

**WHY
SOCIALISTS
OPPOSE
ZIONISM
and
ANTI-SEMITISM**



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Socialism against anti-Semitism and Zionism

Some Jewish organisations, echoed by the media, have been accusing the Labour Party of tolerating anti-Semitism in its ranks. There are bigots who don't like Jews and deluded people who imagine that "the Jews" control the world; and there are neo-Nazis. However, it is not these that the critics have in mind but Palestine Arab nationalist sympathisers who criticise Israel, its policies, history and the campaign to establish it. Some of these have, apparently, occasionally crossed the line between criticising Israel and criticising "the Jews". On the other hand, some of Labour's critics also cross the line, in the opposite direction, and see such criticisms of Israel as anti-Semitic.

So, what is anti-Semitic and what is not? Until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 anti-Semitism had a clear meaning: dislike, discrimination, persecution or conspiracy theories aimed at Jews. There was, however, the question of who were Jews. Originally, they were seen as those who practised Judaism, the religion, and this was the basis of anti-Semitism in Medieval Christian Europe. In the nineteenth century, however, unsound theories of biological human nature designated the Jews as one of many "races", which meant that it was possible to be considered a Jew without practising Judaism, even in fact after converting to Christianity or becoming an atheist.

The Socialist Party is opposed to all prejudice and discrimination against fellow workers. So, it goes without saying that we have always opposed anti-Semitism. It flourished in its "racial" form as an ideological weapon used by reactionary landed interests to try to prevent their position being undermined by the development of capitalism. In so far as it found an echo amongst workers, we opposed it as a prejudice that misidentified the cause of working-class problems as being due to Jewish immigrants or to exploitation by Jewish finance capitalists rather than to the capitalist system of minority class ownership and production for profit.

With the end of aristocratic rule and the granting of political rights to Jews, most integrated and assimilated into the country where they lived, and considered themselves to be British, French, German, Dutch, etc. Those who were still religious saw themselves as citizens of the state where they lived who happened to follow Judaism rather than Christianity or having no religion.

Some, however, accepting the view that the Jews were a "race" or a "nation", advocated that the Jews, like other nations, should have their own country and their own state. These Jewish nationalists called themselves Zionists and the place they chose for their state was Palestine, at the time a province of

the Ottoman Empire. In 1948 they achieved their goal when the state of Israel came into being in a part of Palestine. To this day the Zionists still urge Jewish workers in Europe and America to emigrate to Palestine.

The existence of Israel has made the definition of anti-Semitism more complicated, with Zionists claiming that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitic and anti-Semites saying that they are anti-Zionist rather than anti-Semitic.

In 2016 the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance adopted a “working definition” of anti-Semitism that was not that different from what had previously been accepted. They added a list of examples of its manifestation. These included: *“making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions”*.

The Socialist Party has always denounced these anti-Semitic stereotypes, conspiracy theories and factual errors, and produced articles and pamphlets refuting them.

Another of the examples, however, was more contentious as it extended the definition of anti-Semitism to include opposition to Jewish nationalism: “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination”.

Opposition to Jewish nationalism never used to be regarded as anti-Semitic and was in fact common amongst Jews themselves. This example begs two important questions by assuming, first, that humanity is divided into separate nations each of which has the “right” of self-determination in the sense of the right to establish a state on a part of the globe's surface, and, second, that those making up such alleged nations form a community sharing a common interest. Socialists reject both contentions.

Nations are not natural divisions of humanity; they are political constructs, “imagined nations” as it has been put. The notion that there are collectivities called nations with rights is a product of the capitalist era of human history. States – coercive institutions ruling over a given territory – existed before capitalism, but, once control over them had passed to the capitalist class and its representatives, the new rulers sought to legitimise their rule as that of representatives of “the nation”. Nearly everywhere those they ruled over were not homogeneous in terms either of language or religion. They had to be moulded into a “nation” by having it drummed into them that they had a common history, interest and destiny. As most states are of relatively recent origin, such “nation-building” is still going on today in many parts of the world.

All states are class-divided into a minority who own and control the means of production and those forced by economic necessity to sell their mental and physical energies to an employer for a wage or salary. The interests of these two classes are diametrically opposed as the profits and privileges of the one result from the economic exploitation of the other. There is no common “national interest”, only a class struggle between the two. That the members of both classes share a common interest is one of the ideological means by which the dominant minority class obtain the acquiescence and support of those they rule over and exploit.

Nationalist movements demanding “the right to self-determination” are movements in favour of local capitalists who want their own state so as to be better able to pursue and defend their economic interests. The so-called “right to self-determination” is the right of a group of capitalists to have their own state. The Socialist Party has always opposed such movements as unworthy of working class support as they are movements in the interest of present or future exploiters. That this is so has been borne out by the experience of all parts of the world where nationalist movements have achieved their goal. The exercise of the so-called “right to self-determination” has resulted everywhere, not in “national liberation”, but in a change of masters.

The Socialist Party applied this analysis to the Jewish nationalist movement, or Zionism, when it made its appearance. As the articles reproduced here show, we consistently opposed, from 1918 on, the view that the establishment of a Jewish state would be a solution to the problems that Jewish workers faced. A Jewish state would be a capitalist state in which the Jewish workers who emigrated there would be exploited by Jewish capitalists instead of by the capitalists of the state in which they resided. The interest of Jewish workers lay, rather, in uniting with the rest of the workers of the world to establish a global socialist society, in which there would be no discrimination against any group as the principle of “from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs” would apply.

Socialist opposition to Zionism is not anti-Semitic; it is opposition not just to Zionism but is based on opposition to all nationalism and all nationalist movements.

The Socialist Party
2018

The Futility of Zionism (*Socialist Standard*, June 1918)

At a time of special "stress and storm", such as the present, there float to the surface various kinds of faddists with all sorts of nostrums, all purporting to abolish the ills of present-day society. But when these parties are examined they are found to be but shields to the governing class.

One such party is the Zionist Party. This is made up of a number of Jews who, professedly, desire that Palestine should belong to the Jews. At the commencement of the present war these gentry were loud in bewailing what they called the break-up of the Socialist movement, and proclaiming that those Jews who had put their faith in Socialism could now do nothing else than join in their work of recovering Palestine for the Jewish people. At one moment these Zionists deplore the fact that the Jew is slaying his brother Jew, at the next they slavishly and sycophantically remind the authorities how loyal and patriotic they in particular and Jews in general are. Before examining the Zionists' views it will be necessary to give a brief history of the Jews so as the better to judge the claims of these propagandists.

As far as can be gathered from authentic history the Jews, or rather Hebrews at this period, were a nomadic people wandering about for suitable land, amiably butchering all and sundry who came in their way. Finally they settled down to an agricultural mode of living in that portion of Asia known as Palestine. Professor Hosmer, of Washington University, says:

"The Jews originally had no special turn for trading. In the earlier days, their life, we have seen to be that of herdsmen, tillers of the soil, and handicraftsmen of the simplest sort. Their traffic was insignificant even after their return from the exile, until the Macedonian days, when mercantile intercourse with the other nations became among them a more frequent, but not by any means an all-absorbing, pursuit."

It must not be thought that the Jews lived a kind of communal life, for we read of bitter class-enmity and struggles for political supremacy (priestcraft) especially between the Sadducees (aristocrats) and the Pharisees, made up of small merchants, lawyers, and scribes.

After a time the Jews were attacked by a large number of tribes or nations until they were practically conquered by the Romans, who at first wished to incorporate the Jews in the Roman State system.

"The Emperor Nerva was as lenient to them as to the rest of his subjects; but as soon as they had attained some measure of political vitality, their turbulent and fanatical spirit broke out anew. Their last attempts to throw off the Roman yoke in Cyrene (115 A.D.), Cyprus (116), Mesopotamia (118), and in Palestine

under Bar Cochba's insurrection in 135 A.D. were defeated with enormous slaughter. The suppression of Bar Cochba's insurrection marks the final desolation of Judea, and the dispersion of its inhabitants." (*Chambers' Encyclopaedia*)

From thence the Jews emigrated to the Eastern countries of Europe, particularly Prussia, Italy, Austria, and Hungary. But it was in Poland that the Jews found a home to their liking in the peculiar ghetto style of theirs. It seems that this was because of the unsettled state of Poland itself, where dynastic feuds raged so furiously that it did not allow of a strong, centralised State, which might interfere with the wholesale influx and settlement of the Jewish people. It is since the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century, through easier transit facilities, that Jews emigrated to the Western countries, especially America, in large numbers.

A new epoch in the history of the Jews can be said to have started after the French Revolution. With Napoleon Bonaparte on the scene the Jews in France received the same political rights as other French-born people. Thence is introduced in all capitalist developed States what Zionists call the "Jewish emancipation," i.e., granting to native-born Jews of all the privileges of the other people of the country. Now, through the persecution of the Jews in Russia the Jewish question was much talked of, and in 1897 the first Zionist congress was held. It is from thence that the question of Zionism has been propagated among the Jews.

These Zionists say that with "emancipation" the Jews are no better off; in fact they are (they claim) worse off, in as much as the relaxation of restrictions tends to destroy the social and religious bonds which have hitherto knit them together. Now let us judge these people by their own words.

One of the foremost spokesmen and leaders of the Zionist movement, Dr. Charles Weizman, shows the futility of the Zionist scheme very well in that book *Zionism and the Future*. He says:

"Half a century ago some of the more far-sighted Russian Jews began to realise the danger of disintegration through the adoption of foreign ideas and customs, and to urge the only possible remedy - the establishment of a new Jewish centre of Jewry in the old Jewish homeland under free conditions, in which Jewish life, rooted in its own soil, could develop on modern lines without losing its essential individuality."

How Judaism could develop on modern lines without losing its essence neither Dr. Weizman nor the "more far-sighted Russian Jews" could tell us. Dr. Weizman, however, is wise man enough to know that by keeping the Jews shut out from the light and learning of the modern world the Jewish faith

would be granted a new lease of life. But he happens to know also that it is impossible for the enlightened Jew to revert back to primitive ignorance. He says:

"One effect of the political and social emancipation [social emancipation in the Zionist and capitalist sense, reader] of the Jews of the West has been to break up their solidarity. They have gained the right to participate in the lives of modern nations, not as a national or sub-national group, but as individuals. Judaism conceived as a religious system takes the place of the sense of attachment to the Jewish people and its traditions and ideals. But from the point of view of Jewish solidarity the substitute is woefully inadequate, and its inadequacy becomes more glaring from generation to generation. Hence the natural progress of the emancipated Jew is through assimilation to absorption in his environment."

Dr. Weizman then goes on to thank anti-Semitism, and incidentally, in true bourgeois fashion, prates about loyalty and patriotism.

"This process [assimilation] would proceed to its logical end even more rapidly were it not checked by anti-Semitism. The record of the emancipated Jew in loyalty to his country, in devotion to its ideals and service to its interests, is unimpeachable. None the less he is felt by the outside world something different, still an alien, and the measure of his success and prominence in the various walks of life which are thrown open to him is, broadly speaking, the measure of the dislike and distrust which he earns. Thus the phenomena of assimilation and anti-Semitism go on side by side, and the position of the emancipated Jew, though he does not realise it himself, is even more tragic than his oppressed brother."

That may be a fine tale for the hard-oppressed Galician and Polish Jews - though I doubt if even they would listen to it since the Russian Revolution - but try tell it to the Rothschilds, or Lord Reading for instance.

Dr. Weizman may remark that a good number of the younger working Jews in England are attached to his organisation. But this is solely because they are ignorant of their class position in society. Even so, he knows that his members will not be party to his scheme, for he says "emancipated Jews are for the most part unwilling to leave the countries of their adoption, materially speaking, they are sufficiently well off where they are, and it will only be a minority in whom the Jewish consciousness will be sufficiently strong to draw them back to their own people."

To show what the wealthy Jew thinks about his faith we quote H. Sacher on Anglo-Jewry:

"It excludes Jewish nationalism from its thoughts and its outlook, and it retains in its ritual all those features which are there for no other reason than that Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people. Its official view is that Judaism is only a cult and is inclined to model Jewish ecclesiastical organisation after the pattern of the Established Church. It repudiates the idea of change or reform, yet its pride is to be British; it refuses to have a Chief Rabbi who is not by education English-speaking, and it tries to use the machinery of the British State to enforce its authority."

Well, is not "true religion" for wage slaves? Enough if the rich masters support it, and let us add, and play the hypocrite.

The Very Rev. Dr. Gaster, however, thinks that "no one can be a Jew who does not belong to the Jewish faith." This idea, however, does not tally with the ideas of those Zionists who are always priding themselves about the greatness of the Jew (so great are they that nine-tenths of them pray in a language they do not understand !) even when such happens to be a Disraeli, or say even Jesus.

Our contention that the Syndicalist is a reactionary and reformer is well borne out by the chatter of Arthur D. Lewis, author of *Syndicalism and the General Strike*. In *Zionism: Problems and Views*, a book which he edits, he shows to what reactionary uses he can be put. Thus he says:

"Judaism may be thought superior to Christianity, even if you are not by religion a traditional Jew. Christianity centres round a tomb, Judaism looks forward to justice on earth. In spite of Marx's bad opinion of the Jews, it was no accident that the founders of modern Socialism - Marx, Engels and Lassale - were all Jews. [It certainly is no accident that a Syndicalist is a Zionist freak!] Moreover, Judaism belongs to the collectivist religions, regarding a Jewish community (Israel) as the unit, and not the individual soul, as does Protestantism."

He goes on:

"Popular Socialism proposes to reform the world by a mechanical or external change, popular Christianity proposes to reform it by individual and spiritual change alone, but the Jew thinks of the rule of God as involving the distribution of material welfare and also a change in the heart, the wicked of the earth being turned towards God. The reform of the earth must be accomplished by both external and internal changes."

But why does he deal with "popular Socialism"? Because it suits his purpose. Scientists claim that internal change presupposes a revolution. Is Mr. Lewis afraid that he will scatter away those who subscribe to his twaddle, by using such an un-Godly and anti-Judaistic word as "revolution"? Socialists will

gather a good idea of his understanding of Socialism from the following remark in his book on Syndicalism: "Christians cannot agree about Christianity or Socialists about Socialism."

Lest the reader may be misled into thinking that the Zionists are altogether dreamers I would like to point out that they are, on the contrary, very practical people, as witness the schemes they already have working in Palestine. Listen to S. Tolkowsky and Professor R. Gotteil of Jaffa:

"Colonists already settled who need money either for continuing their labours or for enlarging their holdings can obtain loans from the Anglo-Palestine Company [smells more English than Palestine], but the rate of interest which this bank must levy for its loans is a burden less easily borne by agriculture than by commerce."

"The question of manual labour in these rural colonies has also received close attention. The Colonisation Society 'Esra' contributes towards lightening the existence of the Jewish agricultural labourer by building cheap and comfortable homes for the families and 'workmen's homes' for the bachelors."

"In 1911 the Vine Growers' Association of Rishon-le-Zion and ZicViron-Jacob were able to pay off nearly half a million francs of their indebtedness to Baron Edmund de Rothschild."

So run to Palestine, good, faithful Jews to work like the very devil for the Anglo-Palestine Company and Baron de Rothschild. Care not, for you are in the Holy Land of your fathers, where, if you do happen to fall dead from hunger, overwork, or disease, your bodies will be consecrated in holy soil. Could mortal Jew wish for anything grander! And how are these Zionists to procure Palestine? Let Dr. Weizman answer:

"It will support its claim by no armed force, for though Jews shed their blood for every belligerent country, there is no Jewish army. Their appeal will be based on right and justice alone."

Justice! One has painfully become acquainted with the uses that word can be put to. Although these Zionists do not intend to organise an army, in Carsonic fashion, they see that it is to the strongest force that homage and appeal for "justice" should be addressed. For when they were offered Palestine for the purpose of developing it, by the Turkish authorities, they refused it, since they were afraid of the jealousy or force of the other powers. But now we have a statement from the leader of the English section of Zionists (H. Sacher, *Daily News*, 5 June 1917):

"Dr. Weizman, President of the English Zionist Federation, has publicly

announced that the British Government stands for a Jewish Palestine, and that the head of the Catholic Church contemplates a Jewish Palestine with the utmost benevolence."

If it is only the British Government which says so – the champions of small nationalities, the Dutch of South Africa, the Greeks, or the Irish, for instance – then justice must be on the side of the Zionists. But fancy a Zionist asking the views of the "piggish" Catholic head!

These fanatics are too dense and reactionary to see that the old Jewish social organisation is a thing of the past. As well might we talk of revivifying the gens of old. They have disappeared because society has advanced beyond them, and it is inconceivable that they can ever come again in the history of this present planet. With a new mode of producing wealth, new ideas and customs spring up, necessarily in conformity with the new economic demands of society. If Palestine would become a centre of thriving industry, instead of as now a mere centre for philanthropic and religious activities, then the customs and ideas there will conform to the mode of production that prevails in general in capitalist society. It cannot be otherwise. If the Jews are to produce for a world market they will have to adopt all means and practices for producing cheaply, that we know the modern manufacturer must do.

Hence the same problems and evils must and will arise in Palestine that arise elsewhere where production is carried on for profit. Wage slavery, with all its attendant horrors, alone can be the corner-stone of a thriving and prosperous Jewish Palestine, as these terms are understood to-day, and from this there is no escape under the present system.

No, it is not this or that scheme of a few charlatans or pious dreamers that will solve the problem; it is the universal application of the principles of Socialism, by which those who produce the wealth of society shall enjoy it, that the present-day society with its festering sores will be removed. Then, and only then, can humanity, as a whole, claim the world to its own.

Therefore, the cause of Socialism is and must be universal. So long as you are living in a society that forces you to be a wage slave, you must, if you wish to be free, join hands with your fellow workers of all countries in the task of securing "the world for the workers," not Palestine for the Jews. It is in the interest of your masters that you should be divided by national and religious barriers, or side-tracked by reactionary schemes like the one we have had under review, which they are ever fostering and foisting upon you, so that you should not be able to think of occupying yourselves with the mission of freeing yourselves of capitalistic bondage.

It is up to you, then, to study your class position in society, which is cosmopolitan and anti-religious in character. For it is only by so doing that you will become free in the truest sense of the term.

Divide and Rule in Palestine (*Socialist Standard*, September 1937)

The Royal Commission's proposal to solve the Palestine troubles by partition has met with a mixed reception. The recommendation is to split Palestine up into three pieces, an Arab State, a Jewish State, and a portion which will remain under the British Mandate.

At the recently concluded Zionist Congress opinion was sharply divided. A two-thirds majority, headed by the Zionist Chairman, Dr. Weizmann, voted in favour of the principle of partition, largely on the grounds that it was the best that could be expected from the British Government under the circumstances. The decision was only come to after long and heated discussion, and the news of it called forth protest from some leading Zionists in America and elsewhere.

Among the professed spokesmen of working-class interests there is also a conflict of views. Communist writers, who claim that the Jews in Palestine have been building up a flourishing business under the protection of the British Government, back the Arabs. They urge resistance to the partition proposal and the establishment of an independent Arab State in Palestine, of which the Jews are to be members on an equal basis. The Communists put this forward on two grounds: The right of the Arabs to self-determination and the need to curb British Imperialism.

On the other side, opponents of the Communists, like Abramovich and Orenstein, favour the continuance of the mandatory system and oppose the Arab viewpoint. In doing so they overstate the Jewish case, though probably unconsciously, painting a beautiful picture of Palestine under the Jews, where Socialist ideas will flourish.

The state of affairs in Palestine is not clear cut. There is an old social system side by side with a new, and both subject to an over-ruling Imperial power. Within each again there are class interests that cut across racial and national feelings. And, to still further complicate matters, there is the peculiar international position of the Jew.

The Arab lives under a semi-feudal regime with the land-owner despoiling the peasant of nearly everything. The coming of the Jews introduced modern industrial methods which threaten the incomes of land-owners, partly by offering the peasants a way of escape from fleecing, and partly by competition. Hence the influential Arabs are opposed to the continued immigration of Jews and strive to stir racial hatred among the poor by using the religious bogey. They are opposed to partition and want an independent

Arab State.

The Jew, hunted out of various occupations in the East and the victim of pogroms, has been drifting into Palestine for decades. The immigration of the Jew has been vastly increased since the War, until at present it has reached from fifty to sixty thousand a year. How the Jews are permeating Palestine may be appreciated from the fact that, in spite of Arab immigration, the Jewish section rose from 17 per cent. of the population in 1930 to 30 per cent. in 1936. This antagonises the Arab, who foresees himself being swamped in the rising flood. On the other hand, the growing Jewish section pays the bulk of the tax revenue but receives the least benefit from it, which is a permanent source of complaint.

To the Jew, interference with immigration would have serious consequences. Palestine is perhaps the only place to which he has free access. A large proportion of the immigrants are representatives of families that have been left behind in other countries in dire straits, penniless and denied almost any opportunity of earning a living. To these the immigrant sends back contributions that enable the relatives to buy the necessaries of life. Thus, as one writer puts it, if the Arabs succeed in stopping Jewish immigration into Palestine it will mean starvation to millions of Jews.

The Jewish migration has brought with it to Palestine the capitalist system with its antagonistic classes. While, on the one hand, it is making the desert flower and bringing into existence flourishing towns, on the other hand it is replacing the feudal method of fleecing by the capitalist exploitation of wage-workers. To quote Mordekai Orenstein:

“You will find in Palestine a highly organised capitalist class, a vigorous and aggressive Jewish clericalism, and a modern Jewish Fascism with all the usual characteristics from strike-breaking to the base murder of a distinguished working-class leader.” (Page 10, *Jews, Arabs and British in Palestine.*)

He also adds that you will find there a strongly organised working class. But, towards the end of the pamphlet, he laments that:

“Considerable sections of Jewish workers in Palestine have not as yet reached the realisation of the vital urgency of forging this supernatural weapon [Jewish-Arab proletarian unity] in the political struggle in Palestine.” (Page 21.)

It may be added that partition, by restricting the area open to Jews, must have a considerable effect on their immigration, which is some explanation of Zionist opposition.

The attitude of the British Government is based on simple principles: The safeguarding of British capitalists' interests, as represented by such things as the oil pipe between Mosul and Haifa; security of Imperial air routes, communications through the Suez Canal, and so forth. Their policy of divide and rule leads them to favour different sides at different times, and to keep racial animosities alive as long as they do not become too dangerous.

The support of both Jews and Arabs during the War was bought by promises that have not been kept, and cause irritation to both sections.

The Mandate has evidently outlived its uses to British capitalism, and the partition system is to take its place. This will give Arab and Jew (like the North and South of Ireland) something to quarrel over for years to come, to the hindrance of propaganda for working-class solidarity against the international capitalist class.

Zionism (Chapter 6 of *The Racial Problem: A Socialist Analysis*, 1947)

We cannot deal with the problem of anti-Semitism without also discussing Zionism. Again, we can only deal with it on broad, general lines, because of obvious limitations of space.

Although the beginning of what we know today as the Zionist movement took place towards the end of the last century, it is only in recent years that the movement has gained any great strength. Today, there are over 550,000 Jews living in Palestine; yet in 1919 there were only some 60,000. In 1919, they constituted 9 per cent of the population of Palestine; today they constitute 33 per cent. The early movement was weak and poorly organised. Most Jews were quite indifferent to the movement; certainly, they did not wish to go to Palestine. Of the two million Jews who emigrated from Russia, Austria, and Romania between the years 1881 and 1908, over one-and-a-half million went to the United States, 300,000 went to Western Europe, and only 26,000 went to Palestine. Even among those people who did emigrate to Palestine in the early days, there was little of the active, colonising spirit. Most of the younger element preferred to try their fortunes elsewhere.

Since the end of the first World War, conditions have changed. Anti-Semitism has become stronger than ever before, with obvious results. First of all, those Jews in countries where anti-Semitism was most active tried to emigrate to countries where they would be less badly treated. Secondly, as the tide of anti-Semitism rose higher and higher, so did many Jews become more and more interested in the idea of a "National Home", where, as they thought, they could be together and be free once and for all from the hostility of people around them.

Although all manner of places had been suggested for this "National Home", including British East Africa, British Guiana, and San Domingo – and, more recently, Eritrea and Madagascar have also been mentioned – for various reasons, the final choice of the Zionists has been Palestine.

The Zionists themselves do not constitute one united group. At least four separate organisations go to make up the movement. The largest group is the Histadrut, the Trade Union wing. The others are the Revisionists, an extreme group, whose methods and activities are strongly anti-democratic and violent in character; a religious section; and lastly, the Democratic Zionists. Although some of them are now prepared to accept the compromise of Palestine, i.e., the division of Palestine into two separate states, the overwhelming majority, irrespective of the group to which they belong, now want the whole of the country as a Jewish state.

The essence of Zionism is escape; escape once and for all from hatred and

persecution. Its supporters argue that the main cause of the troubles of the Jews is the fact that they have no country of their own. Only by settling in a country of their own will they be safe from anti-Semitism. No longer then will they be a small minority of outcasts, dependent upon the tolerance of others, but members of their own Jewish state. As such they will be free from interference and discrimination. Such beliefs are mere wishful thinking. In the first place, many Jews are not the slightest bit interested in going to Palestine. This is recognised by many Zionists themselves in their more realistic moments. In any case, even if it was a fact that every Jew wanted to go, the country itself is incapable of supporting such an increased population. This, too, was recognised by David Ben-Gurion, a well-known Zionist leader, when he said:

“We shall go to Palestine in order to become the majority there. If need be we shall take the country by force. If Palestine proves too small - her frontiers will have to be extended” (Manchester Guardian, 3 July 1946).

The declared and avowed aim of the Zionists is to make Palestine a Jewish state. They are, in short, “nationalists”, looking to solve their problems not by abolishing capitalism but by creating one more national state in a capitalist world of national states and empires. Zionist nationalism, as such, is not different from the other nationalisms and we, as Socialists, are opposed to them all, whether they be British, American, Russian, Polish, Indian, or any other. The most that could be said for nationalist movements where directed against alien rulers was the argument that, with alien rule ended, it would be easier for the workers to grasp the fact that their enemy is capitalism, whether the capitalists are aliens or not. It is, however, clear, that in practice the capitalist class in each country finds it about as easy to set the workers against the workers of other countries as it was to set them against a foreign ruling-class. What are called nationalist movements are essentially the movements of capitalist groups striving to drive out foreign exploiters so that they can mount the vacant saddle.

The spokesmen of nationalist movements do not in the main declare their capitalist objectives. British capitalism talked of pacifying the Middle East, or of helping the Jews and Arabs. Actually, British Imperialism was in Palestine for reasons of Imperial strategy and to protect oil interests in that region; which also of course explains the increasing intervention of the USA in the Middle East. With all this, a new factor is becoming of importance, which we shall refer to again later, the factor of rising Arab nationalism.

It is against this background that the demand is made for the settlement of Jewish people in Palestine, with the usual irrelevant arguments so beloved of all nationalisms. The Principal Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues, Kopul Rosen, writing to *The Times* (13 July 1946), claims, for example, that those

who work for the return of the Jewish people to Zion, “whether they be Zionists or non-Zionists, are fulfilling not a secular ambition, but the Divine will as revealed in the visions of Israel’s prophets”. Moslem Arabs can, of course, invoke a like “Divine” mission.

Similarly, the Zionists talk of the “historical connection” of the Jews with Palestine. The Jews, they say, are returning home to the land of their forefathers, which they left many centuries ago. As we have already seen, this is no claim at all. The Jews were certainly not the original inhabitants of Palestine, and, further than that, they have had no contact with the country worth speaking about for almost two thousand years. The Welsh could just as logically argue for taking back England again, or the Red Indians for taking back North America. Such sentimental arguments are always to be found associated with nationalism.

The Zionists also attempt to bolster up their case by referring to the progress and prosperity they have brought to Palestine. They instance the large increase in the Arab population itself; the higher standard of living of the Palestine Arabs compared with that of Arabs in other countries; and the fact that no Arab has been turned off his land without compensation. But here again, these arguments count very little. They in no way face up to the fact that there is a considerable section of Arab landless labourers in Palestine, many of whom are compelled to work for Jewish farmers and capitalists, and that generally their wages are less than those paid to Jews. Nor should it be forgotten, when comparing the wages of Arabs in Palestine with those earned by Arabs in other countries that the cost of living tends to be considerably higher in Palestine.

But, in any case, all these arguments are really incidental to the question. The crux of the matter is that the Zionists are now determined at all costs to make a Jewish National State in Palestine. As such they come into direct conflict with the Arab ruling class in Palestine itself, and, more particularly, they become the objects of hatred of the Arab world generally. The main point of the Zionist case is that by establishing a National Home of their own they would be free from anti-Semitism. In this, they have been proved completely mistaken. In their efforts to flee from the anti-Semitism in Europe, they have only succeeded in generating another, Arab anti-Semitism. Even on the short view of helping the homeless refugees, the wisdom of this policy is more than doubtful.

Finally, it must be stressed that Zionism, even if it were to succeed in Palestine, which is doubtful to say the least, is itself no solution to the Jewish problem. To set up a Jewish state in Palestine in no way solves the problem of anti-Semitism in Britain, the United States, Russia, Canada, South Africa, or any other country. Whatever happens about the National State in

Palestine, the Jews will still be the object of hatred and discrimination in those countries. Anti-Semitism will not be eradicated by the founding of Jewish National States, whether they be in Palestine or anywhere else. The root cause of modern anti-Semitism, as we have already pointed out, is to be found in the capitalist system of society, and only when capitalism itself is abolished will anti-Semitism disappear. If any Jewish worker reading this pamphlet feels himself filled with the need to reproach us for what he thinks is an "unrealistic attitude", let him reflect for a moment upon the so-called "realistic attitude" of the Zionists in Palestine and the results which have ensued. It is the Zionist policy which is "unrealistic", as many Jews will find to their bitter cost. Our case to the Jewish workers is that under no circumstances should they allow themselves to be deluded by ideas of nationalism and "race" into supporting such movements as Zionism which will not solve their problems.

The only solution to anti-Semitism is Socialism, and to the extent that Jewish workers co-operate with other members of their class to bring about Socialism will the complete eradication of anti-Semitism be more quickly achieved.

Palestine and its Problems (*Socialist Standard*, June 1948)

A new state has come into existence in Palestine, the Jewish State of Israel, and it has come into existence against the intentions of the British Labour Government. This Government which, to paraphrase Mae West, has climbed the ladder of power wrong by wrong, took its stand on the Balfour Declaration of 1917 guaranteeing the Jews a national home in Palestine, but it resisted what was bound to be the inevitable consequence of the carrying out of that declaration, the demand for an independent Jewish State. In 1936 the Arab landowners inspired a revolt against the continued immigration of Jews into Palestine, foreseeing a threat to their interests in the existence of the highly industrial and commercial community that was growing up in their midst. Since then Britain, which had secured a mandate over Palestine in 1922, has been exercising a virtual reign of terror. A significant commentary on this is the following statement contained in the *News Chronicle* (28 April 1948):

"Palestine Government has ended its censorship, and yesterday's papers published their first uncensored editions for 12 years - News Chronicle Correspondents, A.P., Reuter and B.U.P."

Within a few hours of the proclamation of the new Jewish State by its self-appointed Provisional Government, President Truman startled the world by publicly stating that America would recognise it. Commentators of Truman's action attributed it to a late attempt to capture the Jewish vote in the forthcoming presidential election. This is too thin. While in fact it may have this result, there is far more behind the action than electioneering propaganda. Jews and Arabs in Palestine, like the Greeks, the Italians and the Yugoslavs, are pawns in a much greater game which involves oil and the struggle between Russia and the Western Powers for economic domination. Why, for instance, has an allegedly democratic and anti-imperialist Labour Government supported the semi-feudal Arab landlords against the Jews, particularly when the leader of the Jewish nationalists, Ben Gurion, has proclaimed himself a social democrat and labour leader in sympathy with the outlook of the British Labour Party?

The Labour Government's blundering methods in Palestine are the offspring of attempts to harmonise conflicting policies. For years anti-imperialism has been a plank in the Labour Party's programme and the withdrawal from India, Burma, and Egypt (except the canal zone) is held up as an example of the implementation of this policy. But the Labour Government is also committed to the safeguarding of the British capitalists' commercial and industrial interests; this dictates an opposite policy. Torn between the two they have failed to satisfactorily accomplish either, disappointing their working-class supporters and exasperating their capitalist directors. To protect capitalist interests they must take measures to conserve the monopoly of the oil

interests and safeguard the supply lines of oil, a great and growing quantity of which comes from the Middle East. A glance at a map will reveal what has guided the blundering and hesitant steps of the Labour Government in Palestine and the adjacent territories.

There are two oil pipe lines from Iraq to the Mediterranean; one through Syria to the Coast, and the other through Transjordan to Haifa. Thus it is necessary to placate or force the ruling groups in each of these territories to favour the production and transport of oil on behalf of Western capitalists. As the Arabs form the majority of the population in these territories the Arab landowners and rulers have been the principal objects of placation, not only by the Labour Government but also by their predecessors, and millions of pounds have been spent, both directly as an annual tribute to Transjordan and Iraq and indirectly under various forms of bribery, to influence a favourable attitude to the oil interests. The final result of terrorism and bribery has been to unite the Jews and Arabs in at least one direction – antipathy to the Labour Government. But the problem does not end with the territories already mentioned. Iran and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company also come into the picture, in dangerous proximity to Russia.

So far we have only looked at a part of the picture. On Saturday, the 15th May, the *Daily Express* announced, with large headlines, Truman's recognition of the Jewish State. In the very same issue of that paper we read the following, under the headline "Shares Boom on Wall Street":

"New York, Friday - Shares went up £250,000,000 today in the biggest day Wall Street has seen in years . . . Rises per share were as much as 35s. Experts think another boom market, due to rising profits and rearmament orders lies ahead."

Yes! The vultures are gathering again! What is America's interest in the Middle East and what does it portend? Why, for instance, was America so frantically concerned about the Italian elections, and why does it back British policy in Greece? In the main the immediate answer is the same as that which concerns Britain – and which finally decided the British Government to give up the Mandate in Palestine convinced that America would be forced to help carry the burden. The answer is Oil and Russian expansion; in other words, Oil and Strategy. UNO, as usual, has been ignored where matters of fundamental importance to the leading powers are concerned.

Economic necessity has forced America to become a Mediterranean power to whom the future policy of Italy, Greece and the Middle East is a vital matter. The Commander of the US Mediterranean Fleet, Admiral Bieri, recently pointed out that the US Fleet intends to stay in the Mediterranean and "American forces will be allocated wherever there are American interests, in

closest co-operation with the British." (*Manchester Guardian*, 10 September 1947). Modern mechanisation, both for industrial and for military purposes, has converted oil into priority number one. In spite of their own large oil reserves neither America nor Russia can meet their growing needs out of their own production. American oil interests are pressing into the Middle East and the safeguarding of the oil life line is of paramount importance. Russia has already shown its interest in Iranian oil, and it is trying to get a strategic foothold in the Mediterranean. The whole area from the oil fields of Iran, covering the coast of Palestine and the Mediterranean, is as much a matter of concern to American capitalists as to British. So far, the British capitalists have borne the costs of maintaining the oil life line. What the British Government has now done is simply throw the ball to America, and America is compelled to take the pass.

The Palestine episode is thus another move in the strategical line-up of the two major imperialistic powers – America and Russia. Russia originally backed the Arabs – then they changed over to support of the Jews. Truman's quick response was obviously aimed at getting in first and forestalling Russia. Russia has since also announced its willingness to recognise the Jewish State, but this need not prevent them from also backing the Arabs. It may be that Russia will find that its imperialistic interests will be better served by backing the Arabs. If it comes to that conclusion it will have no difficulty in finding a pretext for doing so, and we shall witness another somersault in Russian foreign policy. As an imperialist power the Russian Government is not cluttered up or inhibited by any ideals relating to democracy or the self-determination of small nations. Its methods are essentially the same as those of the Western Governments but lacking in the finesse and polish of the latter. Whether the turmoil in the Middle East will be contained or will involve a wider conflagration (as American investors appear to anticipate) no one can at the moment determine with certainty, but what can be said is that it brings nearer the inevitable clash between Russia and the West. Both Jews and Arabs are in a position to block the oil supply but they would only ruin themselves by attempting to do so. Therefore, the question is will either of them be able to turn East or West successfully for assistance.

Within the tormented area of the struggle Arab and Jewish workers have already given evidence of where the chains rub them by the strikes that have taken place against Jewish, Arab and alien masters. These Jewish and Arab workers form the vast mass of the population of the territories involved; they are the poverty-stricken exploitable material without which neither the Jewish nor Arab capitalists and landowners, nor outside capitalists, would be able to reap their harvest of profit from those rich areas. Industrially and commercially Jewish capitalists have been the progressive force. They have brought highly developed Western methods to a backward area, and in places have made the desert bloom. But with Western methods they have

brought Western forms of wage-slavery and expanded under cover of nationalist ideals. For the Arab and Jewish worker neither Arab nor Jewish national independence will remove the mark of subservience from their brows. Their only hope of a life of comfort and security lies in joining with their brethren of other countries in a world socialist movement to overthrow capitalist domination in all its forms and establish Socialism in its place. Only a world Socialist system can remove from society the machinations of the oil and other capitalist interests that periodically turn the world into turmoil and bring greater misery to the millions of the workers.

Finally, the personnel of the Provisional Government of Israel bears a striking likeness to the personnel of the British Labour Government. While this will not make for harmony between the two Governments it will provide another instance of how faithfully Labour Governments reflect capitalist interests.

Ye Daughters of Israel Weep (Socialist Standard, August 1961)

The State of Israel, now thirteen years old, has, by Jewish custom, come of age. It is timely, therefore, to attempt an assessment.

(1) The Zionist Movement

The assumption underlying the Zionist movement was that to establish a "national home for the Jewish people" was the only way to end their age-old persecution, especially under the yoke of the Tsars. This closely mirrored the aspirations of other thwarted nationalities such as the Poles, the Czechs, the Finns and the like. There were, of course, workers who were taken up with this cause but very few of them prior to the First World War. Cramped into a narrow strip of the vast Russian Empire, the Jewish millions lived almost entirely in the towns, where they formed the majority of the population. They were skilled and unskilled workers; some on the land, more in the factories and workshops; they were porters and cart drivers. Only a minority were merchants of any substance, bankers and factory owners. In this background it was the idea of Anarchism and Social-Democracy that gained the greatest acceptance. The Jewish Labour League, the Bund, which was affiliated to the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, had as its purpose Jewish cultural autonomy within a Social-Democratic Russia. They saw that on the principle of divide and rule the Tsars had actually fostered anti-Semitism. They were convinced that the Jewish problem was a by-product of the private property system and would end with the end of that system. They did not think in terms of a return to "the promised land" as a solution to their problems. Neither did the Anarchists.

Emigration to the freer and relatively more prosperous West, the Russian Revolution, and the rise of Nazism, affected Jewish opinion overwhelmingly. In the new conditions Anarchism died a natural death. Faith in a Social-Democratically reformed Capitalism withered in the face of the anti-Semitic mass hysteria that was being harnessed to the needs of the German ruling-class. Faith in Bolshevism, on the part of others, was likewise to vanish when the Soviet reality became clear. The end of the Second World War saw Zionism reaping a harvest of disillusionment and despair.

Out of the ruins of war, emerged the Jewish survivors. Despite the brutally callous turning back of their ships by the British Labour Government, many joined with the pioneers to oust the British and set up the Jewish State, under a Labour Government strangely enough. Few who had witnessed the holocaust of the Jews could fail to be moved by the determination of the survivors to have a home of their own, to live in a land where they could walk with heads held high, where they could till the soil and make the desert bloom and little by little heal the wounds of two thousand years. But national ideals and political reality have never been compatible and never can be. True to

form, the territorial demands of one set of Nationalists were diametrically opposed to the demands of the other set. The "solution" of the Jewish problem turned out to be its transference from Europe to the Middle-East.

(2) The Arab States

The Arabs, too, had national aspirations that had been thwarted by Turkish domination in the first instance and by an Anglo-French carve-up of the region subsequent to that. The Arabs were divided into several different states each of which was subservient to external forces. They were puppet states, mandates and protectorates. In order to weaken Germany's ally Turkey, Britain had deliberately cultivated an Arab sense of national identity during the 1914-18 war. Once victory was won, this policy no longer served British Capitalism and it was dropped. Henceforth, playing off one oil producer against another, one tribal dynasty or one community against another, paid better dividends. Once created, however, Arab nationalism filled a need and the Pan-Arab capitalist class to be saw to it that not only did it survive but that it flourished. In Palestine, where a majority of Arabs had lived for centuries, the territorial demands of Jewish and Arab nationalism proved utterly irreconcilable. When the clash came the Zionists, who were then militarily superior to the combined Arab armies, gained a victory sufficient to set up a state, but with less territory than had traditionally been demanded. The price, in human terms, entailed an entire new exodus." A million Arab refugees subsist to this day on the verge of starvation, caged like animals, within sight of Israel's borders. They refuse to move. They, too, insist on going home.

The popular insistence on an eventual "ingathering of the exiles" does not, in fact, explain why the Arab governments have left the refugees idly by the frontier, breeding and hating. With the calculating cynicism normal to ruling classes, they are seen as an invaluable political weapon.

Over the past thirteen years the situation within the Arab states surrounding Israel has not remained static. The Zionist claim that hostility towards Israel was fostered by corrupt feudal potentates out of fear that their peoples would demand similar living standards and civil rights obviously has some truth in it. But this is less the case now than hitherto. The United Arab Republic and Iraq have both undergone substantial changes in social organisation. Many of the kings who had been propped up by foreign and feudal interests have been swept away. A rigorous process of national capitalist development is taking place. Today, a key reason for continued hostility to Israel is an external one. In facing the pressures of both western and eastern imperialism, a show of Arab unity is of no mean value in the bargaining chamber of the United Nations. Conflicting as their economic interests are, hostility to Israel presents the one issue on which they can all agree. Had Israel not existed, the Arab states would have had to invent it!

It would be a mistake, however, to forget the real possibility of Israeli expansion which would inevitably be at the expense of the Arab states. If increased to any extent, the pressure on land and resources is bound to become explosive if Russia was to permit the emigration of any number of her two million Jews, for example. Meanwhile, Israel's governments, being subject to the wishes of an increasingly nationalistic electorate, cannot afford to ignore their expansionist demands.

In the sort of way that the Russian Revolution was able to command a great deal of passionate though misplaced devotion, so Israel could never have been established without tragic sacrifices and self-less idealism on the part of many of its people. But as in all cases where it has been argued that the end justified the means, it is the very idealists who are most bitterly disappointed by the outcome. Self-styled Socialists, whose working-class solidarity was suspended "for the duration" in order to slaughter their Arab neighbours, are shocked that what was begun as a tactical measure has become a permanency. Militarism, even trigger-happiness at times, has come to stay. A flag-wagging mentality, convinced that one Israeli is worth any three Arabs, is easier to pound out of the propaganda machine than the former subtle distinctions between reactionary Arab rulers and misguided soldiers who were but pawns in the game. Strikers have learnt that Jewish truncheons wielded by Jewish policemen feel just as unpleasant. They even have a Jewish problem in Israel, what with pietists who deny the authority of a man-made Jewish state which profanes the language of the Bible by every day usage, and the religious discrimination against Indian Jews as regards marriage rights.

(3) Communal Farms

For the Zionist who had ideals, the bitterest pill of all is the changing rôle of the Kibbutz. The pioneers regarded these communal farms, this utopian Socialism of a kind, as the pattern of the future nation. Just as the American "wild west" was penetrated and peopled in the first instance by dissenting communities of one kind or another; just as they imagined they were building Christianity or Communism all by themselves, so the Kibbutznik has extended and strengthened the national horizon to see, on arrival, the growth of a way of life the very antithesis of all that he stood for. Who but ascetics or visionaries could have built a city at Salt Lake or planted a forest in the Negev? Yet they pave the way for class divided capitalism of one kind or another.

If the heirs to the mighty Russian Revolution were to be forced by the exigencies of their historic and economic situation along paths not of their choosing, how much less realistic were the hopes of those who saw in a "national home" an end to struggle and to strife? Israel's international position, a tiny state among the giants, illustrates their dilemma. What Jew

would have believed thirteen years ago that Israel-made machine guns would be used by the German Army? Did the Zionist, on the morrow of statehood, think it possible that his country's subsequent dependence upon French aid and arms would make him victim of the same moral degeneration which France itself has suffered under the weight of iniquity in Algeria? Which of their Labourites could have foretold an alliance with the British Tory Government over Suez?

(4) The Eichmann Trial

And now in this year of reckoning, year thirteen, Eichmann, demoniac scourge of the Jews stands, as Torquemada never did, in the dock at Jerusalem before the judges of Israel. Underlying the whole structure of bourgeois law is the maxim that "might is right". But if we were to accept its claim to dispense a timeless "justice" to all men it would be hard to deny the monumental appropriateness of the exterminator's trial before his surviving victims. However, we Socialists spread throughout the world as we are, hold that for justice to be done the entire social system would have to stand trial and be found guilty. But what can we say of Capitalist morality which sanctifies the annihilation of Hiroshima or approves the crushing of Budapest but heaps all wrath on the head of one of its creations? Courts of law are not competent to judge the barbarity of our present social system. They are there to condemn those who lose the struggles that go on within it. Then all sense of common guilt, all sense of common responsibility that weighs so heavy on the conscience of man in Capitalist society, can be relievingly focused on some now helpless perversion of a man.

As to the why and wherefore of this latest show-piece of the prevailing quality of moral standards, we strongly suspect an element of political manoeuvre. Ben-Gurion faces other contenders for power as the recent "Lavon Affair" showed. With French backing he was able to take up an intransigent attitude towards his enemies. Despite General de Gaulle's assurances to the contrary at their recent meeting, once France has made peace with Algeria her enthusiasm for Israel is likely to wane. Friendship with an oil producing Arab Algeria will have far greater rewards to offer. With diplomatic relations re-established with Nasser, Israel cannot expect supplies of arms from Britain. Nor does Kennedy have the slightest intention of jeopardising the interests of the class he represents for the sake of Israel, however much it grieves the New York Jewish voters. His aim is to woo the "uncommitted" nations, most of which side with the Arabs.

An increasing fear of military isolation in a situation where Russian training and arms have immensely strengthened the Arab armies has resulted in pressure from some Israeli quarters for some sort of compromise with the Arabs. If Ben-Gurion, by staging a show-trial which by its ghoulish recital of the most hideous details of Nazi crime, can raise a wave of nationalistic

frenzy, he will ride it to victory at the polls.

The evidence is with us. Zionism has failed to achieve its objectives. Inevitably so. So long as there are Jewish workers attached in any numbers to the divisive and anti-working-class national idea, so long as their (and our) Arab brothers believe likewise, so long will strife ensue, so long will their respective ruling classes remain in the seat of power. The Jewish problem remains with us. It is an aspect of the working-class problem which has no solution outside of world-wide Socialism.

Letter to a Kiev Cousin (*Socialist Standard*, December 1973)

Dear K,

I know that this letter won't reach you. Only if I were to express myself in subtle allusions might such a letter pass the censorship of the State Capitalist Russian Empire. But what I have to say must be said loud and clear. You may not hear me, but others will.

At last you hold an exit permit in your hand, your ticket to the promised land. In struggling for it, you were thrown out of your job by your bureaucratic bosses, who then sent you to labour camp for a year on a charge of parasitism. It goes without saying, as they say, that you were guilty of being without a job – innocent people are not arrested in the Soviet Union, which has no unemployment anyway – as is well known! But tomorrow you board the train for Prague – destination Jerusalem.

Who can blame you for wanting to get out? For centuries the Ukraine has been the most deeply anti-Semitic area of the Empire. Even now a Jew is occasionally knifed to death in the main square of a small market town while the "honest Soviet people" and the police look on. More commonplace are the occasions when your fellow citizens – not all of them, but enough – content themselves with spitting on the ground as they pass and muttering something about the Yids.

But I must admit to being out of sympathy with some of your complaints. While recounting how your kids have been discriminated against in education and work, you bemoan that since the war the professions of Party bigwig, secret police desk-murderer and high Army officer are no longer open to Jews. But your Old Bolshevik grandfather, who fought in Trotsky's Red Army which suppressed the White pogroms in 1919 and later perished in a Stalinist death camp – your grandfather thought that he was fighting for a society of free and equal comrades, without exploitation or oppression of any kind, in which words like soldier, police, wages, boss would have become the obscure jargon of historians. Yes, but he forgot the technical and cultural preconditions of the Communist dawn, so far removed from the realities of a backward peasant country. In the State Capitalist despotism which arose to carry through industrialisation he was for a time a key administrator. Could he have imagined your strange complaint in his youth?

When you get out, you'll be leaving behind your sister, a convinced supporter of the Soviet system. A Party member, she thinks that the system is basically sound, a bit perverted but objectively progressive and so forth. She prefers to do her military service in a Soviet uniform, as you prefer to do yours in an Israeli uniform. And every four or five years the real thing.

Take care as you make your way to Israel. Young men and women, calling themselves Palestinian freedom fighters, may try to kidnap and shoot you. They know nothing of the Ukraine or of how you lived there. To them you are one more Zionist coming to usurp "their" land. In fact, though their parents tilled the soil of Palestine, it always belonged to the landlord, not to them. When the army, which you will soon join, drove them out into neighbouring territories, they refused to settle and take compensation, and were encouraged to dream of a triumphal return to the ancient focal region of religious superstition and fanaticism. Vegetating in the misery of the refugee camps, they have become as misty-eyed Zionists as you. For they also long for the day when their dispersed "nation", the Palestinians living throughout Europe, the Americas and the Arab world, will be ingathered to Zion. And brought up their children to take patriotic revenge on you.

If they ever manage to "re-Arabise" Palestine, they will still be disinherited slaves of the minority who own and rule the earth, privately and through the State. But they may have the satisfaction of slaving for an Arab employer under "their own" Palestinian flag. Will the splendours of national liberation start to fade for them then?

And what about you? In Kiev your family lives in an apartment smaller than a room for one in the brand-new hotel for foreign tourists. In Israel you imagine being welcomed into a beautiful house in golden Jerusalem. You'll probably find yourself in a hastily-built apartment in a new town on the desert edge. When you fall behind in paying the rent – for it may take a while for you to resign yourself to taking the sort of job available – you will be thrown out on the street by the bailiff. You will be disciplined by a new boss, preached to by new politicians, led to the slaughter by new generals. Your freedom will consist in the bailiff, boss, politician and general being Jewish. You will no longer be suspected of disloyalty, unless you "act against the Jewish nation" – but you will learn to shun others as alien.

You know that the fourth major Middle East war, the worst yet, is in progress as I write. It began as I set out on a week's coach tour of Italy. The idyllic Isle of Capri used to be an exclusive resort of the capitalist class – a small fortune (tens of thousands) is still required as a condition of residence, but recently they have let in a few package tourists. The group I was in was among the first to be granted this honour.

A few hundred miles across the Mediterranean I knew that relatives of mine on one side, and friends on both sides, were killing one another on the blazing hot sand, strewn with metal wreckage and human carrion. I'm boycotting newspapers until the end of the war, but headlines are written on the news-stands which I can't help seeing. Like "human wave attacks". Think

what that means.

In my mind the war means mainly the Sinai front. This is the front I've heard people speak of. Three Cairo students I knew at university are there – if not already dead. With one I never discussed politics. The second was cynical. The third (in private) sympathised with Israel. He had an extensive knowledge of Jewish history, told me that Egyptian soldiers taken prisoner by the Israelis were so impressed by their treatment that they refused to fight them again. My Israeli friends, those still alive, are in that minority which sympathises more or less openly with the Arabs. From them I have heard stories of Israeli torture prisons, of Israelis who have openly boasted how they blew up Iraqi synagogues in order to stampede the oriental Jews into Israel. Then there's the persecution of Copts and dissidents in Egypt, the Nazis working there . . .

Recently a young drifter in Libya, unable to hold down a job, concerned with the plight of the Libyan Jews, wanting to show the Israelis that not all Arabs want to throw them into the sea, hijacked a plane and took it on a personal peace mission to Tel Aviv, where he is now safely in prison – thinking what? Gaddafi and Golda Meir were for once in agreement in diagnosing him insane. They should know. And the furore in Israel over two elite paratroopers who, sensitive to the position of Arabs inside Israel, spied for Syria! These people reverse the usual illusion and make of the "enemy" country their ideal homeland. They have resisted the conditioning to which their fellows succumb. As their experience broadens, we can hope they will reach a more Socialist position – a plague on both your houses!

Back on Capri. A fellow traveller - mild-mannered and chivalrous, the perfect English gentleman - comes up:

"You're Jewish, aren't you? Is the war going well? I hope your side is winning."

"I don't. Since when do wars go well? Whoever wins, my side loses."

This reply confused him. It took him several seconds to close his mouth. This same man, in a conversation about pollution, commented within earshot of coloured fellow tourists – "On the subject of pollution, what shall we do with our coloured friends who are polluting the country?" Perhaps he was considering gas chambers. But he was very embarrassed when challenged. There's hope for Socialism yet.

Arriving back in England, the driver of the bus taking us from the airport to the terminal treated his passengers to an analysis of world affairs. Passing through a Jewish area he commented: "All these Israelis have gone to fight their war. I hope they win it soon, or we're bound to get dragged into it. And they can stay there, as far as I'm concerned." Perhaps my astonishment was the product of a sheltered life?

There is no need for me to expose the mythical and unscientific nature of

nationalist ideologies in the Middle East. The Jewish Zionists debunk the Arab Palestinian "Zionists" with excellent scholarly analysis, and vice versa. Literature available from the Al Fatah office, Zionist bodies and so on.

Until the hold of nationalist and racist poison on the minds of the world's workers is destroyed, it will not be possible to live the full and satisfying life of Socialism. Stand up for yourself as a human being and fight for the only worthwhile end - the achievement of a free humanity. And when you come to Western Europe, why not stay rather than go on to Israel? Corpses in the sand cannot, among other things, work for the Socialist revolution.

Yours,
S.

Peace in Palestine (*Socialist Standard*, October 1993)

Peace is always better than war. Because wars are never fought in the interests of ordinary people. And because in wars it is always ordinary people who suffer. So, irrespective of the issues involved or the terms agreed, Socialists can only welcome the ending of any war in any part of the world. Stop the killing is our permanent policy.

In that artificial subdivision of the old Ottoman Empire known as Palestine, those who suffered from the irrational attempt to set up a Jewish State there have been both the original population - whether of Muslim, Christian or Jewish religious background - and those who were misled by the Zionists into emigrating there. Socialists and Zionists have been opponents since the beginning. Inevitably, as they represented two incompatible views as to the solution workers of Jewish background should seek to the problem of anti-Semitism.

The Socialist attitude was expressed early on by Karl Marx, himself of course of Jewish background even though brought up a Christian. In one of his first articles after becoming a Socialist Marx argued that Jewish people should seek emancipation, not as Jews, but as human beings. To do this they should abandon their religion – just as Christians should abandon theirs – and become members of a secular human community in which money and the state should be abolished, i.e. Socialism. In the meantime, under capitalism, Jews should enjoy the same political rights, in a secular democratic state, as Christians and others.

The Zionist movement propounded the opposite view: that the Jews were a separate nation and that as such they were entitled to their own state, in Palestine. People of Jewish background should not seek emancipation as human beings, but as Jews. Neither should they seek integration within the political states in which they found themselves, but separation in a state of their own.

The battles lines were thus drawn and throughout Europe and America Socialists and Zionists vied for the support of workers of Jewish background. Socialists argued against the idea that the Jews were a nation or a race; most Jews were workers and should join with other workers to achieve socialism which would mean “the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex”. Even though many Zionists were not religious, all they had to go on to justify Palestine as the place for their Jewish State was an irrational belief, the religious myth set out in some holy book that the Jewish God had given Palestine to the Jews to be their homeland.

Many Jewish workers were convinced by the Socialist argument and rejected Zionism, and played - and still play – a considerable part in the Socialist movement. Most Jews rejected Zionism in practice – and still do – by integrating into the countries where they lived. The terrible experience of the Second World War, however, convinced many (though by no means most) European Jews to embrace the idea of a Zionist State.

In 1948 the Zionist dream was realised. Palestine was partitioned and a State of Israel established. Zionist extremists practised what is now called “ethnic cleansing” and hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish inhabitants of the Israeli part of Palestine were driven from their homes. Those who remained suffered the same fate the Zionists sought to free Jews from: being a minority in someone else’s “nation-state”. The establishment of Israel did not end anti-Semitism. In fact, it caused it to spread to where it had never existed before – to the Arab-speaking parts of the world. For centuries Jews had lived in peace and security, integrated and speaking Arabic, in these parts of the world. Now, as a direct result of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, they came to suffer the same persecution that the European Jews had. The result was that centuries of integration was undone in decades. Today there are virtually no Jews living in Arab countries: most Arab Jews are now in Israel where they form an underprivileged group.

Our opposition to Zionism does not mean that we support the PLO. Unlike some, we don’t single out Jewish nationalism for special condemnation. We condemn all nationalisms equally. The “Palestinian nation” is just as much a myth as the “Jewish nation”, or any other nation. Nationalism is the ideology which seeks to justify the capitalist division of the world into separate “nation-states”, each competing to gain a place in the sun for its ruling class and each with killing machines at its disposal. We utterly reject this view of the way humanity should organise itself.

As Socialists we re-affirm that all peoples should seek their emancipation, not as members of nations or religions or ethnic groups, but as human beings, as members of the human race. They should unite to abolish the division of the world into so-called nation-states and to establish a World Cooperative Commonwealth of which we will all be free and equal members – citizens of the world, not subjects of nation-states.

Zionism and anti-Semitism (*Socialist Standard*, January 2007)

Two dangerous ideologies that thrive on each other

It's now 110 years since Theodor Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat* (The State of the Jews) and launched the Zionist movement, nearly 60 since the state he envisaged came into being. Upset by the Dreyfus case (Dreyfus was a French Jewish army officer framed as a spy for Germany), Herzl had concluded that Jews would only be safe when they had a state of their own.

As they ran for the shelters during the war with Hezbollah, Israelis may well have wondered whether there is any country in the world where Jews are less safe. And although the Israeli government keeps emigration statistics secret, it is estimated that since 2003 more Jews have been seeking refuge by leaving Israel than by entering it. Thoughtful Israelis may also wonder how much of the anti-Semitism in the world today is generated by Israel itself through its mistreatment of Palestinians and Lebanese.

Zionists are always complaining about anti-Semitism, real or imaginary. They use such complaints especially as a gambit to de-legitimise criticism of Zionism and Israel. From the start, however, Zionist opposition to anti-Semitism has been superficial and selective, because Zionism is itself closely connected to anti-Semitism. The Zionist needs anti-Semitism like heroin addicts need their fix.

Allying with anti-Semites

Herzl realised that if his project was to succeed he had to seek support wherever it might be found. And who was more likely to back his movement than the anti-Semites? Not the most extreme anti-Semites, who wanted to exterminate the Jews, but "moderate" ones who would be content to get rid of them. And so Herzl set off for Russia to sell his idea to the tsar's minister of police, Plehve, a notorious anti-Semite widely regarded as responsible for the Kishinev pogrom of 1903.

An opportunistic alliance with another anti-Semitic ruler of Russia – Stalin – was crucial to the establishment of the state of Israel. On Stalin's instructions, Czechoslovakia provided arms and training that enabled the fledgling Zionist armed forces in Palestine to win the war of independence in 1947-48. Stalin's motive was to undermine the position of Britain in the Middle East. For some years the Israeli government continued to rely on Soviet military and diplomatic support, while keeping silent about the persecution of Soviet Jews, then at its height. (For more on this episode, see Arnold Krammer, *The Forgotten Friendship: Israel and the Soviet Bloc, 1947-53*, University of

Illinois, 1974.)

In 1953 the Israeli-Soviet alliance finally broke down. Israel switched to the other side of the Cold War, obtaining aid first from France and then from the US. Alliance with "the West" also entailed maintaining good relations with anti-Semitic regimes, notably in Latin America. Consider Argentina: a disproportionate number of Jews were among those killed, imprisoned and tortured by the military junta that ruled the country from 1976 to 1983. Given the "anti-democratic, anti-Semitic and Nazi tendencies" of the Argentine officer corps, we may assume that they were persecuted not merely as political opponents but also as Jews. Meanwhile a stream of Israeli generals passed through Buenos Aires, selling the junta arms.

(See: www.jcpa.org/jpsr/jpsr-mualem-s04.htm

www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Terrorism/Argentina_STATUS.html

also Jacobo Timerman's book *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number.*)

Ideological affinities

But it is not just a matter of Zionists and anti-Semites sometimes having strategic or business interests in common. There are ideological affinities. Zionists, like anti-Semites, are mostly racists and nationalists for whom it is abnormal that an ethnic group should live dispersed as a minority in various countries. It is therefore natural and only to be expected if the majority reacts badly to such an anomaly. There is a strong tendency in Zionism to agree that Jews have objectionable traits, which are to be overcome as they turn themselves into a normal nation by settling in Palestine "to rebuild the land and be rebuilt by it".

What if the Jews in a given country are well integrated, face no significant anti-Semitism, and show no interest in being "normalized"? Originally Zionism was conceived as a means of solving the problem of anti-Semitism. From this point of view, where the problem does not exist there is no need for the solution. However, ends and means were inverted long ago, and Zionism became an end in itself, with anti-Semitism a condition of its success. Anti-Semitism might still be regarded in principle as an evil, but as a necessary evil. Often it was also said to be a lesser evil compared with the threat of assimilation supposedly inherent in rising rates of intermarriage.

Against this background, it seems a trifle naive to ask why Israel's ruling circles don't realise that by their own actions they are generating anti-Semitism. They realise. But they make it a point not to give a damn what the world thinks of them.

There is nothing unique about the affinity between Zionism and anti-Semitism. Russian nationalism thrives on Russophobia (the denigration of Russians), Irish nationalism on anti-Irish prejudice, Islamism on hatred of Moslems, and so on. To escape the vicious circle, we must respond to ethnic persecution not by promoting "our own" brand of nationalist or religious politics, but by asserting our identity as human beings and citizens of the future world cooperative commonwealth.

Discover more about The Socialist Party of Great Britain



Or go to this link online:
<http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/info-request>

Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party advocates a society where production is freed from the artificial constraints of profit and organised for the benefit of all on the basis of material abundance. It does not have policies to ameliorate aspects of the existing social system.

The *Socialist Standard* is the combative monthly journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, published without interruption since 1904 and infuriating and exasperating political opponents in equal measure. The journal was placed on a list of publications banned for export during World War I for its call for workers not to fight for their countries, and in World War II it evaded the censor largely by producing articles on ancient wars as cover for the Party's implacable opposition to the conflict.

In the 1930s the *Socialist Standard* explained why capitalism would not collapse of its own accord, in response to widespread claims to the contrary, and continues to hold this view in face of the notion's recent popularity. Beveridge's welfare measures of the 1940s were viewed as a reorganisation of poverty and a necessary 'expense' of production, and Keynesian policies designed to overcome slumps an illusion. Today, the journal exposes as false the view that banks create money out of thin air, and explains why actions to prevent the depredation of the natural world can have limited effect and run counter to the nature of capitalism itself.

Gradualist reformers like the Labour Party believed that capitalism could be transformed through a series of social measures, but have merely become routine managers of the system. The Bolsheviks had to be content with developing Russian capitalism under a one-party dictatorship. Both failures have given socialism a quite different -- and unattractive -- meaning: state ownership and control. As the *Socialist Standard* pointed out before both courses were followed, the results would more properly be called state capitalism.

The Socialist Party is not a left-wing organisation nor its journal a left-wing journal. 'Left-wing' has simply become an umbrella designation for parties and organisations demanding modifications to how we now live. The Party and the World Socialist Movement affirm that capitalism is incapable of meaningful change in the interests of the majority; that the basis of exploitation is the wages/money system. The *Socialist Standard* is proud to have kept alive the original idea of what socialism is -- a classless, stateless, wageless, moneyless society or, defined positively, a democracy in which free and equal men and women co-operate to produce the things they need to live and enjoy life, to which they have free access in accordance with the principle 'from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs'.

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This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

£2

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