work. In comparison with the inherent wickedness of capitalism, it was clear to Hobsbawm that the brutal Communist tyrannies were the

lesser evil.<sup>89</sup> Such hollow judgements make for melancholy reading, indicating that even today, Hobsbawm has not fathomed the scale of the gigantic delusion in which he believed. As for Zionism, it was deserving of no more than the occasional derisory (and crassly ignorant) footnote in his general *oeuvre*. Like most Communists who came from a Central European Jewish background, the Jews were, for Hobsbawm, at best a phantom people—whose contemptible (Israeli) nation-State merely illustrated the latent proto-fascist features of all reactionary nationalisms. Naturally, it did not occur to Hobsbawm that in comparison with the massive crimes committed by the Soviet empire at its peak (which he was such a past master at explaining away), Israel has remained a shining beacon of freedom and hope. Having failed to address the Soviet experience except in the most evasive fashion, Hobsbawm remains a singularly untrustworthy guide to anything concerning the Jewish State which he treats with the level of accuracy and insight of a second-rate Stalinist hack.

Equally revealing is the case of the late Howard Zinn, Boston University historian and author of the best-selling *A People's History of the United States*. Zinn, a self-proclaimed Marxist and admirer of Mao and Fidel Castro, never disguised his view of America as a deeply repressive, racist, and imperialist nation guilty of repeated genocide. His opinion of Israel was scarcely more balanced, though he had been brought up in a working-class Jewish home in Brooklyn and served as a bombardier in World War II. Zinn acknowledged that until 1967 Israel did not loom large in his consciousness, which was also true of many other American Jews. But by the time of the 1982 Lebanon War he had become thoroughly “ashamed” of the Jewish State and convinced that its establishment was “a mistake”—indeed “the worst thing that the Jews could have done.” Israel, like the United States, was aggressive, violent, bigoted and driven by a nationalistic frenzy. It had turned its back on what was best in the Jewish tradition—its internationalism, creativity, and emphasis on cultural achievement. Indeed, it was Israel’s existence and its actions which had become the main source of antisemitism in the world. Zinn, like many left-wing Jewish anti-Zionists, insisted on describing the subjugation of the Palestinians as a form of “ethnic cleansing,” while ignoring the actual causes of the Six-Day War. For him it was self-evident that Israel had betrayed the essential nature of Judaism by its preoccupation with security, borders, military power, and geo-political strategy. Nowhere in his account is there the slightest recognition of the jingoistic, racist nature of Arab nationalism or the genocidal threat posed by radical Islam. Nor have Jewish intellectuals like Howard Zinn had anything

to say about the bankruptcy of their own Marxist creed, whose practitioners in recent years have begun to form a de facto alliance with the Islamists. This is perhaps the final stage of decomposition in the slow death of Socialism and Communism.<sup>90</sup>

Marxists and Islamists share a curiously similar apocalyptic agenda of earthly redemption that envisages the installment of absolute “social justice” through violent means. For both of these extremes (and for parts of the neo-fascist Right) Palestinian martyrdom in the name of Allah has become a glowing symbol of “resistance” not only to Israel but to globalization and the “corrupt” West. At the heart of such radical utopias, there is the quasi-religious belief that the world will only be “liberated” by the downfall of America and the defeat of the Jews.<sup>91</sup> This chiliastic fantasy has today emerged as a notable point of fusion between the radical anti-Zionist Left in the West and the global jihad. Revolutionary antisemitism has become an increasingly important factor in cementing this anti-capitalist populism much as it was during the birthpangs of modern socialism over 150 years ago.

NOTES

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39. *Ibid.*, 176–77.

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41. See Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (New York, 1971).

42. Mordechai Altschuler, *Soviet Jewry on the Eve of the Holocaust* (Jerusalem, 1988), 118–27.

43. Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 224–26.

44. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Le Grand Bazar* (Paris, 1975), 9–20.

45. Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération. Les années de rêve* (Paris, 1987).

46. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession*, 528–29.

47. Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora*, 447–521.

48. Denis MacShane, “‘Kauft nicht bei Juden’ will worsen the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” *Jerusalem Post*, 30 Nov. 2010.

49. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession*, 385–87, 400–15.

50. Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora*, 486–90.

51. See Alvin Rosenfeld, “Modern Jewish Intellectual Failure,” *Society* (Nov.–Dec. 2005): 8–18; idem, “Progressive” *Jewish Thought and the New Anti-Semitism* (American Jewish Committee Publication, New York, 2006).

52. Laurent Murawiec, *The Mind of Jihad* (Cambridge, U.K., 2008), 235–39.

53. Arkady Vaksberg, *Stalin against the Jews* (New York, 1995), 175–77, 196–97.

54. Steve Cohen, *That’s Funny You Don’t Look Anti-Semitic. An Anti-Racist Analysis of Left Anti-Semitism* (Leeds, 1984) makes a useful stab at exposing some of these failings.

55. See Philip Spencer, “The Left, Radical Antisemitism, and the Problem of Genocide,” in *Journal for the Study of Antisemitism* 2, no. 1 (2010): 133–51.

56. Donald Niewyk, *Socialist, Anti-Semite and Jew—German Social Democracy Confronts the Problem of Anti-Semitism, 1918–1933* (Baton Rouge, La., 1971).

57. David Bankier, “German Social Democrats and the Jewish Question,” in *Probing the Depths of German Anti-Semitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews 1933–1941* (Oxford, 2001), 521.

58. Franz L. Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism 1933–1941* (London, 1942), 551.

59. See Robert S. Wistrich, *Hitler and the Holocaust* (London, 2002); Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006); Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (London, 2007).

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62. *Ibid.*, 462.

63. Ernest Mandel, *The Meaning of the Second World War* (London, 1986); also the critique of Mandel’s thinking by Norman Geras, *The Contract of Mutual Indifference* (London, 1998); and Mandel’s theses, published as “Prémises Matérielles, Sociales et Idéologiques du Génocide Nazi,” in *Le Marxisme d’Ernest Mandel*, edited by G. Achcar (Paris, 1999).

64. Andrei S. Markovits, “Coping with the Past. The West German Labor Movement and the Left,” in *Reworking the Past. Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historians’ Debate*, edited by Peter Baldwin (Boston, 1990), 262–73.

65. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive* (Paris, 1954); also Jonathan Judaken, *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question* (Lincoln, Neb., 2006), 123–46. For his view on Israel, see *ibid.*, 184–207.

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68. Robert Wistrich, “Der alte Antisemitismus in neuem Gewand,” in *Neuer Antisemitismus?*, edited by Doron Rabinovici et al. (Frankfurt a.M., 2004), 250–70.

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70. Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question. A Marxist Interpretation* (New York, 1970), 225–63.

71. *Ibid.*, 266.

72. Robert S. Wistrich, “Left-Wing Anti-Zionism in Western Societies,” in *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary World*, edited by idem (London, 1990), 46–52.

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74. See Robert S. Wistrich, “Cruel Britannia,” *Azure*, no. 21 (Summer 2005): 100–24.

75. David Hirsh, *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism. Cosmopolitan Reflections* (Yale Initiative for the Study of Antisemitism, Working Paper, 2007).

76. See the essay by Martin Jay, “Ariel Sharon and the Rise of the New Antisemitism,” *Salmagundi* (Spring 2003): 14–21. For a biting commentary, see Edward Alexander, “The Warped Case for Jew-Hatred: Martin Jay ‘Explains’ how Jews cause Antisemitism,” *Midstream* (Feb–Mar. 2004): 5–8.

77. Edward Walter, *The Rise and Fall of Leftist Radicalism in America* (Westport, Conn., 1992).

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79. Walter, *Rise and Fall*, 134–39.

80. Jordana Horn, “Falk: Population Transfer Could Be War Crime,” *Jerusalem Post*, 1 July 2010.

81. See Richard Falk, *Human Rights and State Sovereignty* (New York, 1981) for his views on the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Also Walter, *Rise and Fall*, 147–55.

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83. A good example is Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge, U.K., 2004) and the review by Benny Morris, “Politics by Other Means,” *The New Republic*, 22 Mar. 2004, 25–30; Pappé’s subsequent book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (New York, 2006) is more brazen.



84. Ibid. See also “Nations and Narratives,” *Economist*, 4 Nov. 2006, 108–9.

85. See the collective work *Antisémitisme: L’intolérable chantage* (Paris, 2003), written by French leftists—mainly of Jewish origin. Also important are some of the essays in Edward Alexander and Paul Bogdanor, eds., *The Jewish Divide Over Israel: Accusers and Defenders* (New Brunswick, N.J., 2006).

86. Anne Roiphe, “Jews Who Call Each Other ‘Nazi,’” *Jerusalem Report*, 21 Mar., 2005, 46.

87. David Horowitz, *Unholy Alliance. Radical Islam and the American Left* (Lanham, Md., 2004).

88. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (London, 1995); see also idem, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life* (New York, 2002) and his recent *How to Change the World: Tales of Marx and Marxism* (New York, 2011). Also the critique by John Gray, “Following a False Prophet,” *New Statesman*, 17 Jan. 2011.

89. Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, 280. Also idem, “After the Fall,” in *After the Fall: The Failure of Communism and the Future of Socialism*, edited by Robin Blackburn (London, 1991), 122–23. For a glimpse of his ignorance and bias towards Israel, see Eric Hobsbawm, with Antonio Polito, *On the Edge of the New Century* (New York, 2000), 26, where he makes the absurd statement that “Israel, like Zionism, has no historical foundation.” Among other pearls of wisdom, Hobsbawm insists that Orthodox Jews “completely rejected” Israel before the 1967 war and offers a pathetic caricature of what the Temple and Jerusalem have meant for Judaism and Jewish history.

90. See the interview with Howard Zinn in *Moment Magazine* (Mar.–Apr. 2010): 74–77; also <http://frontpagemag.com/2009/10/21/collaborators-in-the-campus-war-against-israel-and-the-jews-howard-zinn>.

91. David Horowitz, *Unholy Alliance*, 123–45; also Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York, 2003), 121–60; and Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession*, 400–28.