

JEWISH SOCIALIST

— The magazine of the Jewish Socialists' Group —

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Special 5th anniversary issue!

Towards a new South Africa — detainees speak out



Revolution in Eastern Europe:
what future for Jews
and socialism?

Racism in Germany East and West

Community security scandal

5th anniversary quiz!

While flowers bloom and schools of thought contend in Eastern and Central Europe, and the first shoots of freedom struggle through the hard baked earth of apartheid, the Chief Rabbis of Romania and South Africa are desperately trying to work out who they should pay homage to now. For years these official Jewish leaderships have collaborated with murderous dictatorships, supposedly to protect the interests of their communities, even if that meant abandoning others to a dreadful fate.

Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen of Romania says now, as he tries to wriggle out of his friendship with Ceaucescu: "Everything I obtained was for the Jews of Romania, not for Ceaucescu... If I could have shaken hands with Hitler, I'd have been happy to do this to save 100,000 Jews."

Meanwhile, in Cape Town, a Jewish educationalist said after Mandela's release: "With regard to the situation of the Jews, their wellbeing is bound up with that of the whites in general." There are some South African Jews, though, who consider that there might be a threat to Jews from the white Afrikaner neo-Nazis.

These are not the only Jewish "leaders", either currently or historically, to assume that their interests lie with whoever is in power, however antidemocratic their politics. Recently we have had the spectacle of the Board of Deputies of British Jews fawning over Margaret Thatcher at a celebratory dinner costing £50 a head and, in stark contrast to glasnost, our own Community Security Organisation has adopted a policy of excluding people from communal events because of their political views. While, for the first time in decades, questions are being asked – and answered – in Russia, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, our own community officials refuse to comment or explain their actions on the grounds of "security". And now Thatcher's on the way out, our communal leaders are also going to be left floundering in the face of change, still loyal to a right wing party that never has and never could serve the interests of minority communities, and viewed with understandable suspicion by the left.

Chief Rabbi Rosen's increasingly desperate protestations

are a stark expression of this dilemma as he faces the justifiable anger with collaborators of ordinary Romanians, Jewish and non-Jewish. And Jewish leaders justify their failure to speak out against human and civil rights abuses in South Africa, by pointing to the friendship between the ANC and the PLO. There is no need to make crass parallels between the situations of the disenfranchised Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and the black South Africans to explain this relationship. It is enough to see the mutually profitable military and economic ties between South Africa and an Israel which has always been more willing to serve reactionary, racist and even antisemitic governments than the diaspora Jewish communities which are at their mercy.

Moses Rosen's statement is appalling in its cynicism. The Chief Rabbi of Romania cannot claim to be ignorant of the whole spectrum of collusion and collaboration that went on between victims and Nazis. The agonising question, "What would I have done?", wracks any thinking Jew today, not because collaboration would have saved Jews but because we now know that it didn't. Indeed, it enabled the Nazi genocide to progress more efficiently.

If there is one lesson in the experience of Jewish communities under all these tyrannies – Nazism, Stalinism and apartheid – it is that the interests of Jews, like the interests of anyone else, are best served by fighting for freedom, equality and democracy, not by selling your communal soul (and in some cases members of your community) to whichever devil happens to be in charge. When will they ever learn?

With this issue Jewish Socialist celebrates its 5th birthday. We would like to say a big "thank you" to all who have written for us; to Nancy White, our typesetter; to Aldgate Press, our printers; to individuals who have made generous donations; to our supporting subscribers; and finally to all our readers who make the whole enterprise worthwhile. We look forward to your continued support in the next five years!

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Cover photo: Defiant women during a funeral procession. IDAF

Community securitate

Security guards at a recent Israeli film festival organised by the Spiro Institute for the Study of Jewish History excluded several people from the cinema, mostly members of the Jewish Socialists' Group (JSG). On the first day of the week-long festival, Frank Fisher of the JSG was pulled out of the queue and told he would not be allowed in. The security guards, who were supplied by the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD), refused to give any reasons.

Robin and Nitza Spiro, the festival's organisers, were so upset that they offered to escort Frank into the cinema the following weekend. A few days later, though, they changed their mind when the Community Security Organisation (CSO) threatened to withdraw cover from the festival altogether if the Spiros insisted on Frank going in.

But all this diplomatic

manoeuvring, along with Frank's classification as a "security risk", went above the heads of the new boys who were on duty the following weekend. Frank walked straight into the film on the last morning of the festival, while two other JSG members were kept out, along with Pauline Lewis, chair of British Friends of Peace Now (BFPN) and an executive member of Mapam, both Zionist organisations, one with representation on the BoD. Pauline had been seen buying a ticket from a JSG member. When Nitza Spiro protested about Pauline's treatment, she was again overruled by the CSO men who claimed they had the authority of her husband, Robin, though they did not seem to be aware that he was in hospital at the time.

The festival ended with a symposium chaired by Guardian film critic Derek Malcolm. Frank, once again

a "security risk", was barred, along with JSG members Michael Safier and Charlie Pottins. The CSO even tried to exclude Derek Malcolm himself until someone pointed out who he was. Inside the symposium, author and film maker Simon Louvish raised a question about the CSO's harassment of the public, and Derek Malcolm condemned the CSO's actions from the chair. Nitza Spiro apologised on behalf of the Institute.

The story was picked up by the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Hampstead & Highgate Express*. No one from the BoD would make any comment apart from senior vice chairman Eric Moonman, who denied that there was any policy to exclude the JSG but said it was the job of the CSO to keep apart "people who have lost relatives in the Holocaust" and "people with a political view". He aggressively refused to talk to *Jewish Socialist* on the grounds that JSG national secretary David Rosenberg had written to the *Ham & High* criticising Moonman's "abuse of the memory of Hitler's victims in order to justify authoritarian and anti-democratic practices today", and pointing out that many Jewish Socialists themselves lost relatives and spent the War years fighting Nazism.

Several of the "refuseniks" wrote to the BoD asking specific questions and calling for an investigation; a public apology; guidelines as to the limits and accountability of the CSO and its relationship with the organisers of events; an assurance that people will be excluded only if they are a threat to safety and not for their political views; and a system of appeal against unjust and damaging treatment. They asked for explanations of the allegations that were made to third parties, if not to themselves, that they constituted a security risk.

The answers were offensively brief, including one apology, to Pauline Lewis, which said: "I have now had the opportunity to look into the matter and it would

appear that in your case a mistake was made for which we sincerely apologise. You will certainly realise the importance of tight security in the light of anti-Jewish incidents and threats." Apart from the clear suggestion that the other victims of the CSO were likely to create "anti-Jewish incidents and threats", we have reliable information that "looking into the matter" simply meant asking another leading, though more right wing, member of BFPN whether Pauline was, or had ever been, a member of the Jewish Socialists' Group!

So was Eric Moonman telling the truth when he denied that the Board had any policy to exclude the JSG? Despite widespread concern about the behaviour of the CSO, the BoD has refused to answer any of the questions it has been asked. Hayim Pinner, BoD general secretary, would not go beyond the chilling and, under the circumstances, absurd comment: "Security is an overriding consideration which is done quietly and efficiently."

Professor Geoffrey Alderman, a Deputy himself, whose integrity has made him a longstanding thorn in the side of the Board, has taken up the issue and has put it in the hands of the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL). He too wrote to Dr Lionel Kopelowitz, president of the Board, asking the following questions:

1 Does the community security organisation or group operate under the authority or aegis of the Board of Deputies of British Jews?
2 Is it the policy of the Board or any of its committees to regard membership or support for certain Jewish organisations as *prima facie* evidence of a threat to communal security?
3 If so, what are the organisations and wherein lies the threat?

4 Does the Board or any of its committees maintain in any form a list of Jewish persons living in the UK whom it regards as a threat to communal security or to



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the safety or standing of the community?

5 If so, could you please provide me with a copy of the list?

6 If such a list exists, how is it possible for those on it to verify that the information accumulated about them is true?

7 By what means are the activities of the CSO, to the best of your knowledge, funded?

8 If the CSO does not operate under the aegis, auspices or authority of the Board, under whose aegis, auspices or authority does it, to the best of your knowledge operate?

Dr Kopelowitz replied that he could not answer the questions at the moment because, since Professor Alderman had referred the matter to NCCL, it was, in effect, sub judice. It is not sub judice. Dr Kopelowitz, the leading representative of Britain's Jews, is either ignorant or lying.

Now people in the mainstream of the community are starting to wonder who, if anyone, controls the boys with the walkie talkies. But for many of us on the left of the community this is one of a series of actions carried out by people who cannot be named, who cannot tell who authorises or finances them and who cannot reveal the criteria for their decisions on the grounds of "security".

We have reported in previous issues of *Jewish Socialist* about people being excluded from communal events such as a Holocaust memorial event in Hyde Park and a meeting called by the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on War Crimes where the CSO was in charge of security. Jews and non-Jews were stopped at the door of the Heart of Israel exhibition in north London explicitly on the basis of a list being referred to by the security guards. Even more sinister have been the silent

phone calls in the early hours of the morning with which JSG members have been afflicted around certain events the group has organised with Israel in the title, such as when Mordechai Vanunu's brother spoke to a meeting, when the JSG arranged a meeting with a joint Jewish-PLO platform and, most recently, when the group went to the press about the CSO's activity, although before anything was published.

The only pro-CSO statement the press could extract was from one Manny Davidson, whom the *Jewish Chronicle* named as chair of the Spiro Institute. In direct contradiction to Nitza Spiro's statement at the film festival, he expressed "deep regret" that "you and your team walked away feeling that you have been slapped in the face instead of receiving the heartfelt thanks which, of course, you well deserved". Nitza Spiro would

not clarify this contradiction between her own and her chairman's comments, but used the same diplomatic form of words as her newly-appointed director, Barry Shenker, saying: "If people were excluded on political grounds and not because they were a security risk, which we have no way of knowing, then it is against everything we stand for."

Many JSG members have been active and creative participants in Spiro initiatives in a number of capacities, but the Institute is obviously prepared to sacrifice their contributions in the face of the protection racket being operated by the community establishment. What a pity that an organisation which has taught Modern Jewish History so effectively to so many has failed to learn that Jewish establishments do not always operate in the best interests of their community.

JULIA BARD

Yakar's shame, anti-racists' gain

Jewish anti-racists reacted forcefully against plans by a north London Jewish educational centre to provide public platforms for Enoch Powell and Ray Killen, the South African ambassador, early this year. The Yakar centre in Hendon has established a good reputation as an open and progressive forum. It has held seminars on Jewish-Black relations (see JS12) and panels on South Africa addressed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Archbishop Trevor Huddleston.

The meetings were first announced in a *Jewish Chronicle* advert in November 1989 under the heading of Yakar's "Cultural programme". Powell was invited to speak on Ireland. Anti-racists immediately sent a letter to Yakar's principal, Rabbi Mickey Rosen, urging him to cancel the invitation on the grounds of Powell's repeated demands from 1968 to the present day for an end to black immigration and a start to repatriation, positions which could not be separated from his views on Ireland. Pointing out that Powell had not been offered a Jewish public platform since 1968, the letter explained that there were many speakers who could lead a discussion on Ireland from various viewpoints who had not been widely condemned for inflaming racism. The anti-racists argued further that the meeting would inevitably undermine Yakar's previously positive work on Jewish-Black relations.

When Rabbi Rosen did not bother to reply, a further letter was sent with more than 30 signatures, including local councillors, members of the Jewish Socialists' Group and Mapam, a former president of the Union of Jewish Students, and a member of the Defence Committee of the Board of Deputies. Still no response from Rabbi Rosen.

He finally broke his silence when the issue became public through the press. In what appeared to be a departure from the rabbinical tradition of learning, Rabbi Rosen dismissed the protest as a "load of codswallop" and the protesters as "extremists" who were unacquainted with "the English tradition of free speech" (is he calling us aliens... or rootless cosmopolitans?). Meanwhile, Ronnie Landau, who was to chair the meeting, was busy defending Powell's reputation as a classical scholar. No doubt Powell can say "Send 'em back" in classical

Greek!

Two days before the meeting a further letter of protest was handed to Rabbi Rosen by representatives of Barnet Community Relations Council, to which Yakar is affiliated.

On the night, despite heavy-handed policing, a forceful protest was held outside with banners representing the JSG, Mapam and Islington Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Action. Every one attending the meeting was handed a JSG leaflet which detailed Powell's statements over the years and explained why it was an outrage that he should be invited to speak on Jewish premises. Protesters held placards declaring "If Powell called for Jews to be repatriated would Yakar invite him?", "Remember Yakar, we were immigrants too", "Jews know what 'orderly repatriation' means", and many other slogans.

After the meeting started a small group from the picket evaded the police and

slipped round the back of the building to chant slogans that were audible inside. Rabbi Rosen came hurtling out to urge the forces of law and order to apprehend the miscreants (wrongly identified as JSG members in a subsequent *Jewish Chronicle* report) who were disrupting his revered guest.

We understand that Rabbi Rosen was far from happy about the prospect of Yakar being the focus of another public anti-racist protest. Combined with the impact of a wave of protest letters from previous guests at Yakar, including Archbishop Tutu and Archbishop Huddleston, Rabbi Rosen eventually "postponed" the second controversial meeting.

If not for the determined efforts of Jewish anti-racists and their allies, on the very

night of 11 February, when the world was rejoicing in the release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison, a prominent Jewish educational centre in north London would have been playing host to a representative of the apartheid regime which imprisoned Mandela and which continues brutally to deny the human and civil rights of the majority of people in South Africa.

One final word of comfort for Rabbi Rosen. A press release arrived applauding Yakar for "inviting Enoch Powell and the South African Ambassador to address them and not caving in to pressure from the left-wing Jewish Socialists' Group". True standard bearers of "the English tradition of free speech"? Not quite. It was from the North London National Front!

Smear campaign or Shamir campaign?

Dirty tricks and disinformation have been in the news recently, and some people who claim to be waging Israel's "war against terrorism" here in the diaspora have not been too fastidious to use dirty propaganda. Consider a recent issue of *Action Briefing* published by the once-respected Association of Jewish Ex-servicemen and women (AJEX).

Last summer, Israeli Trade Minister Ariel Sharon came to Britain and, during his visit, he spoke to an audience at a Park Lane hotel. Various groups, including the JSG, under the umbrella of the Joint Committee on Palestine (JCP), held a picket outside the hotel to remind people of Sharon's bloody record in Lebanon, and to oppose his chauvinist policies today.

Three strange men turned up to the picket, one of them carrying a placard showing a Star of David flag and Nazi swastika flag, with an equals sign between the words "What's the difference". They were immediately told that this was wrong as well as offensive, and that they would not be allowed to spoil the picket. They objected; and one of them made anti-Jewish remarks and they were quickly turfed off the demo, to the disappointment of a photographer who had stationed himself across the road and who asked the young man to pose for him there instead. Then, lo and behold, the man's photo appeared in *Action Briefing* where he was described as a "Moslem fundamentalist demonstrator at the JCP picket against Sharon". But where's the rest of the picket? Not even in the background.

Mazeltov Mandela

Jews Against Apartheid welcomes the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years and supports wholeheartedly his statement on the situation in South Africa.

We also welcome the unbanning of the African National Congress, Pan African Congress and South African Communist Party and the statement that their members are at least to be released. We are glad that severe restrictions are being lifted from 33 democratic organisations and that the death penalty has been suspended.

These are signs of hope that the pressure being built up by the people's struggle in South Africa will eventually lead to the ending of apartheid.

We are concerned that the state of emergency still exists and that no mention has been made of the Internal Security

Act, which allows for indefinite detention without trial and the proscription of political activity. The edifice of apartheid is still in place. The Group Areas Act and the Land Act have not been repealed. People in South Africa are still classified according to the colour of their skin. We look forward to the moment when all laws to restrict political activity are repealed. Only then will all the people of South Africa be able to talk and negotiate the ending of apartheid.

At this momentous time for the future of South Africa, Britain must keep up pressure through economic, diplomatic and other means. We fully support Nelson Mandela's statement that "to lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process towards the complete eradication of apartheid".

Action Briefing wants its readers to believe that the JSG, the Joint Committee, the PLO, all sorts of left-wing groups (including some we've never heard of) and "Muslim fundamentalists" are all in it together, equating Israel with Nazi Germany and approving "terrorist" violence.

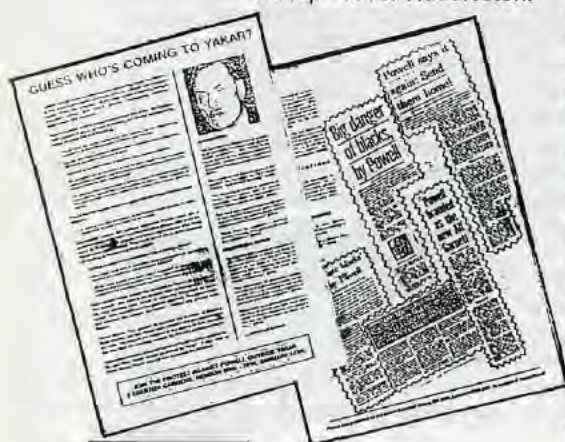
Elsewhere in *Action Briefing* we are told: "The Jewish community has itself become a particular target for the anti-Israel offensive; with groups like PSC [Palestine Solidarity Campaign] and JSG hoping to divide Britain's Jews in order to weaken support for Israel."

The fact that Israel itself is already sharply divided over the Intifada and PLO peace proposals, with people like Ezer Weizman MK, ex-Intelligence chief Yehoshofat Harkabi and Rabbi Abu Hatzeira all joining the call for peace talks, is ignored. So are the arguments going on in our Jewish community, from the Board of Deputies Foreign Affairs Committee (whose chair, June Jacobs, met PLO representatives) through to ordinary Jewish families.

Maybe *Action Briefing's* researchers were too busy rooting around for conspiracies to notice. For *Briefing*, if half a dozen JSG members, who are also ex-members of the youth movement Hahonim, attend a reunion, this is written up as "JSG took its anti-Israel campaign into the heart of the community..."

It's ridiculous, but it's also sad. For many years, AJEX enjoyed popular affection and respect. You didn't have to be a wealthy donor or a learned rabbit to march (or watch) with pride at Remembrance Day parades, to volunteer to help in hospitals or to guard synagogues. Many members of the JSG are children of AJEX parents; some are AJEX members themselves.

Although AJEX has long been changing, only a few



years ago, when I spoke at a tribute in Manchester to one of the JSG's founder members, Joe Garman, I was followed to the rostrum by the representative of the local AJEX branch of which Joe had been an active and well-loved member.

Action Briefing originates from the days when Jewish ex-servicemen and women actively confronted antisemitism, and it used to contain information on racist and fascist activity. Now its anonymous format and AJEX's good name are being abused as a cover from which to smear opponents of Israeli policy, not least within the Jewish community.

When we first found ourselves listed among supposed "threats to the Jewish community" (along with, among others, the Bir Zeit folk-dance ensemble), the JSG approached AJEX for a meeting. They didn't want to know. The recent *Action Briefing* mentions the JSG

several times and quotes all kinds of people with whom it wants to associate us, but it *never once* manages to quote from any JSG statement of publication – to tell its readers what the JSG says. That's political cowardice. The editor of *Action Briefing* remains anonymous but provides a phone number – not at the AJEX headquarters but at the Board of Deputies.

We're sure many AJEX members, including some who disagree with the JSG, will be concerned that AJEX's name is being used in this way and will ask questions about it.

CHARLIE POTTINS

The Jewish Socialists' Group has published a detailed exposé of the latest AJEX Action Briefing. If you would like a copy, please send 50p and an sae (A4) to Jewish Socialist, BM3725, London WC1N 3XX.

Police against peace

The unprecedented co-operation between Israeli, Palestinian and European peace forces in the "Time for Peace" events in Jerusalem at the end of December was met with vicious state violence and repression. In east Jerusalem, where most of the Palestinians had gathered, police and border guards used teargas, water cannon and rubber bullets against non-violent protesters taking part in a 30,000-strong human peace chain around the walls of the old city. Around 50 people were arrested and a similar number injured, including an Italian tourist who

lost an eye.

The protesters were united around the slogans "End the occupation", "Two states for two peoples" and "Peace negotiations with the PLO now". Prominent local Palestinian leader Faisal Hussein commented, "The demonstration was successful and that's why the authorities were nervous and attacked it."

The Israeli Peace Now movement demanded an independent investigation into the behaviour of the police and border guards. They accused senior government officials of planning and directing the use

of excessive force in order to show that a joint Israeli/Palestinian demonstration was dangerous and impossible. Senior Likud ministers claimed that the demonstration had been organised in conjunction with the PLO and called for Peace Now's leaders to be brought to trial.

The "Time for Peace" events grew out of an independent initiative taken by groups at the NGO's conference on Palestine in September 1989. It was then co-ordinated by three Italian organisations: a peace group, a cultural group and a Christian Workers' Association. The

events they planned were attended by 1,300 Europeans and 150 activists from the USA. In addition to the human peace chain, there was a "Women go for Peace" conference, and delegations to towns and villages in the occupied territories, including hospital visits, meetings with representative of agricultural and medical relief committees and with Israeli peace groups. We were prevented by the army from visiting refugee camps or had to accept an army "escort", making it impossible to meet with local activists.

MICHAEL FEINBERG

"Women and Peace", the umbrella organisation of Israeli women's peace groups, yesterday achieved its greatest victory so far. In the context of a three-day-long set of cooperative actions between a large European peace delegation and Israelis and Palestinians, "Women and Peace" coordinated the first day's activities.

The morning opened with a conference under the banner "Women go for peace". Although there was seating for 700, more than double that number arrived. The first panel discussion featured Italian, North American and local women peace activists, including Jewish Israelis and Palestinians from both sides of the "green line". The assembly was later

addressed by women representing a wide range of political ideologies – feminist, religious, left-wing and establishment women – all united in their opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and calling for negotiations with the PLO towards a two-state solution.

At one o'clock the conference participants met hundreds of other women for a united "Women in Black" vigil, combining the forces of the 24 separate vigils held weekly around the country with the strength of our European visitors. We were close to 2,000 women, all dressed in black, ranged around a central Jerusalem square.

Following this powerful vigil, we set out for our

historic march from Israeli West Jerusalem to Palestinian East Jerusalem. Picking up women all along the way, we were met by a massive contingent of Palestinian participants from around the territories as we entered East Jerusalem. By the time we arrived at the Palestinian El Hakawati Theatre, we were 7,000 women strong. The police were forced for the first time in anyone's memory to shut down major Jerusalem thoroughfares because of a demonstration. As we proceeded through East Jerusalem, women and men came out in hundreds to accompany and encourage us. It was an unparalleled display of unity.

The only dismaying

moments came when we arrived at the theatre, where a large demonstration of Palestinian supporters awaited and greeted us. Using the excuse that a Palestinian flag had been unfurled, the security forces employed teargas and force to arrest 16 people, including Palestinian, Israeli and Italian participants. Even this contemptible outbreak on the part of the police and army could not dull the feeling we all shared of having managed, beyond our wildest expectations, to demonstrate that Palestinian and Israeli women, with firm support from the international community, are "going for peace".

Spike Pittsberg

Solidarity with the Bund

Two years ago on the 45th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising we reported on the alternative ceremony organised by Bundist and Solidarnosc activist Marek Edelman. Together with other Solidarnosc activists, Edelman, who was second in command of the uprising, unveiled a memorial stone in Warsaw's Jewish cemetery for the pre-War Bundist leaders, Alter and Erlich, who were murdered by Stalin. Solidarnosc also produced an Erlich-Alter commemorative stamp.

Jewish Socialist has

received a small supply of these stamps to distribute in order to raise funds for the upkeep of this memorial stone. We will send all donations we receive for them direct to Marek Edelman for this purpose.

If you would like a stamp, please send your donation (recommended minimum £5), payable to "Jewish Socialist", to us at Jewish Socialist, BM 3725, London WC1N 3XX. Any money received beyond our stamp supply will be added to the donations unless you specify that it should be returned.



Bon anniversaire UPJB

The Union of Progressive Jews of Belgium (UPJB) has celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The Union can trace its beginning back to *Solidarité Juive*, which worked among immigrant Jews in Belgium to help Jews in countries where they were oppressed. Later, when Belgium was under Nazi occupation, members fought alongside other partisans resisting the occupation. After the War, they organised summer camps for the orphaned children of those who had been deported.

UPJB has a proud record of opposition to all forms of racism and

fascism and is in favour of a just solution to the Middle East conflict which respects the national rights of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. They organise a wide programme of activities of interest to Jews and socialists.

The fiftieth anniversary was marked by an exhibition recalling the history of UPJB and the publication of a book by one of their members. There was also a series of events, including a concert where members of all generations came together to exchange memories and pay homage to those no longer with them.

Let my people in

The world co-ordinating committee of the Bund has called a new American law closing the doors of the United States to Soviet Jews a "scandal" and a "stigma".

Up to last October, Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union went to Italy where they could choose which country they wanted to settle in. Up to 90 per cent chose the United States and only 10 per cent Israel. Now, following pressure from the Israeli government and Zionists in the diaspora, the United States government has abolished the "refugee law" that enabled them to settle in the States. Forcing Soviet Jews to go to Israel against their will, they say, "is a historic stigma, which can only harm the interests of the entire Jewish people,

as well as the interests of Israel".

They call for a return to the situation where Soviet Jews who are emigrating can choose where they want to go, and for the doors of America to be reopened. The Bund also calls for Jewish organisations in the diaspora to help in the development of Jewish national and cultural life in the Soviet Union.

"The spontaneous rebirth of Jewish cultural institutions across the length and breadth of the Soviet Union, even though many of them may not yet have official recognition, is the sign of a new beginning," they say. "Secular Jewish organisations in the western world should support this by all possible means."

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Dutch, French and Indian Trotskyism during the Second World War

'Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it'

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

• Volume 1. Back issues: No 2 (Bumper issue on the Spanish Civil War), No 3 (War and Revolution in Europe 1939-45), and No 4 (Dutch, French and Indian Trotskyism in the Second World War).

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DYBBUK'S DIARY

HOLOCAUST NEWS

"Vast areas of our inner cities have been colonised by alien peoples," claims Northampton MP Tony Marlow, warning of "the Holocaust which could follow" if Hong Kong Chinese are allowed in.

Those spokespeople for the Jewish community who normally leap in to denounce anyone they deem has misused the Holocaust as a metaphor seem to have kept quiet over this use of it as a threat. Strange, considering Marlow is no friend. He likes to be thought of as a friend of the Palestinians but, knowing his reputation and distrusting his motives, they try to avoid him.

Are people showing deference just because Marlow is a Tory, or is it because Norman Tebbit came in just after him, talking about the "British people having a

multiracial society foisted upon them", and they feel daunted by the Chingford skinhead?

IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM...

This is a nice story for a change. I recorded some time ago, as a sign of the times, that when the tutor of a Jewish adult education class asked how many of his students were Zionists only one hand went up. It was that of a lady from the Israeli embassy.

Well, there's a sequel. A friend, who was in Jerusalem for the big women's peace march that was so savagely attacked by the police, met her among the marchers. It was while she was working in the Israeli embassy's information office that she started to realise the Palestinians had a case, she explained. My friend thought you ought to know.

Not just an Austrian Cockney but also a *Jewish Socialist*. Remembering Martha Lang with affection on the fifth anniversary of *Jewish Socialist* magazine. Karen Merkel.

Congratulations on the fifth anniversary of your magazine. May it go from strength to strength. Irene and Alvin Rosenberg.

Congratulations to *Jewish Socialist* on its 5th anniversary, from Sue, Bill, Mark, Tim, Clara and Annie (Stirling).

Mazel tov to *Jewish Socialist* and greetings to all our JSG comrades from Clive and Eve.

Deborah Cohen and Neil Nerva wish *Jewish Socialist* mazel tov on its fifth birthday. Glasnost and perestroika will come to the Jewish community yet.

Ruth Lukom would like to thank the rest of the Editorial Committee for five years of their filthy, depraved, sick sense of humour. Politics can be fun!

Congratulations to *Jewish Socialist* on its 5th anniversary from Diana and Chaim Neslen

ALTERNATIVE FIRST AID - A SHORT COURSE IN EVERYDAY THERAPY

Longstanding qualified alternative practitioner is running a series of workshops in acupressure, massage and other techniques for everyday therapy, making a short course covering effective ways of dealing with headaches, stiff necks, nausea, etc. Next workshop, Sunday 29 April, Willesden Green Library Centre. Ring (01) 961 4736 for further information. Special low fees for early booking.

Liberation Judaism

Beit Klal Yisrael is a new congregation with a particular concern for people who may not think of themselves as formally religious and who feel that conventional synagogues neither address the questions that are important to them nor recognise their legitimate needs as Jews.

Rabbi Sheila Shulman, who was recently ordained at Leo Baeck College, wants this congregation to be inclusive of a range of people who feel alienated from many Jewish institutions. They particularly welcome lesbian and gay Jews; Jewish women and men whose partners, though not Jewish, want to support and participate as "Friends of the Congregation"; Jewish

women who want to work out an independent and challenging relationship to Judaism and being Jewish; and Jews who are on their own and would feel more comfortable in a congregation that did not aspire to be a sort of Noah's Ark.

"Beit Klal Yisrael is a congregation in which no one who comes has to leave any of her- or himself outside in order to participate," is how they describe themselves. They expect to offer regular services, festival celebrations, lifecycle markings and burial rites to members. They will also offer adult education: "a programme of Jewish learning as exciting, diverse and challenging as we can make

it"; courses for proselytes and a religion school when there are enough children.

The group setting up the new congregation says: "We are at least as concerned with the spiritual continuity of Judaism as with its biological continuity. We wish to encourage a rich Jewish cultural life and to have an ongoing programme of activities which reflects the full range of Jewish creativity."

This is a welcome move and a rare attempt to include many Jews who feel driven out of Jewish life. And it's a far cry from the incessant hand wringing about the rate of intermarriage - code for Jews being "lost" - which comes from the mainstream of the community.

There will be a benefit for the new congregation on 31 March, including a talk by Rabbi Sheila Shulman and dancing to the klezmerband, Royte Klezmores. The benefit starts at 7.30pm at Swiss Cottage Community Centre, 19 Winchester Road, London NW3 3NR. (Swiss Cottage tube; buses 13, 31, 46, C11, 82, 113, 268.)

For further information write, enclosing £3 to cover printing and postage (plus a bit extra for a donation, if you wish), to North Kensington Reform Synagogue, Beit Klal Yisrael, c/o RSGB, The Manor House, Sternberg Centre for Judaism, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY.

Under the shadow of the Berlin Wall, West Germany's Turkish workers, Third World refugees and Jews suffered various degrees of hostility and aggression. Bringing down the Wall has cast new light on racist activity and on the enforcement of racist laws, says Elfi Pallis

In front of the entrance to one of Berlin's main underground stations at the Wittenbergplatz a tall memorial lists the Nazi concentration camps under the heading: "Places of horror we shall never forget". Just across the road, East Germans dressed in faded denims cheerfully queue for their welcome money from the West German government, patently oblivious to the sign. It is hard to blame them given that most were born decades after the terrible events. Clutching their handful of deutschmarks, they rush off to buy satsumas, for them the symbol of today's Germany.

Berlin's Jews, of course, find the past less easy to dismiss. Many are elderly concentration camp survivors of Polish origin. Cared for by UNWRA near the city following their liberation from Auschwitz, they often stayed simply because they could not face another strange place or language. Despite a physically comfortable existence and excellent community facilities, they, their children and even their grandchildren retain a refugee mentality. Any kind of political change deeply worries them.

"The opening of the wall has created instability and a pressure on resources. We do worry that this might engender greater hostility to us," an administrator for one of the city's Jewish cultural organisations says carefully. Like other Jews, she is not keen to be named. Some speculate privately that the choice of 9 November, the anniversary of Kristallnacht, for the opening of the wall was a deliberate German plot to write over an embarrassing epoch in German history. But they will not say so openly.

While the Jews worry about future hostility, however, the city's Turkish workers and Third World refugees have to contend with aggression right now. A walk through Neukölln, one of West Berlin's poorer working class districts, reveals a variety of anti-black slogans daubed on homes and shops. The district's left-wing municipality, twinned with Hammersmith, paints them over each time they are daubed, but new ones keep appearing. In recent years, well before the opening of the wall, brutal attacks have been carried out against Turks living in the town. In two cases, young immigrant children were injured on their way to school.

Since Germany started to go through a recession which, by British standards is very mild, the "Ausländer", as they are collectively known, cannot do anything right. If they have jobs, as do most

GERMANY

Shades of the Past

Turks, they are accused of depriving Germans of employment. If they are asylum seekers from a danger zone such as Lebanon or Kurdistan, a category of people allowed to stay in Germany (unlike Britain) but forbidden to work, the popular press condemns them as parasites.

A visit to Berlin's Arbeiterwohlfahrt, a clutch of bare rooms in a rundown neighbourhood serving as an advice centre, offers a glimpse of the desperate situations that have brought these people to Germany and kept them there. Caught in a web of bureaucracy, Kurds tortured in Iraq, and Palestinians fleeing Lebanon are helped by the centre's officials to fill in the endless forms that might enable them to settle freely in Germany and, most importantly, bring their families.

It is an almost impossible task. One Palestinian man whom centre staff are trying to assist had lost four of his children during Israel's shelling of their Lebanese refugee camp. He wants to bring over the surviving three and their mother, still living in the ruins of their home and threatened by inter-Arab fighting, but has been refused asylum as he cannot prove that he is being *individually* persecuted.

The officials blocking his application are, in the opinion of the centre's director, Yvonne Bearne, not usually racists but simply people carrying out a government policy enjoying widespread public support. Three-quarters of Germans, according to one opinion poll, feel that their country contains too many foreigners.

The fact that the Republikaner party (REP) has found it so easy to enter German political life just by openly expressing this view indicates the depth of that feeling. Until the REP's founding in 1983, ultra-nationalism had been the prerogative of three small parties linked to newspapers whose readers coveted the memoirs of Luftwaffe pilots or the videos of early 1940s feature films advertised on their pages.

The new party, a break-away from the Christian Democrats, chose to woo young voters. REP leaders told school leavers and workers unable to get jobs that their plight was caused by "criminal foreigners" and "phony asylum seekers". Turks were animals that had to be expelled, said the local party officials, fresh-faced, trendy young men judging from the party posters displayed on Berlin's hoardings.

"Germany is not an immigration country..."

Foreigners are guests, which precludes the granting of steady jobs, benefits, permanent stay, family unification or public services to them," thundered REP publications. Put forward just as government cuts in apprenticeship schemes, housing and benefits were beginning to bite, the ideas fell on fertile ground.



Alternative Liste demonstrators

In January 1989 the REP celebrated its first regional achievement: it won 7.5% of seats in Berlin's ruling senate with 91,000 votes. Party officials declared that they could now expect to enter Germany's parliament in the December 1990 national elections.

The influx of nearly 800,000 East Germans and Russo-Polish ethnic Germans since the beginning of 1989 has further increased the popularity of the argument that "room is now needed for the Germans".

The REP's success has, however, not just been due to being in the right place at the right time. It also derives from its appeal to a mix of fashionable and traditionalist sentiments, particularly prevalent in Berlin. The demand to expel Germany's foreigners, for example, is justified in ecological terms. Voters are warned that: "The fact that our extremely densely populated homeland is being invaded by foreign masses might one day make environmental problems insoluble. The main problem in the destruction of the environment is the overpopulation of our living space."

At the same time, the party presents itself as the champion of old-fashioned family life, advocating a higher German birth rate, the banning of abortion and an education programme for girls that will focus on motherhood.

The contradiction is embodied by REP leader Frank Schönhuber. An executive of Bavarian television for 10 years before turning full-time politician, he is also the author of a book called *I was there*, which glorifies the exploits of his former army unit, the Waffen SS. He insists that Germany cannot alone be blamed for the Second World War. "The victorious powers' war propaganda went

into our history books," complains the REP programme, "and our youngsters are made to believe their exaggerations and falsifications."

Towards Jews, Schönhuber is cautiously hostile. Prone to dismissing any criticism of his party as "Jewish allegations", he says he does not have to like Jewish community leaders, but is not antisemitic. "Antisemitism", he states, "led to our greatest national disaster," but philosemitism, with its ongoing compensation payments and regard for Jewish feelings, is said to breed only hatred. Mistakes were made, he admits, but "Germans have given the world far more than Auschwitz can ever wreck".

Berlin's Jewish federation leader, Heinz Galinski, one of the few vocal figures in an otherwise shadowy community, has been repeatedly singled out for personal abuse by Schönhuber. "Mr Galinski, I am not against Jews," the REP leader declared at this January's party conference, "but you must stop libelling German patriots." It is this type of argument that has gained the REP the nickname of the "Yes...but" party.

A visit to Berlin's senate, a smooth modernist building sharply contrasting with the ornate pomp of the long-defunct Reichstag, nevertheless reveals quite how far Berlin is still from sharing REP views. Power there is held by a coalition between Social Democrats and the greenish Alternative Liste, both of which are committed to antiracism.

The AL, moreover, is actively campaigning for a more humane German policy towards foreigners and strives to raise public consciousness about Third World refugees' problems. Among other issues, it publicises the bureaucratic rules that prevent them from working and the dangers they face in their home countries. According to party leader Heide Bischoff-Pflanz, such efforts actually helped AL to get elected with 11% of Berlin's votes, to the REP's 7.5%.

The AL emphasises not only that Germany has, contrary to popular belief, much the same proportion of foreigners as its large European neighbours, but also that refugee numbers must be put in a historic context. "After 40 years of asylum law," says Bischoff-Pflanz, "we have recognised fewer asylum seekers than left Germany in 12 years of Nazi dictatorship."

Democracy is indivisible, but Germans find it hard to see the lessons of the past as relevant to the present, she explains. As a former teacher, she is concerned that racism is not discussed in Germany in general terms. Instead, Nazi antisemitism is treated as an entirely separate subject of no contemporary relevance. She argues that while racism may indeed exist all over the world, the Germans discovered where it could lead and must therefore keep their doors open. "It is crucial that we, of all people, put basic human rights above national rights," concludes Bischoff-Pflanz.

Berlin bootboys alive and well

Brenda Kirsch looks at the growth of neo-Nazism in East Germany and responses to nationalism.

The resurgence of a greater German nationalism in the GDR over recent weeks has exposed a seamy underbelly: a developing neo-Nazi movement. Although so far small, anti-fascists in the GDR have reacted strongly, with a quarter of a million protesting in Berlin last week.

The public displays of neo-Nazism – from banners at rallies to the defacing of war memorials – has been aggravated by the meddling of West German fascist groups. Some are claiming to have set up branches in the GDR and there has been some to-ing and fro-ing of neo-Nazis across the border. But these developments can't be laid solely on the interference of outside forces. What the public demonstrations since the "turn" have revealed is the sad fact that 40 years of official anti-fascism have not been able to wipe out all traces of Nazism.

Unlike the British punk movement of the 1970s, this isn't just a case of young rebels adopting the symbols of Nazism to shock complacent elders (in contrast GDR "punks" have been behind AntiFa, a non-aligned, anti-fascist movement). Rather, it is an attempt to recreate the full-blown version of Nazism (down to SS "ranks"), with antisemitism and anti-foreigner sentiments being key. A recent opinion poll of young people found that 2% supported a neo-Nazi position, a disturbingly high figure.

How have these developments occurred in a state built on anti-fascism? Evidence from some who've confronted extreme right wing ideas and practices in the past suggests that – as in other areas – formalism along with complacency may have disguised the real situation.

This was certainly Erika Grossmann's experience when she was a Christian Democrat councillor in a Berlin borough. Her brief included youth clubs and three years ago youth workers alerted her to skinhead racism at one club, including an assault on a brown-skinned girl. Yet when she raised this with the "authorities" she was not believed: "such things do not happen", she was

told. Yet it later emerged at a trial of skinheads that well-organised neo-Nazi groups, some from "well-connected families", were in existence, unchecked by the security police. The trial arose after a cultural opposition meeting in a church was broken up by some skinheads – while the Stasi stood by – and graves were desecrated.

An observer at these trials was Independent Left supporter Kostja Münz. He was reluctant to talk about his research of neo-Nazis, no doubt concerned that such developments should not be sensationalised. A member of the GDR's small Jewish community, he keenly asserts his Jewish identity alongside his left commitment.

We met as he was busy delivering leaflets for a broad anti-reunification rally in Berlin. He was angrily impatient with the general preoccupation with reunification: "Posing the 'German question' nullifies the Holocaust," he observed, while acknowledging the positive role the old leadership had played in denazification: "The leadership's anti-fascism was exemplary, and it worked. But it was also formalistic." The limits of that formalism could be seen most recently in the growth of anti-foreigner feeling...

Münz related a story about a Vietnamese woman (certainly a resident and not a tourist) who took three packets of rice from a supermarket shelf. "Without speaking or even looking at her an assistant snatched back two packets. I complained to the assistant that no one should 'select' another's appetite, a word associated with the Holocaust which she readily understood." Münz saw the dangers of a "false consciousness", with Cubans, Vietnamese and Mozambicans suddenly seen as responsible for the shortage of goods.

As a younger generation Jew concerned to reclaim his culture and community history he has been trying to encourage a new approach, including the introduction of Jewish history into schools. When he first started talking to students at teacher training colleges he said he was met with astonishment at the disclosure that he was a Jew; "they didn't believe that there were any in the GDR". Yet there is a Jewish population estimated at 2,500-3,000, including the new communist leader, Gregor Gysi, and a new wave of Jewish self-organisation; Münz himself is treasurer of a project to refound the New Synagogue in Berlin as a Jewish centre.

Now he says that he is swamped by invitations to speak to trainee teachers. And, despite the dangerous growth of nationalism, Münz for one is optimistic about possible developments. "We've always had problems of a 'German mentality', in the West and the East, which is frightened of anything which is different," he said. "Now we have a chance to do something new."

This article is reprinted with permission from 7 Days, 13 January 1990

Enormous possibilities have opened up for socialists and Jews as a result of the revolutions in Eastern Europe, says Michael Safier.

The revolutions in Eastern Europe are the most significant events in the recent history of the socialist project and of the Jewish people. It is difficult even to find language which adequately enables us to contemplate the successive explosions of actions and ideas that, in such a short time, have overturned barriers, stormed bastions and destroyed the Wall that straitjacketed the lives and social experience of whole peoples. The events of May to December 1989 built on or brought into being social movements filled with possibilities, though beset by uncertainties, whose future course is as unpredictable as was their initial impact.

Such revolutionary events are not only important for all of us, but also have complex and unclear aspects which generate controversy. So significant an event brings all sides hurrying to claim ownership so they can bombard the rest of us with their version of its true character and meaning.

The balance of claims lists heavily towards the triumphalist neo-conservatives, certain that we have seen the last nail driven into the coffin of the socialist project, and the universal accession of the market morality. Meanwhile, on the left, there is a sinking feeling in the face of yet another fundamental failure excruciatingly exposed, without possibility of redemption; requiring yet further effort to revise and reconstruct some semblance of a feasible future.

Equally certain of themselves are those in the worldwide Jewish community and in the government of Israel, who see what has happened in Central and Eastern Europe as the end of restrictions to the emigration of the remnant of East European Jewry. Thus they welcome the closing of the books on 700 years of a history they portray as little more than popular discrimination, persecution, pogroms and the Final Solution.

Among Jewish Socialists there is a well-founded fear of a return to pre-War Central and East European chauvinism and reaction resulting from the stresses of readjusting to a new capitalist order combined with religious and nationalist manipulations. On many counts, the future looks bleak: the reactivation of Russian and Central European antisemitism – one example is the revival of Pamyat in Moscow and Leningrad – amidst the assertion of a “new age” of Eastern European neo-colonial dependence on Western capitalism.

I believe that all such judgments are premature, flawed and often self-serving. After a time of turbulence and perhaps traumatic extremes, partly in reaction to 40 years of fear and frustration, the events of 1989 will be found to contain potentially positive consequences, both for the renewal of the

socialist project and for the Jews of Eastern Europe – and for the connections between the two. The recent events are both too well known to need recapitulation and too dense to describe adequately. Nevertheless, we must still ask: what caused this sudden eruption? What are the characteristics of these revolutionary movements? What are likely to be the immediate consequences of the revolution? And what are the implications for socialism, for world Jewry and for Jewish Socialists?

And the answers to all these require an appreciation of the socialist project and of the conditions needed for the future well-being of the Jewish people. The project is the emancipation and self-realisation of whole human beings. This requires a multi-dimensional enterprise which includes production for need and a high standard of material welfare; individual liberty and freedom of choice; democratic accountability; social responsibility; and cultural diversity. It is founded on a refusal to accept the “natural necessity” of a dual form of social existence, where the freedoms achieved by some are intrinsically connected to the exploitation, oppression, discrimination and unequal life chances of others. Above all, it means a commitment to defend and increase self-organised, self-determined social (as opposed to individual or corporate or state) action and power to control our lives. Only on this basis can the future survival and well-being of Jews everywhere be achieved, both in the diaspora and in Israel.

The last 40 years have seen no fewer than four revolutions, in the strict sense of the term: dramatic transformations of whole societies from within, in which the fabric and pattern of life have been “turned upside down”. All these events have been of world historical significance; their experience and ideas have been echoed far beyond the places where they happened; many of their promoters have energetically exported their achievements. In each case – China in 1949, Cuba in 1956, Iran in 1979, Eastern Europe in 1989 – dictatorial and brutal reactionary regimes were overthrown, and the potential for human emancipation they promised meant that they were heralded as a “new dawn”. As they have decayed though, alongside material advances and achievements in social justice have been revealed the death, destruction and oppression of millions which in many cases extinguished their struggles for life, liberty, equality and fraternity. Not all these revolutions had the same causes or characters. The Chinese and Cuban revolutions had close affinities with their classical forebears, the Russian and Mexican revolutions of 1917-21 and 1907-10: armed struggle and civil war leading to the capture of power against contending counter-revolutionary forces.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 was closer to the revolutionary insurrections of 1789 in France and

1917 in Russia. In Tehran, as in Paris and Petrograd, a loose coalition of revolutionary parties in part mobilised, in part combined with, and in part were submerged in popular protest and armed uprisings on the streets which finally “stormed the heights” of reactionary and repressive state power.

The revolutions of 1989 are different again. Drawing on the “springtime of peoples” of 1848, they culminated in an eruption of pent-up energy which had been brutally suppressed for 40 years by regimes which denied people’s rights and aspirations to determine their own destiny.

The events of 1989 ended the era of forms of socialism that were imposed in Eastern Europe by the post-War settlement reached by 1948. It also ended the enforced isolation and “allowable” forms of existence of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe that were part of the general social control practised by the various communist dictatorships. What happened in Eastern Europe between May and December 1989 was largely unforeseen and quite inconceivable, even to those closely involved – a surreal drama which unfolded day by day, each episode more extraordinary than the last. Two elements stand out.

Firstly, there is the way in which ruling regimes, one after the other, with their entire apparatus of power – army, police, security, party, bureaucracy, media, “people’s organisations” – were challenged, pressurised, and finally forced to breaking point. They accepted their own inability to resist wholesale rejection by their subjects, and were replaced by varying coalitions of those subjects. Secondly, there was the sight of masses of people occupying squares, streets, government buildings, offices, factories, communications centres and even security headquarters in a dozen major cities throughout the region. And they were backed by a variety of opposition social movements, unions, civic associations and dissident groups, able to mobilise or at the least receive the support of more than 100 million people.

It is important to recognise the determination, release, realisation and wonder experienced by hundreds of thousands of Poles, Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians and Bulgarians, as well as the diversity of history and culture represented by these upheavals. In Poland it was the electoral response to a decade of struggle by Solidarnosc. In Hungary it was the response to a commemorative occasion. In Germany, a people’s occupation and breakout culminated in breaching the Berlin Wall. In Czechoslovakia there was a negotiated transfer of power to the Magic Lantern forum which orchestrated the mass demonstrations. In Romania it was a bloody confrontation with absolute tyranny. The diversity is every bit as great as in Western Europe.

But all these revolutions were based on a few major cities, despite the fact that, apart from East

Germany and Czechoslovakia, the whole area is less industrialised and urbanised than the West. This has both positive and negative implications for socialism and for East European Jewry. The events in Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia were the culmination of pressures which can be traced to four determining factors. None was, on its own, decisive, but their interaction and combination produced a revolutionary outcome.

One factor is political – the “end of empire”. The rejection of the existing regimes as illegitimate and inauthentic impositions of a foreign power, of authoritarian governments whose power rested ultimately on an external force, meant that, without that force they were impotent.

As the Soviet Union under Gorbachev moved into a new era of internal and external liberalisation (particularly after Afghanistan), the local state institutions and party apparatchiks proved to have little endurance when faced with determined and widespread popular opposition. This was connected to the “failure” of centrally-planned economy. The modernisation of production, technology and management needed to satisfy the evolving demands generated by even a moderately increasing level of material welfare was not being sustained. The system, which lurched from crisis to crisis, was not delivering the goods and only operated with a growing illegal private sector. Successive attempts at “reform” repeatedly revealed the high costs and meagre improvements that could be made within the allowable limits of enterprise and local initiative. Eventually comparisons with free market ways of working and levels of consumption started to undermine the edifice.

This lack of credibility was related to cultural and ideological factors. As belief in the state and party ideology became sustainable only by the isolation and persecution of all other ideas and thinkers, in the end thinking people knew (and were known to know) that the prevailing forms of education, media and official culture were propaganda covering over the lies and distortions of dictatorial power. The steady and increasingly open attack on the official system of thought by various independent and dissident voices prepared the ground for alternative systems of ideas that were to provide in the end a powerful rationale for revolutionary demands and actions.

A fourth, social, factor – the evolving struggle against the erosion and suppression of civil society – added the final ingredient. This is where the central contradictions between the aims of socialism and the reality of Stalinist regimes were most cruelly exposed: the promise of guaranteed social rights for all, and the reality of a privileged “new class”; the promise of equality against the blocked



access to advancement for all except party members; the promise of universal welfare and the reality of such poor quality provision that people were driven to corruption or "private" sources of help; the expectation of participation and self-determination, encouraged by the spread of literacy and education, and the experience of systematic persecution of any association or social movement – co-operative, communal, cultural, religious, mutual self-help – not sanctioned and supervised by the authorities.

The character of the revolutionary movements themselves is also multifaceted. One element is the centrality of open, oppositional politics in the context of national identity. Revolutionary leaders have acquired their credibility and maintain their legitimacy through close attention to the demands of trade unionists, workers and peasants, students, dissidents and the public at large to be involved and acknowledged in a new kind of "forum politics". The power of nonviolent mass public pressure, and the demand for the right to representation have been principal ingredients in persuading whole populations to stand behind the newly emerging administrations. At the same time everybody recognises that these are also "national" aspirations, patriotic uprisings in support and remembrance of liberation struggles and local heroes.

Another element is the open acknowledgment of popular preference for private, community and co-operative enterprise and the legitimacy of individual property rights. These are seen as requirements for increased efficiency and quality of production, better distribution and range of choice in consumption, and better provision of housing and social services. A further element is the assertion of individual rights to cultural and intellectual freedom, acknowledging the place of moral integrity against political power, and seeking to recover and celebrate all aspects of national cultural history. Most important of all is the element of social self-organisation, the plurality of authentic, voluntary forms of association – religious, professional, local, commercial, cultural – within which to practise civic values and forms of organisation, an essential basis for self-conscious and confident citizenry as a counterweight to the hegemony of parties and state.

The immediate consequences of the revolutions are likely to be further more or less extreme reactions to the previous conditions and impositions. New (or renewed) nations will be open to varieties of national chauvinisms, with new governments exposed to pressures of opportunism and expediency while trying to establish themselves. There will be a swing towards liberal and conservative political groupings and attitudes. The market economy and private

property will be greatly expanded, with enterprise efficiency and consumer demands taking precedence over increased inequality and unemployment, and reduced welfare provisions. Wholesale cultural and intellectual as well as commercial importing from "the West" will pervade mass media and public debate. Long dormant or repressed social movements will resurface from the pre-War past, including religious revivalism of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox varieties, together with varying degrees of class and ethnic particularisms. The whole corpus of Thatcherite tendencies is likely to be evident over the next few months and years, brought in on the back of the extensive financial and technical "aid" which will be offered to governments struggling to cope with restructuring.

What then will remain of the socialist project, for us or for them? Again, certain combined features of these revolutions suggest a potentially positive answer. These include an increased level of popular political awareness and participation; the commitment to an open, democratic, pluralist, political forum; rising rates of economic growth produced in part through a more technically competent management cadre and business class; continued expectations of worker participation, unionisation and maintenance of welfare provision for all in a social market economy; a high value set on freedom of expression and dissenting opinion; status accorded to "comradeship, conversation and conviviality" in the face of overbearing authority and armed force; and, above all, the promotion and practice of social self-organisation and self-determination. All these could generate a revived socialist strategy that could be as relevant to Britain in 1992 as to Eastern Europe for the future.

It is hard to predict what will remain of, and for, the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union. For 40 years, following the decimation of what was once the largest segment of the Jewish population, and while a new major community was being established in Israel, the cultural traditions and particular contribution of the Jewish people of the Russian-Polish pale of settlement, of Romania, Hungary and other parts of the region were barely kept alive under the weight of communist "cultural policy". As authoritarianism and persecution recede, we see reviving previous forms of religious and cultural chauvinist antisemitism.

Yet it may well be that, with open access to both national and international sources of material and cultural support, the Jewish communities can begin to retrieve and revitalise their religious, educational, communal and welfare institutions. There are more than three million Jews in Russia, Romania and Hungary who will no doubt continue

to decrease in numbers by emigration, but in the new political, economic, social and cultural climate of opportunity their future well-being could still be reasonably guaranteed.

The position of the Jews of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the post-War period has been poignant for Jewish socialists. From the crucial parting of the ways in 1897 of the Jewish communists, the Zionists and the Bund up to the revolutions of 1989, communists and Zionists have both seen nearly a century of expansion, access to government power, and the creation of new societies. In sharp contrast, the Bund had only the inter-War years, mainly in Poland, in which to build its own version of progressive Jewish life as a politically and culturally autonomous minority, before being overtaken by the Nazi invasion and the Holocaust.

In the late 1980s, and now in the 1990s, the limitations of both communism in Eastern Europe and Zionism in Israel are being more clearly exposed. A new possibility for a socialist Jewish commonwealth located within a newly revived secular component of the Jewish community in Eastern Europe may no longer be dismissed as a dream, doomed to disappointment. It may, indeed, be conceivable that Jewish socialists here can provide support networks for our counterparts in the East. After the events of 1989 such possibilities look like just where we should be directing our energy.

Apartheid's days are numbered

A month before Nelson Mandela's release, two Jewish former detainees – Raymond Suttner and Amy Thornton – were in London to tell a Jewish Socialists' Group meeting about the prospects for political change and the position of the Jewish community

We've reached a new phase in the struggle against apartheid and the possibility of victory is there. I wouldn't like to make predictions as to when but there's been a substantial change. The South African government are in an irresolvable situation where they cannot reverse the gains that we have made. I also want to deal more specifically with the question of peace, how we achieve peace in South Africa, and the question of the new president of South Africa which seems to preoccupy politicians such as Mrs Thatcher who have an affectionate disposition towards South African governments. There have been many occasions where people have said "victory is certain ... this is the last decade or the last five years of apartheid

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black community as collaborators, tried to set up sorts of partnership with big capital.

If you look at their situation today, there is a sense of disarray, there is a very narrow base with defections both to the right, to extreme fascist groupings, and to the left with sections of the white working class joining democratic trade unions in small but nevertheless significant numbers and others joining up with our democratic political organisations. You've also got the emergence of progressive Afrikaans cultural and media institutions: an Afrikaans newspaper, *Vrye Weekblad*, was the first one to expose death squads through police evidence. Along with this the government has lost a vision of the future, lost its capacity to project a vision that captures the imagination, not only of blacks, which they've never been able to do, but of white South Africans. No society can persist without a rationalising ideology, socialist, capitalist, apartheid. You have to have an ideological mix which will hold people together, which will make them feel this society has a possibility of continuing.

The crisis is also manifested at an economic level. We've seen recently that they secured a rescheduling of their debts but the fact remains that no fresh investment has come in since 1985 and the pressure to pay back existing debts makes it impossible for them to import the machinery and refuel some new growth. The impact of these economic constraints are felt not only by the black community but by white capital, by farmers who cannot buy what they need for their agricultural activities because of high interest rates and a high inflation rate, which affects all sections of the white community. A final factor in their crisis is the crisis of apartheid repression because one has tended to assume, because the use of guns and all sorts of force represents the strong arm of the state, that that is in fact its strongest arm politically. In the recent period that is the area where their support is at its very narrowest and where we have the most support. We have therefore seen very important victories in the last period against the state repressive apparatuses.

We have seen hunger strikers forcing their own



Photo: IDAF

We've reached the stage in South Africa where both racists and non-racial democrats recognise that white rule is doomed. It's a question of when rather than whether it will fall. This crisis is also manifested at an ideological level. There is an extensive moral debate going on in the theological columns of Afrikaans newspapers where Afrikaans newspapers, initially mouthpieces of the government, come into conflict with the government over moral issues. They have heard that apartheid is dead according to government spokespeople, but they look around and they see that it's very much alive and well. They are embarrassed that their sons are fighting unjust wars until recently across the border in Angola and in the townships against fellow South African people.

release, the release of some 900 detainees. We've seen De Klerk's government forced to concede our marching in the streets, forced to turn a blind eye to people unbanning themselves and our organisations, forced to allow ANC leaders to be welcomed by huge crowds and openly propagate ANC policies. The minister of law and order himself has said in parliament that it is not illegal to hoist the ANC flag; something for which people have actually been charged in the past. So we've pushed these people back on a number of levels. The democratic organisations have been operating under various forms of emergency since 1985, with the exception of a few months. Despite a most savage onslaught by military means against the townships, despite locking up some 50,000 people

and some 700 or more people having been restricted, we've been able to reconstitute ourselves, rebuild what has been broken down and in fact take on new levels of struggle: continuing rent boycotts, consumer boycotts, establishment of new organisations which stretch right down to grass-roots levels with street committees and so forth.

The ANC continues to operate and to be treated as the most legitimate organisation in South Africa. Its popularity is really unassailable in South Africa. We have fought back successfully against a very vicious state onslaught. They do not have anything to offer which is remotely near what is acceptable to the people. We do offer what the people want. We will not be pushed back and it becomes a question of deepening and strengthening our organisation until we are ultimately able to ensure that we do achieve the freedom for which we are striving.

So we are at a phase which is unprecedented in South African history. In this phase, sensing a victory and the prospect of victory on the part of the masses, the National Party has been forced to elect a different type of president, representing not the militaristic section of the party but someone who has grown up through the party machine whose approach to political problems is not the overkill method of the previous president, who would have preferred to lock up 50,000 rather than 50 if he had a choice. In the case of De Klerk, he has come to power and sought to remove unnecessary repression, recognising that a situation may well be contained with the use of less repression. He is seeking a political solution; he has taken quite bold steps in releasing Sisulu and others, and the release of Nelson Mandela seems certain.*

We must be sufficiently sophisticated to recognise the meaning and significance of De Klerk's doing that but not exaggerate the importance of these changes. The different approach of De Klerk is important for us. He wants to continue apartheid rule but he is adopting different methods. Now these methods are significant because he is seeking a political solution, a solution that will have legitimacy. We know that the only solution that the people will accept will be a non-racial democratic South Africa with one person, one vote. He has made it clear that he does not want that and is aiming at something different. But the fact that he is seeking to open political debate channels as a way of getting legitimacy provides us with opportunities which we have used and plan to use to advance our proposals and our vision of a new South Africa.

That vision has been formulated in the struggles of the people over many decades. In the first place that vision finds expression in the Freedom Charter adopted in 1955. It also finds expression in the constitutional guidelines of the African

National Congress that are under discussion in South Africa and amongst exiles – a vision of the type of constitution based on the Freedom Charter that the people of South Africa may want. It also finds expression most recently in the Harare Declaration on negotiations, which was adopted by the Organisation of African Unity in August last year, subsequently by the Non-Aligned Movement, and, in slightly modified form, but by consensus, by the United Nations. This is the basic plank which we advance and is, formally at any rate, accepted by the entire world as the basis for peace in South Africa.

How this process starts in the first place is in a common commitment of all parties to the conflict to establish a particular type of state. In other words, we are not saying we want negotiation as our end; we want negotiations for a particular purpose – the establishment of a non-racial democratic South Africa, one person, one vote. Anyone serious about negotiations must accept that this is the view not only of the liberation movement, of the mass democratic movement, but of the entire world. Secondly, before any serious negotiations can be initiated there must be a climate which allows free political activities so that, when we negotiate, we can have contact with the people of South Africa, where the organisations can freely canvass opinion. For that purpose there must be unconditional release of all political prisoners, ceasing of all political executions and political trials, unbanning of banned organisations, and troops out of the townships.

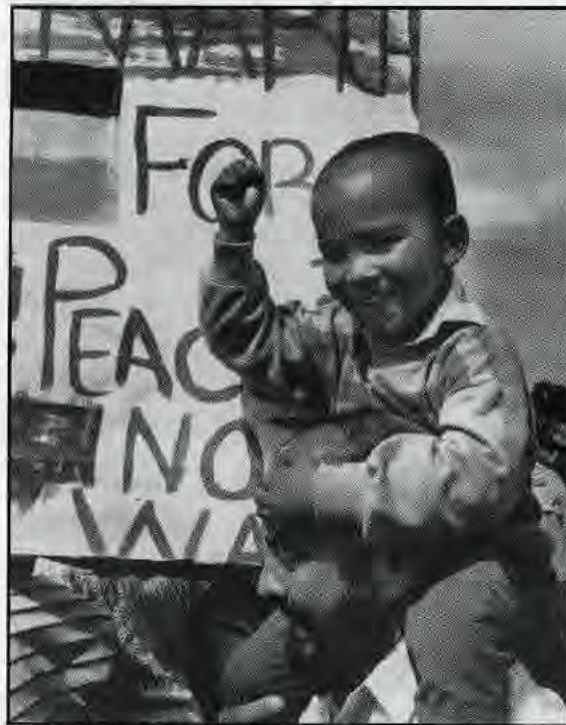
The next phase is the negotiation of a cessation of hostilities and the establishment of an interim government comprising the liberation movement and the government. This interim government would oversee elections for a constituent assembly which would in turn create a constitution for a new democratic South Africa.

There are people who are going to say when Nelson Mandela is released: "This is a very significant thing, so significant it creates the right climate for negotiations." It is very important that people like yourselves and all democrats say: "Our struggle in South Africa has not been to release one person alone." No matter how important the release of Nelson Mandela is, we have made various demands because these are necessary before we can even start to negotiate seriously. We must stop the Thatchers of the world from trying to force the people of South Africa to settle for a Buthelezi/Muzorewa type solution. The people of South Africa are willing to struggle, however long it takes to achieve this new society for which so many people have died, and it's very important that we do not allow any form of manipulation to subvert this process.

RAYMOND SUTTNER

Fair weather friends

The Jewish community in South Africa has been reduced to less than 100,000 people. Over the last 10 years, there has been a concentrated emigration of Jewish professional and wealthy people out of South Africa. People don't want their children to go into the army, not so much because they oppose apartheid but because they don't want to put their sons at risk. There are very strong motivating factors. People who had the wherewithal financially and professionally to transfer capital and skills to other countries which would take them have done so, and, much to the Chief Rabbi's distress, the countries of choice are Australia, Canada and America, with Israel running a very firm fourth.



I say it with a certain amount of sadness and sarcasm because there was a time when if whites were involved in the struggle for democracy for all of South Africa, 90 per cent of those whites would have been Jewish. There is a noble history of Jewish working class people bringing trade unionism and political organisation, and the study of socialism, to South Africa from Europe. During the War, when Russia was our ally, the Communist Party in South Africa was quite a strong organisation. Again, most of the whites in the Communist Party were Jewish. The turning point came, first of all, with the establishment of the state of Israel, although people were still marrying the two ideas because it was Soviet support at the United Nations which helped with the formation of Israel. It was Czechoslovakia where many young Jewish South Africans were going to be trained as pilots

and help in the war of independence with Israel. The big turning point came after the twentieth congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the revelations by Krushchev of the Stalin era and the confirmation of the fact of antisemitism in the Soviet Union.

At the same time the National Party was riding the crest of ever-increasing majorities in the white elections in South Africa, and had introduced all the apartheid legislation. The country was pretty well booming. For many Jewish democrats this was an opportunity to find a rationale to part from the political struggle in South Africa because of what had happened in the Soviet Union, and to support Zionism and to say, "Well at least the South African government is allowing us to send money out of the country," and so on and so forth. The overwhelming majority of Jews who were involved politically withdrew and became active in Zionist politics. Some of them were involved in South African politics.

Then came another phase – the coming to power in Israel of a very right wing government which sought assistance from South Africa. By this time the anti-apartheid movement internationally was beginning to create very real pressures on the South African government, and the South African government sought in Israel an ally to extricate itself from some of the effects of sanctions. Here begins a very sorry and immoral period of Jewish and Israeli concerns in South Africa. There is tremendous cooperation between the South African government and the Israeli government on the basis of technology coming to South Africa and South African raw materials going to Israel. Israel is laundering lots of South African goods into Europe and to other markets, with different packaging. The Israeli army supplies technical know-how to the South African army, such as how to deal with insurgents. The lesson has been learned so well that I can now look at an incident happening in the Palestinian Intifada and it could be happening in the streets of Cape Town. The ammunition used, the methods used, are identical, as is the phraseology used by the authorities in Israel to describe the stone throwing.

The Jewish people involved in the progressive movement have become fewer and fewer. The Jews do not participate even on a moral basis of making public statements to condemn things which happen; their voice is absent. It was an exception, when we had the first legitimate march in Cape Town, that they found someone who would speak – that was Rabbi Sherman. It was his 80th birthday, he's retired, he doesn't seek to be reinstated by any community and he read a prayer at that church service. There have been a couple of rabbis who have spoken up.

In the mid-'80s, when there was this tremendous resurgence of resistance in South Africa,

Jews against Apartheid was formed – "Jews for Justice" in Cape Town, "Jews for Social Justice" in Johannesburg. They didn't set out so much to organise the Jewish community as to provide a platform in the Jewish community for the voice of the mass democratic movement. Frank Chikane, Tutu and various other political spokespeople from the mass democratic movement spoke and they always had a very good audience, but now these Jewish groups have become very dormant and very quiet.

What has interfered for them in this process of participation is this question of the Intifada. We have a strong Muslim community in South Africa and a strong progressive Muslim community. Organisations affiliated to the national democratic movement support the PLO, support the Intifada. It's become very difficult for any Jewish organisation to totally keep that out of any kind of discussion. It has very much affected the work that they do. The Israelis are not embarrassed by their South African connections, but we have reached a stage I think where the process of change in South Africa has begun and is not going to be turned back, and the Jews, who always quote pragmatism as the reason for doing anything and everything, are now having to deal with the pragmatic fact that these are the people who are going to be the governors of South Africa and we'd better make ourselves

acceptable to them as well. I'm putting it very crudely but I think we are going to see situations where the Board of Deputies will make a statement about aspects of apartheid, and Jews for Justice will be able to hold meetings and be assured of a reasonable audience. Pragmatism demands that they give some voice and some hearing to democracy in South Africa.

The other positive element, and again with no support from the rabbonim or from the Jewish Board of Deputies, is the increasing number of young whites refusing to go into the army. In 1987 there were 34, the next year there were 143, and this last year, over 800, among whom were a group of Jewish youth – some of them for political reasons, some for religious reasons. They had a special event for these youth who had taken this stand and a service was supposed to be held in a Cape Town cathedral. Some of the very religious Jewish youngsters said they couldn't come into the church, so they moved it into the hall next to the cathedral and members of the various religious communities in South Africa participated in this service. Nobody from the Jewish community even came to support those Jewish boys, some of them with their yarmulkes who were standing there as Jewish youth, because they were Jewish youth who objected to going into the army.

AMY THORNTON

The increasing burden of care

What will the government's plans for changes in community care mean for the Jewish community?
Karen Merkel and Julia Bard investigate.

In 1991, local authorities will be required to take the lead in co-ordinating community care. Social services will be expected to respond to increasing demands which result from the closure of long-stay institutions for people with disabilities, as well as changing ideas on methods of supporting those inside them, an ageing population and a greater public expectation of a more humane approach to care. The Associa-

tion of Community Health Councils for England and Wales says that only 15% of local authorities have an action plan to achieve the 1991 strategy; only 3% of local authorities have worked out a scheme for budgetary control; and only one in three is developing programmes for those in need. Just one year into implementing the poll tax, local authorities will be struggling to maintain existing provision, especially since the government will undoubtedly have introduced its penalty system for "high spending" authorities by then.

The government White Paper, *Caring for People: community care in the next decade and beyond*, focuses on clarifying roles and responsibilities,

bringing together the relevant sources of finance, delegating responsibility for decision making to local level wherever possible, improving accountability and providing the right incentives. All of which we now recognise as euphemisms for cuts. Nearly 60% of the budgets of local and health authorities is still locked up in hospital provision and can only be released once residents are actually back in the community; and 60% of local authorities have not even reached agreement with their local district health authorities on the financial and practical arrangements for resettlement in the community. Even the Audit Commission is critical, saying: "There is a lack of adequate

support for people living in the community and their carers, with a particular shortage of respite and day care. Government encouragement of rapid, largely unplanned, growth of residential care in private and voluntary homes has led to both less suitable and more expensive care than is necessary in many cases. Overall, public money is not being spent in the most effective way."

So where will the additional support come from? The community itself – in other words, charity. This raises difficult issues for the Jewish community. Lord Young, the first president of Jewish Care, said: "Jewish tradition and culture is imbued with the concept of social justice. The founding fathers of the Jewish Welfare Board and the Jewish Blind Society were continuing a centuries-long tradition." For Jewish communities, "looking after our own" is a long-standing tradition which goes back well before the ideals of Victorian philanthropy. But the Jewish community is not alone in developing systems of self-support. Many immigrant communities in Britain have established elaborate and, in some respects, autonomous mutual aid systems.

The Jewish Welfare Board (established in 1859) and the Jewish Blind Society (established in 1819) recently amalgamated to form Jewish Care, which also incorporates the Jewish Association for the Physically Handicapped. Together they have 33 residential homes, day centres and hostels, and 250 sheltered housing facilities with an annual budget of nearly £15 million. Jewish Care houses 957 people in accommodation from residential homes to hostels, and 3,550 people attend its day centres. It is anticipated that the statutory contributions towards this care will amount to £7 million and the combined

investment income will be approximately £1.5 million, leaving a shortfall of £6.5 million to be found through fund-raising.

Melvyn Carlowe, the executive director, says: "The two organisations have always recognised their responsibility for the care of Jewish elderly, mentally ill, visually impaired and physically disabled people and their families. Local government cutbacks in services to these groups of people, coupled with recent demographic changes, have meant increasing demands on the community." Jewish Care's figures show that there is a marked increase in the elderly Jewish population, while the proportion of people aged between 20 and 63 will decline from 56% to 49% by the year 2005. Over the last 10 years the average age of people moving into Jewish Care residential homes has risen from 75 to 86. Jewish Care says: "Those entering the homes [now] are frailer, more confused, often with visual, physical or mental disabilities, which necessitates a much higher level of care than previously." With the advent of community care, there are likely to be many more people needing such help.

Peter Tihani, director of Jewish Care's North West London Jewish Day Centre in Golders Green, says: "The proportion of people with severe disabilities and greater age has increased markedly." He believes that day centres like his are serving an important need in enabling people to stay in their own homes, but says that now they cannot cater for those who are more active but nevertheless need social and cultural support.

These social and cultural needs are complex and hard to define, and some socialists consider that providing – or fighting for the provision of – Jewish welfare is a form of separatism which weakens the demand for adequate welfare provision for everyone. Micky

Lewis is a Jewish pensioner who, at 72, has been a member of the Communist Party for 50 years. She has lived in Hackney since 1944, where she actively campaigns on health and pensioners' issues. She is a member of *Hackney Pensioners' Press*, which recently published a feature on the borough's elderly Jewish population, focusing on those using Jewish day care facilities. She says: "I felt that the people we met in the centres were living as if they were in a ghetto in the sense that it is because of their Jewishness that they live and do their social things together. I believe this can make for a narrowness because it creates an 'inside' and an 'outside' which ignores so much. Of course I understand the history of wanting to be together because of persecution and antisemitism, but you must lead a wider life, and you must be part of the world – the working class world – and work together for issues. It's important to leave your own *shtetl* – after all, you can still take your own kind with you."

But if Micky Lewis has found many of her "own kind" in the Communist Party, there are many other people whose lives have been spent largely inside the Jewish community. One day a week Zelda Bard works as manager of the very busy dining room at the North West London Jewish Day Centre. "I like working there," she says, "because I'm among people who are familiar to me. It's not a strange atmosphere. A lot of people who come to the Day Centre would otherwise be very lonely and isolated, and the most important aspect for them is contact with other people, particularly with contemporaries. There may be equivalent non-Jewish facilities, and maybe some Jewish people do go to non-Jewish lunch clubs and friendship clubs, but I think they feel more at ease with people from their own cultural group. I suppose that's because we're still an ethnic group,

which means that we understand each other's background and cultural mores. For instance, I deal with lunches, and I know that when-ever we try offering food that isn't 'Jewish', it's not very popular. Even though most of the people who come to the Centre were born here, and only about half are concerned about being strictly kosher, the lunches which go down best are chicken, salt beef and fried fish."

Micky Lewis recognises that need for familiarity, but believes it conflicts with the need to break down barriers: "At the same time as believing that it is right to move out of the *shtetl*, I also felt I had a lot in common with the people we met in Jewish centres, because of my own past. There's a glad feeling of having the same background, and I don't want to discount the culture and its importance. I feel very good about it. However, I also feel discomfort because, while it's nice to feel part of a group, it also means leaving others out. Ultimately it's more important for me to be with people who have the same politics than the same religion."

"The contradiction rests around whether providing your own homes and centres creates or solves the problem: needs haven't been met in the past; social services can't provide culture. We desperately need unity from a working class point of view, irrespective of religion; we have to campaign. Many Jews feel that they're separate and that their issues are different – and so they might be, but I don't think it's right that they are. We make little progress that way. Our history works against us; we've become so used to needing to support each other 'in spite of everything' that we've become isolated. I feel discomfort at the insularity – at the idea of being the outsider."

The increase in private welfare that we have seen since the Thatcher government came

to power is appalling in the sense that it undermines the demand for statutory provision but, at the same time, for many communities these independent frameworks provide for social and cultural as well as economic needs. For instance, most local and health authorities are neither able nor willing to provide meal services that cater in any way for the dietary needs of Britain's diverse communities, and this is true for translation services and other social and cultural requirements. So the idea that local authorities would be able (or even want) to respond to different cultural arrangements in the running of residential homes and day centres is almost risible.

The London Borough of Hackney presents a clear example of the nature of the problem. There are 24,000 Jews in Hackney, and this represents England's second largest Jewish community – which may come as a surprise, since people tend to think that most Jews moved out of this area long ago. Of these, 8,000 are over 60, comprising a quarter of Hackney's total elderly population. This 8,000 is the largest identifiable elderly group in the borough. There are now more elderly Jews per square mile in Hackney than in any other part of Europe. Hackney is also the poorest borough in the country. Perhaps the most significant statistic is that 25% of all the residents in Hackney's council and private residential homes are Jewish.

Having lived with the self-delusion that there are no longer any poor or needy Jews, a disturbing dilemma emerges for the Jewish community. Whose responsibility is it to take care of the frail Jewish elderly? Clearly local authorities will not be ready to meet the vast increase in their caseload by next year, yet it is also clear that charity amongst the Jewish communities no longer begins at home. In the past socialists

have stuck relentlessly to the line that voluntary provision or charity undermine the demand for the state to meet the needs of its people. That may be true, but the demand on the state, in turn, requires that socialists understand the breadth and depth of the needs of the people. As Zelda Bard's experience on the ground shows, it is not simply a matter of preferring gefilte fish to shepherd's pie. Many Jewish people would rather stay isolated and uncomfortable – and perhaps even hungry – than go to a centre which didn't recognise or cater for who and what they are.

In the meantime, do we abandon these people as hostages to a demand for state provision? We can make demands of both the state and the Jewish community. We can demand that the state provides, or funds people to provide, services that recognise and respond to people's stated needs and that don't brutally exclude a whole range of ethnic, religious and cultural groups by relentlessly assuming a white, Christian, Anglo-Saxon norm. We can also demand that the Jewish establishment acknowledges the extent of poverty, disability and need for support in the community so that it, in turn, can demand that the state provides for those needs.

But our own communal leadership – and its tame media – portray all Jews as economically successful members of society whose only difference from the majority is an ancient religion which they practise behind closed doors and who, in times of trouble, "look after their own". Even in its own terms this facade is crumbling under the economic pressures both of donations which go to support Israel in preference to the community here, and of Thatcher's health and welfare cuts which she cynically entitles "Care in the Community".

To be Jews among socialists...

Jewish Socialist magazine is very much a product of the 1980s – a period when a whole range of new and radical initiatives burst upon the Anglo-Jewish scene, representing diverse issues and interests, breaking free from the stifling constraints of the “official” Jewish community and its power structures. But the group that launched the magazine has a longer history. David Rosenberg tells the story.

The first manifesto of the Jewish Socialists' Group (JSG) appeared in *Tribune* in March 1974. At that time it was a small group primarily based in Manchester made up of individuals long active in general political struggles throughout the Communist Party and the Labour Party. They were increasingly concerned with two nagging

issues which, in the short term at least, seemed to demand a collective response through a Jewish organisation.

These comrades had begun meeting in October 1973. The date is not accidental. It was immediately after the Yom Kippur War. Although most did not describe themselves as “Zionist”, they were very concerned about positions increasingly taken by the Left on the Israeli-Arab conflict which seemed to express an uncritical pan-Arab nationalism that completely disregarded the national rights of the Israeli people and a secure future for Israeli Jews. This trend had, they perceived, become particularly blatant during the '73 War.

The other issue concerning the Jewish socialists was much closer to home – the rise of fascist groups. They sensed that the fascists were in the ascendancy and understood that, alongside their anti-black

racism, antisemitism would feature prominently in the spread of fascist ideas and in their public activities. They sought urgently to alert and mobilise both the Left and the Jewish community against this incipient danger.

The group was very active in its first few years, propagandising, educating, and mobilising at street level. Events seemed to bear out their concern on both these central issues. By the late 1970s the National Front had a membership that had grown to 20,000-strong and was taking to the streets at every opportunity. The JSG was very active in the Anti-Nazi League formed in 1977 and, especially in the north of England at that time, anti-fascist mobilisations often featured JSG speakers. While the group was uniting with others to make a “no platform for fascists” policy effective in every sphere, this same tactic was being transposed in a

...and socialists among Jews

clumsy, opportunist and threatening way to the more abstract ideological debate around the Middle East conflict. This had disastrous consequences, on college campuses where many Jewish student societies found themselves banned or facing severe restrictions on their activities. JSG members on campus consistently opposed the banning of Jewish student societies, while arguing against

Jewish chauvinist positions for a just peace settlement. The group was also busy combating a tendency among much of the Left of complacency about antisemitism for fear of compromising the purity of their anti-Zionist position.

In those first few years the group grew and changed considerably. It recruited a number of students who later formed the base of the London branch.



The wider world was changing too at dramatic pace. Thatcher swept to power in Britain playing the racist card; Begin's Likud came to power in Israel, and the established institutions of the Jewish community swung further right. The events of the late 1970s brought a good deal of political heart searching on the Left, particularly in response to activists within minority movements around issues of identity, community and strategies of autonomy.

Appropriate to these times, the group welcomed a number of new members who identified with a specifically Jewish socialist autonomous political tradition – the Bundist tradition rooted in Eastern Europe at the turn of the century, but a tradition that stressed the here and now, politically and geographically; committed to Jewish rights and cultural autonomy in the diaspora; rejecting the centrality of Israel

Five of the best



When *Jewish Socialist* came into existence, five years ago, it promised that it would at last give a voice to radical Jews. We have kept that promise: the Jewish Feminist conference 1987, Ruach 1988, Israeli socialists, army refuseniks and peace activists, anti-racist Jews ... have all found a voice in *Jewish Socialist*.

But we have achieved much more than that. We have opened debates that could not have happened elsewhere – on the political use of Holocaust analogies; on the future of the non-refusenik majority of Soviet Jews. And we have broken taboos, questioning religious coercion as in the practice of circumcision; querying and rejecting Zionist political priorities; examining attitudes to AIDS and homophobia in the Jewish

community; looking at the personal experience and politics of mixed relationships.

We haven't sought to open these debates and touch these hot potatoes out of a *dafke* principle – wanting to be contrary or sensationalist – but as part of a tradition that has historically challenged bourgeois and reactionary orthodoxies and moralising within our community. We have consciously recognised our roots in the Jewish socialist tradition and have published articles by Bundist activists, Cable Street veterans, anti-Nazi workers writing about struggles here, in Germany and in Eastern Europe in the 1930s. Through their reminiscences, the Jewish socialists who have written for us have bridged their experiences and struggles of yesterday with ours today.

Jewish Socialist has always looked towards at least two constituencies – primarily the socialist movement and the Jewish community, providing a unique voice in both. The last five years have thrown up various issues that have tested and in some cases drawn apparently sharp dividing lines between these two communities, such as the GLC experience, the poisonous injection of Farrakhanism into Black-Jewish relations and anti-racist politics, the heated controversy over *Perdition*. *Jewish Socialist* was the only Jewish journal to interview Ken Livingstone during his period as GLC leader. The magazine challenged Farrakhanism on socialist and anti-racist grounds rather than Jewish chauvinist ones, and, on *Perdition*, what other journal

could feature substantial contributions from both Jim Allen, the play's author, and David Cesarani, one of the play's main detractors, as well as providing its own independent critical comment on the claims made both by Zionists and anti-Zionists?

Jewish Socialist has provided a platform not just to engage with the Left but also with the “leaders” of the Jewish community. From the cover-up of antisemitic attacks, through their cynical and totalitarian manipulations over the *Jewish Quarterly* affair, to this very issue where we reveal what is being done in the name of “community security”, our magazine has courageously exposed and challenged those who would find it easier to claim to speak for us all if

Jewish Socialist did not exist.

The British Jewish community is just starting to emerge from a very insular period when it seemed only events in Britain, the USA or Israel were worthy of note. Suddenly Jews in Eastern Europe are gaining recognition, yet, since issue 2 of *Jewish Socialist*, there have been in-depth articles on contemporary Jewish life in the USSR, Poland and Hungary. We are committed to internationalism in both Jewish and socialist spheres. We have also covered developments in France, Germany and South Africa.

Who knows what surprises the next five years will hold? Whatever they are, you can be sure that *Jewish Socialist* will be there with its distinctive eye and voice.

in Jewish life and thereby fundamentally at odds with traditional and neo-Zionist views of Jewish history and destiny.

Although the group contained and continues to reflect a variety of Jewish and socialist traditions among its membership – and this is a major source of strength – the Bundist input was fundamental. It ensured that the group recognising that its horizons stretched beyond the most pressing immediate issues of the Israel/Palestine conflict and anti-fascism, and the short-term strategies they demanded, to a recognition of a wider set of underlying issues about the relationship of minorities to the socialist movement and the type of socialism we strive for, and about politics and power within the Jewish community, locally, nationally and internationally.

The group's founders had not conceived of the group as having such a broad and long-term role. Most of them found it difficult to adapt to changing conceptions of that role and the practical policies that flowed from them, particularly in terms of mounting a political challenge *within* the Jewish community. After the group's 1981 conference, when differences became clearly crystallised, a number of the founding members, led by the

late Aubrey Lewis, left. He later formed the short-lived "Jewish Socialist Action" before becoming active and locally prominent in Poale Zion – the Labour Zionist movement.

The broadening political horizons of the group were reflected in its new manifesto, adopted in 1980, amended in 1981 and substantially revised again in 1988.

Through the 1980s the group became firmly committed to and rooted in a diasporist perspective, engaging in a very practical and effective way with international issues, such as the Israel/Palestine conflict, but recognising that we were Jews in Britain "here to stay"; that here is the arena in which our activity is based and can be effective. So in 1982/83, during the Lebanon War when we took our first steps in pioneering Jewish/PLO dialogue in Britain, we did so not as an arm of any Israeli or Palestinian movement directly involved in the conflict, but in our own right as diaspora Jews who refused to accept that Israel was acting in our name and who sought to challenge the efforts of the Jewish establishment in Britain to corral Jews into identifying with "Israel – right or wrong".

From its well-founded diasporist perspective the group was well placed to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the accession to power of an outward and forward looking Labour-controlled Greater London Council. It gave the JSG two years' funding (1984-86) for a London-based "Jewish Cultural and Anti-Racist Project" (JCARP). The project carried out a great deal of work promoting Yiddish culture (classes, talks, cultural events), and organised a series of meetings aimed primarily at the Jewish community where it drew on the community's anti-racist traditions to present joint Jewish/Black platforms

addressing contemporary issues of racism, fascism and antisemitism and their connections to each other.

The work of JCARP brought us into direct conflict with a Jewish establishment clinging tenaciously to its orthodoxies of political conservatism, religious authority and assumed Zionism, and we felt the full weight of its power and repression which manifested itself in widespread public and private smear campaigns, denial of access to communal facilities, encouragement of physical harassment by far-right Jewish elements at our public meetings and use of bullying tactics against others in the community who either came close to us or treated us as equals. A clear example was when the Board of Deputies forced the resignation of the editor of the "independent" *Jewish Quarterly* after he printed an article by a JSG member about responses to current racism and antisemitism in Britain.

All these events, however, tended to confirm and clarify the group's emergent analysis of the Jewish community and its relation to wider political issues. It began openly to challenge widely-accepted portrayals of the community as homogeneous and secure, drawn by its more affluent, conservative and powerful elements, and showed that the community was in fact very diverse. There were competing interests in the community but the opposition of interests was regulated through a hierarchical power structure with an economic and political base.

The group argued that beneath the veneer of security and affluence many parts of the community found themselves in increasingly vulnerable economic sectors, while in Britain's general political life more space was opening up for right-wing and authoritarian positions. Racism was gaining

strength and the JSG was aware of the historical role of antisemitism in European societies and the possibility of a renewed upsurge. Le Pen's incipient movement in France and the persistence of a high level of antisemitic incidents here seemed to be a taste of what the not-too-distant future might hold.

Against a widespread communal "common sense" that the community could look only to itself and to Israel for its security, the JSG argued that the security of Jews here was bound up with that of other ethnic minorities and threatened groups, and ultimately with the struggle for socialism. It recognised that, while the right-wing image and practices of the Jewish establishment were alienating, marginalising and excluding many radical Jews, the dangers threatened us *all* and the group was not prepared to leave the response in the hands of bodies who historically have shown themselves

incapable of defending any but their own narrow interests.

An important spin-off from the group's GLC-funded activities was that they gave the group the confidence to begin publishing its undiluted thoughts in its own magazine. They also gave the group the confidence to move outwards and build, rather than just support, campaigns together with others. Almost every radical initiative that has emerged in Britain's Jewish community in recent years has had a greater or lesser JSG input – for example, Jews Against the Clause, Friends of Yesh Gvul, Jewish Women Support the Palestinians, Anne Frank exhibition events in Sheffield and Nottingham, a range of Yiddish cultural events, and so on. Through experience, activities and self-education we have gained a clear idea of where we come from and a vision of where we are going.

In the 1980s the first practical steps were taken to bind the

destiny of the Jewish people with the destiny of socialism. That unity in its various forms survived many decades until it was shattered and almost obliterated by Nazism and Stalinism and its remnants ground underfoot by triumphalist and chauvinist Zionism and narrow and elitist neo-Conservatism. In the 1990s, particularly younger and more radical Jews are looking beyond the range of these reactionary and discredited ideologies to a politics that gives meaning to their identity, that legitimates their real concerns, that links them to other peoples' and other groups' concerns, that encourages them to participate actively in shaping their destiny, that looks forward to the future with confidence. The Jewish Socialists' Group offers that politics, that perspective and that opportunity.



On Jewish Socialist's 5th birthday we remember with love

Joe Garman

lifelong socialist and anti-fascist, founder member of the Jewish Socialists' Group. We miss his warmth and humour but his inspiration and example live on from family, friends and comrades

Jewish Socialist reader? Yes.

Jewish Socialists' Group member? No.

Celebrate the 5th anniversary of Jewish Socialist by joining the Jewish Socialists' Group and help to translate ideas into action.

Write to the Membership Secretary, JSG, BM 3725, London WC1N 3XX.

Congratulations and thanks to all who have served on the editorial committee over the last five glorious years!

JSG member

Message from a socialist shulgoer

If there are approximately 330,000 Jews in Britain and about 123,000 belong to a synagogue and 49,100 males and 28,000 females formally belong to the United Synagogue and 6,000 males and an unknown number of females belong to the Federation and 18,000 males and 10,500 females belong to Reform and Liberal synagogues and the ultra-orthodox absent themselves from the Board of Deputies (save for a single observer) for fear of "corruption" by the Progressives (and there are possibly 6,000 Lubavitch, 2,100 Sephardim (represented), 3,400 Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregation members (unrepresented), and an unknown number of members of independent shtetlekh and no Federation women, and only the few female United Synagogue members in their own right may vote for delegates and no canvassing is permitted for United Synagogue (US) elections and no hustings are held on policy in Federation or United Synagogues and not more than 10% of members participate in US synagogal elections — how representative or democratic is the Board of Deputies of British Jews, given its concentration in synagogal communities?

School visit

The name tag on her pinny says, Patricia Kaufpisch.
I'm going to ask her if she knows what it means, Kaufpisch.
No I'm not going to ask her if she knows what it means...
her father must have told her...
no, her father didn't tell her...
I want to tell her...
No, I can't tell her in front of her friends...
I've got to say why they called her Kaufpisch...
maybe I will tell her that old German joke...

there were these Jews, right?
living in Germany about 300 years ago, right?
and they were called ben This and ben That,
so these Germans said to the Jews
if you want to be citizens of Germany
you got to have German names, right?
but it'll cost you...
and if you haven't got much money
(money, Jews, gettit?)
you'll have to buy ones like
Ochsenschwanz, Eselkopf, Saumagen and Hinkedigger:
Oxprick, Asshead, Pigbelly, and Cripple...
so this Jew comes up to the German in charge of names
and he says, I've come to buy a name for myself
have you got any of those pretty ones,
Rosenthal, Valley-of-the-roses, that sort of thing?
Sure, says the man in charge,
but Valley-of-the-roses doesn't come cheap,
what sort of money are we talking about here?
Oh I've hardly got two coins to rub together,
says the Jew.
So what do you do for a living, son? says the man in charge.
I sell things, a bit of this, a bit of that.
Fair enough, says the man in charge, fair enough.
How's this for size? Kaufpisch, Sellpiss.

...if I could talk to her on her own, I could tell her
but she's saying, Goodbye thank you for talking to us,
Mr Rosen.
Rosen? It means roses.
So? I was one of the lucky ones.

Shlump

Mum doesn't often shout at me
but when she's fed up with me
she goes in for great long speeches
and she doesn't hear anything you say —

she says:
I'm tired of seeing you in those trousers
why don't you go to the men's shop in the High Street?
what's it called?
Harry Boothroyds?...

No mum, one's called Harry Reed
and the other's called John Booth

...or you could go and see the little man under the
bridge
and he'd fit you up with a nice pair of trousers
that Harry Boothroyd he has...

No mum
one's called Harry Reed
and the other's called John Booth

...he's got nice trousers
you look a complete shlump in those trousers
I'd give you the money
you could go to Harry Boothroyd's tomorrow...

No mum
one's called Harry Reed
and the other's called John Booth

...and you could look smart
but those trousers are a disgrace
I'm ashamed to see you wearing them
I'm sure the Stollar boy
doesn't wear trousers like that
doesn't he get his trousers at Harry Boothroyd's?...

He gets his trousers at Harry Reed's or John Booth's,
mum

...so what's the matter with you?
Don't you want to look smart,
all this don't care what I look like stuff
where do you get it from?
you don't see me going about looking untidy,
— your father maybe —
but even he goes and gets himself
a couple of suits at Harry Boothroyd's...

No mum,
Harry Reed or John Booth's

...I'm giving you the money.
Here. Go now
and don't come back
until you've got yourself a pair of trousers
I can't bear looking at you another minute...

Which one shall I go to mum?
Harry Reed or John Booth's?

Yes. That's right. Now go.

Michael Rosen

So you think you've got all the answers?

1. Which famous owner of a cat called Mimi was born 120 years ago on 5 March?
2. In which year did the owner die? And how?
3. What was once red, has always been black and is now into rainbows?
4. What star sign was Marx? And what is his birthday?
5. What did some women fly for the first time in the 1760s? And what were they doing?
6. What early acid party did Abbie and Jerry throw together?
7. Which poet did not leave the London Borough of Newham for Cambridge but went instead to Merseyside?
8. Who said "The Christian was from the very beginning the theorising Jew"?
9. And who said (in 1920) "in my opinion there is no other International but the Third and that is the place for every socialist"?



10. What have Patrick Hillery and Chaim Herzog (uniquely) in common?
11. What was London doing in New York during the First World War?
12. Change one letter to get (palindromically) from a Jewish socialist to a second generation Syrian who made it big in the diaspora.

Happy families. Give the family connection between the following

13. (a) Concerts in the National Gallery (b) "unassailable..."
14. (a) Kate's alto sax (b) 117 days. And what have both got to do with the spear of the nation?
15. (a) A wolf in sheep's clothing (b) Professor Mamlock

Answers on page 41

CROSSWORD

Set by Shlump

ACROSS

- 1 Mad monk loses, gets upset, gets carry-out from delicatessen (6, 6)
- 8 The waters pass through, so turn round and we hear Big M following (7)
- 9 A cricket score? A try, more like (4, 3)
- 11 Dog makes water by having pee and losing tea, say (7)
- 12 Margaret not well, eh? Hear that? That's a story and a half! (7)
- 13 Sounds like a car but it's the parts you need (5)
- 14 Norfolk city coloured by royal Sloane being drunk (2'1, 6)
- 16 Take a streetcar ride with Spike Milligan, a bit of telly and a sheep (2, 2, 1, 4)
- 19 I come before the New Testament and billionaire to bury the answer (5)
- 21 Say one's keen to see hunt go berserk (7)
- 23 Is Herbie after Harry, alias Horace, in drug thing (7)
- 24 Poor thing! Ben came back before Brits lost most of the writ (7)

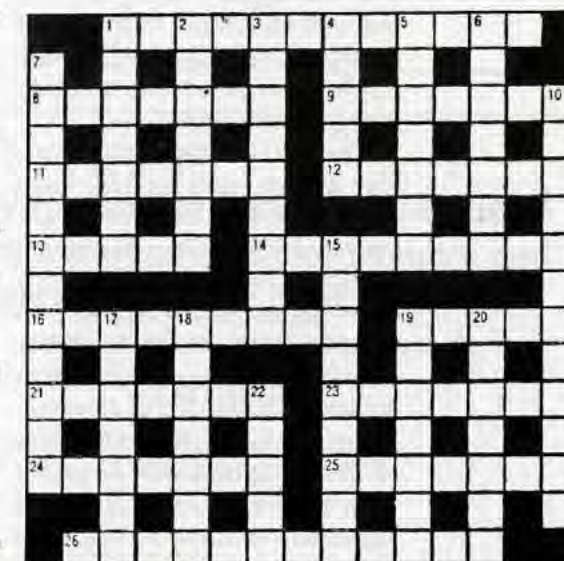
- 25 Lefty Frenchman, London University, after money, poetically gloomy (7)
- 26 ? — No thanks, I prefer matzos (5, 7)

DOWN

- 1 Quiet! The Spanish follow the French Sea like a shlemiel (7)
- 2 No disks, cock-up, hurry (2, 5)
- 3 A nice horse? Thanks to Dennis Hopper (4, 5)
- 4 Moths fly up, exchange their love for respectability and keep very quiet (5)
- 5 Fleur, sitting on wild witch, telephones Irish poet (7)
- 6 Victoria's schedule? Bund's programme? (3, 4)
- 7 Heard that the old Zionist's gone ecological in North London (7, 5)
- 10 Hairy Tories? (12)
- 15 More than half of orchestral piece comes before why we hear one is in South Africa: a deformity due to the growing together (9)
- 17 Anglican robot gets out of control in autumn (7)
- 18 Oxidised saucepan upset in a maul (7)

- 19 Can't get out, reverse the situation, and you've got problems, English-style (2, 5)
- 20 Infinitive form, deduce the solution (2, 5)
- 22 What's the moral in Spielberg creation having laryngeal spasm? (5)

Solution in next issue of JS. First correct solution opened on 1 May will receive book token of £10 or one week's supply of fresh bagels from Ridley Road, Hackney 24 hour bagel bakery.



Peaceing it together

The International Jewish Peace Union has now been in existence for nine years. Richard Schwartz charts its development.

The International Jewish Peace Union (IJPU) was founded in New York in 1981, but the founding charter came out of a meeting in Paris of a range of Jewish opponents to the invasion of Lebanon. Disparate as this group was, with many participants already involved in existing organisations, agreement was reached on two cardinal points: the rights of Israeli and Palestinian people to two independent states side by side and the need for mutual recognition between the Israeli government and the PLO.

The initial activities of the IJPU focused on the Lebanon invasion. Apart from the need for protest action, many Jews wanted to express their opposition to and horror of the invasion in a Jewish framework. This was partly to combat the attempt by the Israeli government and many of the established diaspora bodies to suggest that the Jewish people spoke with one voice, that of the Israeli government.

It was never intended that the IJPU should function as an "alternative" diaspora organisation. Rejecting the notion that *anyone* spoke for *all* individuals. The IJPU was to serve as a home for those organisations and individuals who may have their own local agendas and priorities, but who felt bound to speak out on aspects of the Israel-Palestine conflict and wished to do so within a larger framework.

The IJPU has been able to survive and develop for two main reasons. Firstly, extreme decentralisation; local branches, whether acting under IJPU's name or as organisations with their own identity, have taken whatever initiatives they have seen fit. (On occasion, this has led to disagreements.) Secondly, the willingness of the international secretary (Maxim Ghilam, editor of *Israel & Palestine*) to assume the burden of

much of the administration, co-ordination and finance.

The IJPU now has chapters in eight countries: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Israel. The JSG is one member group. IJPU also has close relations with groups in Belgium and Switzerland, and individual members are scattered around a number of other countries. The actions of each of the member groups are dictated by local priorities. Nevertheless, on the question of Israel and Palestine, they have found it advantageous to belong to an international organisation providing "voice enhancement", practical help and a network of like-minded people.

In the international arena, the IJPU has played an active role in organising the annual United Nations meeting for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the question of Palestine. It has been an elected member of the International Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs since its inception in 1986. It has good relations, both formal and informal, with members of the Israeli peace camp and the PLO but remains independent of party politics.

While diverse opinion is much in evidence within the IJPU (as anyone who has sat in on an international secretariat meeting will testify), there are a number of agreed basic positions. Firstly, the Palestinian people have been deeply wronged in the creation of Israel and in the occupation of territories. That is a recognition of reality, not an argument against Israel's legitimacy as a state. Secondly, not all Jewish critics of official Israeli attitudes to the question of Palestinian statehood are self-hating Jews. It is not un-Jewish to object to oppression and arbitrary punishment and to support the right to self-determination.

Fear of antisemitism is not an excuse for inaction. Mark Ellis, author of *Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, has commented that "Antisemitism becomes a shield that deflects the difficult questions confronting us. A Jewish theology of Liberation needs to turn the fact of antisemitism into a challenge for reflection and critical social analysis."

Both the Algiers declaration and the past two years of Intifada have changed perceptions. Diaspora Jews who criticise the lack of progress in Israeli government attitudes to Palestinians are no longer on the fringes. Dissent is common and minority voices are now heard in mainstream Jewish organisations. The evolution of the letters pages of the *Jewish Chronicle* over the past few years suggests that unease is spreading. In Israel, several new organisations have sprung up and older ones are interacting. Some organisations are actually working together under umbrellas. This helps to make an important point to those Jews who see criticism of Israel as taboo. Israel is not monolithic. All diaspora Jewish action in a Jewish framework is supporting some position held and advocated by Israelis in Israel.

The IJPU itself contains Zionists, non-Zionists and anti-Zionists who believe in a two-state position as the only way forward. Most of us are not in a sufficient position of power to give meaning to grand gestures. We can engage in political carpentry; chip away at petrified attitudes and political plumbing; not in the Watergate sense but in the sense of unblocking pipes. What is also important at this stage is to accept the political breadth of the active or potential forces for establishing an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. The IJPU provides a committed voice without an ideological package deal.

Congratulations on your fifth anniversary. Trust your voice will be increasingly heard in Britain and South Africa now and in the future

**Jaya Appalaraju
ANC, Harare**

Congratulations to *Jewish Socialist* on five years of enlightened journalism – an essential voice for the Jewish community

Naomi Dale and Jeffrey Tribich

Congratulations on your high standard of publication and on keeping alive the socialist tradition in the Jewish community

**Shalom Charikar
Founder, Jews Against Apartheid**

Thanks for maintaining the best traditions of Jewish radical journalism

Looking forward to many more years!

Ingvor and Barry Smerin

**Congratulations!
Five years of in-forming, supporting national and women's liberation movements.
For international socialism**

**Comradely greetings
Celmira Salazar and
Teresa Hope**

Congratulations to *Jewish Socialist* on the first five years

**Steve Ogin and
Vijaya Venkatesan**

Congratulations on your fifth anniversary and for the space given to socialist and liberation struggles worldwide

**Ronaldo Ramirez
and Ruth Weil**

May the *Jewish Socialist* continue to inspire a sense of enlightenment and regard for human rights among its own readers and the Jewish community

Max Ehrenworth

In *Jewish Socialist* 18 Ralph Levinson criticised multiculturalism for separating race from class and ignoring the material basis of racism. Michael Heiser responds.

Ralph Levinson suggests that progressive teachers and, by extension, parents and governors need to formulate a "clear and workable strategy and reappraise anti-racist education and where it comes from". He shows how anti-racist education emerged from a critique of multicultural education which, crucially, seemed to be having little effect on the underachievement of black students. By challenging racist structures in society and analysing racism within the context of class relations, anti-racist education promised to reach the parts multicultural education couldn't or wouldn't.

Whether anti-racist education has actually led to better performance by black students is a moot point, which has yet to be confirmed. But Ralph seems to suggest that anti-racism fails in that it challenges the basis on which the state operates without having fully raised the consciousness of parents, governors or the public. His solution (with which I do not disagree) is to raise the consciousness of students themselves.

Ralph recognises that the crisis in anti-racist education has partly come about through the New Right's attack on it. This attack has pointed up crucial weaknesses in the theoretical foundations of anti-racism. But the reappraisal of both anti-racism and multiculturalism has got to be more fundamental than that which Ralph suggests.

The vital issue is that of culture. Paul Gilroy's trenchant critique of anti-racism (*New Statesman* 2 February 1990) states baldly: "It is the issue of culture and the failure of anti-racist practice to deal effectively with the cultural dimensions of racial politics in this country which confirms its redundancy." The New Right are moving beyond theories based on biological inferiority to those which stress cultural differences. Norman Tebbit, the leading representative of this current in Parliament, has used cultural differen-

Class Analysis

ces to oppose granting the right of settlement in Britain to Hong Kong Chinese.

However, Gilroy goes on to assert that "anti-racists colluded with their New Right opponents by reducing 'race' to culture". Gilroy has got the right issue but the wrong emphasis.

Much of the anti-racist theory comes from the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) and the influential pen of A Sivanandan. He writes: "In the capitalist system it is the economic factor which is dominant, it is that which determines social relations and, in the final analysis, the political and ideological superstructure" (*A Different Hunger* p165). However, in contemporary Britain at least, capital prevents a common class consciousness between the indigenous and the black working class "by intruding the consciousness of race" (*ibid* p104). So what starts off as economic exploitation becomes racism, and black workers suffer exploitation both through "class" and "race". (Naomi Dale [*Jewish Socialist* 4] has pointed up the difficulties such an approach has in coping with "mixed-class" groups such as Jews.)

Culture, then, is part of the "superstructure", ultimately less important than the economic "base". The IRR claims that multiculturalism "separates race from class and thus presents no threat to the state because it diverts the attention of ethnic minorities away from the class struggle into problems of race and culture".

Far from "reducing race to culture", as Gilroy claims, this approach dismisses culture as ultimately secondary.

When socialists hear the world "culture" they should reach, not as Herman Goering counselled, for their gun but instead for the work of Raymond Williams, whose approach to socialist theory recognises the centrality of culture in everyday existence. A similar approach, though with a different emphasis, is evident in Gramsci's work, in Austro-Marxist theory and in the theory and practice of the Bund.

"Culture", says Williams, "is ordinary," a "whole way of life" which determines the way people think about their surroundings and are influenced by them, which is both "traditional and creative". Far from a simple "base/superstructure" approach, Williams presents culture as both determined by and determining of the particular political and economic structure of a given society, or of a particular part of it.

The Left must take culture seriously, and not just as a superstructural nicety or a narcissistic exercise in experiential navel-contemplating (though it can be that), somehow secondary to the "real struggle out there". The New Right has realised the extent to which culture shapes everyday perception; socialists will not defeat them unless and until they engage on the same territory. The real question, which socialists neglect at their peril, is "what constitutes this culture in 1990s Britain?"

The New Right see "British culture" as static; their political project seeks to relate to the "strong independent Britain" of the days of Empire. Minorities, unless they assimilate, are seen as a threat to the British "way of life" and even if they do assimilate their numbers should be kept down.

Against that, the Left needs a dynamic view of culture, which shows how it is a product of many different levels of human interac-

tion; the personal, familial, local, regional, national and international – how each individual's cultural identity is formed both by family background and cultural traditions (single or plural) and by those of the people they live, work and go to school with.

The contemporary culture of my locality – Brent – today comes from the history and traditions of Willesden and Wembley, of their urban development and from the Londoners, and people from elsewhere in England, Wales and Scotland who settled there. It comes from the Irish, the Jews, the Afro-Caribbean and the African as well as the different Asian groups (in many cases via East Africa) who have settled there. That is the reality, the dynamism of multiculturalism. There is not one "British way of life", there are many.

In reasserting the importance of multiculturalism I don't deny Ralph's criticisms of the sort of multicultural education which folklorises "other" cultures and treats them as "exotic" (a school of multiculturalism characterised as "sari soiree"). But is this form in fact monocultural at the core but with a seemingly multicultural surface?

Neither do I deny the role of racism as a material force.

Imperialism, and the racist attitudes derived from it, is a crucial element in the British cultural formation, dominant from 1880 to the 1930s, to which the New Right wishes to return. (It also played a crucial role in the "traditional" culture of the British labour movement and has over the past 15 years been subject to intense criticism, not least on the part of those minorities for whose support it has looked). Neither do I deny the role of racism in forming (to use Williams's term) the "real social identity" of black Afro-Caribbean and Asian minorities. But, as Paul Gilroy has pointed out, some anti-racist activities "trivialise the rich complexity of black life by reducing it to nothing more than a response to racism". I react just as strongly against the argument that anti-semitism is the only significant determinant of Jewish existence.

Where, then, do we go from here? Despite its theoretical weaknesses, anti-racist education has very real achievements to its credit, for instance the pioneering work of the Development Programme for Racial Equality in Brent. The best practice in anti-racist education is multicultural in the full sense outlined above. Practice has preceded theory.

One way forward may be to synthesise anti-racist and multi-

cultural education; take the best features of both to assert the reality of multicultural Britain against the myth of a monocultural contemporary reality. Any socialist theory with any claims to deal with the "actually existing conditions" of the 1990s will have to include such an element.

Ultimately, Ralph's point about achievement is crucial. I too am conscious of a widespread feeling, particularly among parents of Afro-Caribbean origin, that the school system is failing their children. Anti-racism arose as a response to this feeling but anti-racists did not appreciate the sophistication of the feeling. When anti-racists said to black parents that their children's underachievement was ultimately the fault of capitalism, these parents could point, with reason, to the fact that people of working-class origin, both "indigenous" and from immigrant groups such as the Jews, had effectively used the educational system to get ahead (whilst often simultaneously recognising that in a capitalist society such advance could only be partial).

The Left must show that it supports education which allows true equal opportunities to all. Such an education will best come from institutions which are truly multicultural.

In loving memory
Dennis Rosen
olevesholem

We remember you in the
struggle against antisemitism,
in the struggle against apartheid,
in the struggle for
a socialist future

Our comrade forever

Hackney Teachers Association

Congratulations
to the JSG
and
Jewish Socialist
on a magnificent
first five years

Comradely greetings

Committee of the
Mouvement Socialiste Juif
Paris

CABINET

ONSPIRACY

Looking behind the scenes at wartime Britain, in the last article in the series Charlie Pottins shines a light down some of Britain's darker corridors of power

There was an expectant air in the House of Commons on the morning of 16 January 1940. Leslie Hore-Belisha, forced to resign as Secretary of State for War because of what Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain would only call "a strong prejudice" against him, was due to make a statement to the House.

Interest stretched far beyond Westminster. "The British people have a right to be told frankly and fully the reasons for the replacement in wartime of a virile and apparently successful War Minister," declared the *Melbourne Argus* on 8 January. Even *The Times* acknowledged public concern but said much would depend on what Hore-Belisha had to say.

In the event Hore-Belisha spoke of his efforts to reform and modernise the army, making it a career open to talent, so as to "bind all members of the nation more closely". He commented wryly: "It did not occur to me to consider that we were making the army too democratic to fight for democracy." This brought some cheers from Labour. But anyone hoping for a challenge to Chamberlain's government was disappointed.

"When Belisha made his resignation speech it fell far short of the challenging dramatic tone which the *Mirror* had hoped for," says Maurice Edelman in *The Mirror: A Political History*. "Belisha, despite his blandness in the face of antisemitism, was acutely sensitive to the danger that his Jewish origin might embarrass the government."

Misplaced loyalty to those less than loyal to him; misguided patriotism, with a war on? Nazi propagandists were delighted anyway, treating his departure as encouraging and as a faltering, ineffective, British attempt to remove "Jewish control". As for the British public, it had to accept being kept in the dark. Hore-Belisha faded eventually from view, his name to be remembered only by the traffic beacons he'd introduced when he was Minister of Transport.

The exact reasons Chamberlain got rid of his War Minister "have never been fully explained", said Dingle Foot in *British Political Crises* (William Kimber, 1976).

Late in 1939 the commanders of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France had told King George VI of their resentment against Hore-Belisha. The King discussed this with Chamberlain. On 8 January 1940 Chamberlain reported to the palace that he had dismissed Hore-Belisha, adding: "I said that as I had told him repeatedly before, there existed a strong prejudice against him for which I could not hold him altogether blameless."

"What was the prejudice?" asks Edelman. "It was the kind of prejudice that no one wanted to

make explicit. It was, in fact, the prejudice of the established social and military order against a Jew of middle class and foreign descent, who sought publicity for his work, rejected the caste attitudes of his day and who, for short, was referred to by his critics as a 'cad'."

Perhaps Hore-Belisha's flair for publicity, so upsetting to the officers and gentlemen of the BEF, with whom he dared to differ, gave Chamberlain the idea of making him Minister of Information. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Sir Alexander Cadogan, confided to his diary on New Year's Day 1940: "H told me Hore-Belisha must be got out of the WO and will be offered Ministry of Information. This blinding – and exquisitely funny. I hadn't time to get my breath, but on thinking it over, came to the conclusion that Jew control of our propaganda would be a major disaster."¹

"H" (Lord Halifax) and the Foreign Office blocked this appointment. Instead, Hore-Belisha was offered the Board of Trade. He politely declined, "because I could not feel the assurance that the consideration which had persuaded the Prime Minister to make the change would allow of my energetic discharge in the national interest of the other office".

By this time, apparently, several junior ministers were clamouring for Hore-Belisha to go. But why did he go so quietly? What happened between Hore-Belisha's removal from office on 6 January and the speech which disappointed friends 10 days later?

On 12 January 1940, the weekly magazine *Truth* appeared with the headline "Belisha no loss". It raked up the financial affairs of some companies in which he had been involved, back in 1928, which had collapsed with losses all round the following slump year. Although there was no evidence of wrong-doing by Hore-Belisha, he had lent his name, as an MP, to these flops. *Truth* made it sound far worse; and Tory MP and antisemite Captain Archibald Maule-Ramsay made sure every MP and peer received a copy.²

Hore-Belisha consulted such bigwigs as Sir John Simon and Sir William Jowitt, with a view to taking action against *Truth*. These eminences advised him that it would not be in the national interest to take it to court. Later, Hore-Belisha was to say: "I must confess that in the light of subsequent events, had I been guided alone by my own personal feeling, I would have taken action."³

Founded by the radical, Henry Labouchere, in 1877, to expose corruption "without fear or favour", during the 1930s *Truth* had fallen into far from liberal hands. It acquired "the reputation of specialising in a rather significant way in those scandals with which persons with Jewish names happened to be connected".⁴

An article in *Truth* in August 1938 spoke highly

of Hitler as a "sensitive" artist, while the 24 November 1939 issue had Major JFC Fuller's column defending the Nazi concentration camps (mentioned in a Commons debate in 1941; Fuller, a well-known military historian, was also a keen Mosleyite).

How could a man in Hore-Belisha's position, twice a Minister of the Crown, a respected public figure, be thrown off balance by an attack in a little right-wing rag, allowing it to undermine his confidence and help finish his career? It was because he believed that there were some much more powerful forces behind the well-timed blow from *Truth*.

Cecil King, Hore-Belisha's supporter and confidante, said: "Finally, through the Conservative Central Office, they engineered a very bitter article in *Truth* which attacked his financial records as a director of companies in the 1928-9 boom, and incidentally described the Daily Mirror, for supporting him, as the 'Jew-infested sink of Fleet Street'. As part of this campaign, Belisha said, Lady Astor was going around saying he had feathered his nest on army contracts. This campaign filled in the gap between Belisha's dismissal and the meeting of parliament."

Incidentally, as War Minister, Belisha did not deal with army contracts, which came through the Ministry of Supply, but who cared? Leslie Hore-Belisha had come against what would nowadays be called a Tory "dirty tricks" campaign.

Department of dirty tricks

It was during the notorious "Zinoviev Letter" affair (when the *Daily Mail* ran a faked letter to create a "red scare", hitting Labour and scaring Ramsay MacDonald out of his wits) that JC Davidson, liaising between Conservative Central Office and the security services, met Major Joseph Ball, then with MI5. By 1927, he was at Central Office as director of publicity.

In 1929, responding ostensibly to those Conservatives who had been saying they needed a department to develop social policy, the Party set up the Conservative Research Department. With Joseph Ball in charge, the approach to social and political problems was a distinctly secret service one.

"With Joseph Ball I ran a little intelligence service of our own, quite separate from the Party organisation. We had agents in certain key centres and we also had agents actually in the Labour Party headquarters, with the result that we got their reports on political feeling in the country as well as our own. We also got advance 'pulls' of their literature. This we arranged with Odhams Press who did most of the Labour Party printing, with the result that we frequently received copies of their first leaflets and pamphlets before they reached Transport House. This was of enormous value to us because we were able to study Labour



Party policy in advance, and in the case of the leaflets we could produce a reply to appear simultaneously with their production." (Davidson, in *Memoirs of a Conservative*)

From 1929 until his death in late 1940, Neville Chamberlain was chairman of the Conservative Research Department. In February 1938, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden returned from holiday to find that, in his absence, Prime Minister Chamberlain had rejected overtures from President Roosevelt for international security efforts, preferring the "wonderful chance" of an agreement with Mussolini. He was further upset to find that Italian ambassador Grandi appeared to know more than he did about British intentions. Chamberlain and the Italian almost seemed to have an understanding already.⁵

Behind Eden's back, the Prime Minister had been in regular contact with fascist Italy, through irregular channels. One of them was Sir Joseph Ball, "the confidential agent of Chamberlain, who since the month of October last year has been functioning as a direct 'secret link' between myself and Chamberlain", as Grandi boasted to Count Ciano, Italy's Foreign Minister, on 19 February 1938. Eden resigned on 20 February.

In October 1937, Ciano has signed a secret treaty in Berlin, pledging war on "communism" and the Spanish Republic; the beginning of the Axis. In February 1938, while sweetening the British with promises to respect their interests in Spain, Mussolini gave the green light to Hitler for the Anschluss, the invasion of Austria.

March 1938, on the streets of Vienna, grinning Nazi thugs assault and humiliate elderly Jews, making them kneel and scrub pavements with caustic lye, or perform press-ups for the amusement of the mob. April 1938, in Rome, to mark the signing of an Anglo-Italian agreement, an English Jew comes to grovel on behalf of His Majesty's government. Leslie Hore-Belisha says it gives him "great joy" to meet Signor Mussolini and see his achievements.

Having helped see through the agreement with Italy, Chamberlain's "confidential agent" Ball had more to do. "The mood of the House was one of confidence in Chamberlain rather than Eden, and Joseph Ball of the Conservative Research Department set to work to ensure that the Party in the country would take the same view," said JA Ramsden in his *History of the Conservative Party: the age of Balfour and Baldwin 1902-1940*. The Beaverbrook and Rothermere press were both pro-appeasement (the latter, for example the *Daily Mail*, had backed Mosley and still admired Mussolini) and both were "well briefed by Downing Street", so it was not too hard. (Chamberlain's Downing Street press officer, George Seward, also served for confidential contact with the German embassy.)

Besides press control and manipulation, the government was alive to the importance of other media. In March 1935, Isador Ostrer of Gaumont British agreed to help the National Publicity Bureau organise itself for propaganda. At British Movietone, Sir Gordon Craig and Sir Malcolm Campbell were ardent Tories. Editor Gerald Sanger advised the Tory Party on film propaganda.

"I have cultivated some close personal contacts with the leaders of the British film industry," Ball reported confidentially to Chamberlain in June 1938, "and I am satisfied that I can count upon most of them for their full support to any reasonable degree." Stressing the importance of exploiting the screens of the ordinary cinemas, seen by 20 million people each week, Ball said: "I have already prepared the way for this with all the big circuits among exhibitors ... with Korda among the producers, and with the chairmen of the five big newsreel companies."⁶

An interview with Labour leader Attlee on Eden's resignation was cut from Paramount news within hours of filming. During the Munich crisis, MPs opposed to Chamberlain were censored. Newsreel coverage of the Spanish Civil War had a pro-Franco bias that was remarked upon Government control might also help explain the bland treatment of Nazi Germany in pre-war newsreels.

Ball used other techniques too. A group of rebel Tory MPs had begun meeting at the Queen Anne's Gate home of Ronald Tree. He noticed odd clicks on his telephone. An American journalist friend told him it was being tapped. He said: "Some time later, during the war, I came across Sir Joseph Ball at the Ministry of Information, a dislikeable man with an unenviable reputation for doing some of Chamberlain's 'behind-the-scenes' work... He had the gall to tell me that he himself had been responsible for having my telephone tapped."

According to one-time Central Office worker Percy Cohen, interviewed by Arnold Beichman,⁷ Ball "meddled in all kinds of affairs, some secret, some open. He was a man who was always intriguing and who knew how to make contacts. If Chamberlain wanted a job done, it was always through Ball."

Did they do a job on Leslie Hore-Belisha, using the antisemitic *Truth* magazine? How closely was this foul little weekly connected with high-ranking members of the Conservative Party?

The truth about *Truth*

The Jewish community was concerned about *Truth*. "For a considerable number of years part it has been easily the most venomous antisemitic paper in this country, all the more dangerous as its antisemitism has been of an insidious and subtle nature," Sydney Salomon told the Board of Deputies' Jewish Defence Committee. "Efforts have been made both in public and private to combat this



policy. There are forced behind [it] which are obviously of a powerful nature, but they keep carefully in the background. We have not yet, however, abandoned hope of forcing them out into the open."⁸

During the war, with *Truth* maintaining its antisemitic line, the Board was told: "There is still a very strong feeling that the [Conservative] Central Office is interested in this paper."⁹

On 15 October 1941, Labour MP Josiah Wedgwood raised a Commons adjournment debate on *Truth*: "It is widely read, not so widely as the *Daily Worker*," he conceded (an allusion to the government's ban on that paper), "but very widely in the clubs and messes, by that large class of people who are referred to as the governing class in this country." Describing it as "pro-fascist" and "antisemitic", Wedgwood mentioned *Truth*'s attacks on Jews, including Belisha, Labour MP George Strauss, Neville Laski and Victor Gollancz, and "numerous libel actions" it had faced.

"As in the case of all newspapers, there is somebody at the back of this newspaper. It must be owned by somebody. There are 1,920 shares of which 1,800 are in the name of Lloyds Bank, probably held for other people as nominees." The shares were £10, Wedgwood said, but he did not believe *Truth* could have paid its way with a capital of £18,000, "seeing the damages they have had to pay in these libel actions". He judged that the money behind the magazine had come from the National Publicity Bureau initially, and then from Tory Party funds.

Although shares had been shuffled around, "through these kaleidoscopic changes there appear the figures of Mr Crocker and Sir Joseph Ball, not as directors but as connected with *Truth*. I understand these people are also in the Swinton Committee [the government's Security Executive]... I am more than anxious to get the attitude of the Swinton Committee, towards the fascists and towards the Jews, changed than even to get a change in the editorship of *Truth*" (our parentheses).

It was certainly ironic, if not something more, that while Ball had become deputy chair of the Swinton Committee and brought along his friend, Charles Crocker, a director of *Truth*, that magazine was attacking the 19B internment law over which the Committee presided as "Jewish revenge", and stoutly defending interned Nazi sympathisers like Admiral Sir Barry Domville! (The Swinton Committee also directed the internment and deportation of Jewish refugees and other "enemy aliens".)

During the debate, Aneurin Bevan remarked: "I understand that until recently the Hon Member for West Lewisham was an official of the Conservative Central Office and at the same time chairman of *Truth*." The "honourable" Member for West Lewisham, until he lost his seat in 1945, was

Henry Brooke, later returned for Hampstead; Housing Minister (1957-60); Home Secretary 1961-63). Between 1936 and 1939, Brooke was deputy director of the Conservative Research Department and chairman of the Truth Publishing Company. This was mentioned by Horace B Samuel in a letter to *Time and Tide*, published on 22 November 1941.

Sir Robert Vansittart, whom Chamberlain had sacked from the Foreign Office, engaged Samuel to conduct a confidential private enquiry into *Truth*. He found that in June 1936, after Labouchere had died, the bulk of shares in *Truth* had been acquired, via Lloyds Bank, by Lord Luke of Pavenham, a close associate of Sir Joseph Ball and chairman of the National Publicity Bureau's business committee. To conceal the link with the Bureau, whose funds had been used, shares were handed out in small bundles to associates of Luke and Ball. Henry Brooke took 10. When he became an MP, he passed them over to Crocker.

Samuel's report to Vansittart was that Chamberlain and Ball were behind *Truth*'s attack on Hore-Belisha: "a deliberate effort to kill Belisha once and for all as a political force".¹⁰

Chamberlain died in November 1940. *Truth* carried on. A fortnight after its ownership had been raised in the Commons in 1941, a block of 1,800 shares was quietly shifted to editor Colin Brooks. WC Crocker resigned his directorship. The following year Ball left the Swinton Committee. He remained at the Conservative Research Department until after the war. In 1942, Conservative Party chairman Sir Thomas Dugdale, complaining that the Party had no press to call its own(!), told *Truth*'s editor that his was "the nearest to a dependable organ".¹¹

RA Butler, who took over the CRD in 1946, said he found "no funds or even records". Chris Cooke's *Sources in British Political History*, noting that certain CRD records remain confidential, adds that most old files were destroyed anyway, "partly the result of a wartime fire, and partly of a conscious policy". The entry for Henry Brooke says: "Lord Brooke states that he has not discovered any papers which would be of interest."

In 1952-53, *Truth* passed into new hands. Editor AK Chesterton was dismissed. (Ex-Mosleyite Chesterton started a paper called *Candour* and the League of Empire Loyalists. He later became a founder of the National Front.) In 1954 *Truth* printed an apology to Leslie Hore-Belisha for having made "unfair and baseless attacks upon him motivated by racial prejudice". Better late than never! The paper ceased publication two years later.

In 1956, Sir Guy Kindersley wanted to publish his account of how he had brought the Zinoviev Letter to Tory Central Office. He was invited to a city office where Sir Joseph Ball persuaded him that certain things should remain concealed. Lord Davidson said Ball "is undoubtedly tough and has



looked after his own interests... On the other hand, he is steeped in the Service tradition and has as much experience as anyone I know of the seamier side of life and the handling of crooks."

When Henry Brooke became a minister in the 1960s, people were too polite to mention his past (Brian Pearce, in *The Newsletter*, 19 March 1960, was an exception), even when he was being petitioned, as Home Secretary (and author of the Immigration Act) to do something about racists and fascists. (He strengthened the Public Order Act instead.) This is a matter of Tory Party, not individual, history; but until recently even some historians have seemed unwilling to look into it.

Leslie Hore-Belisha was one of theirs, if not quite one of them. As a Jew he was disposable and they didn't mind how they did it. Neville Chamberlain was, according to James Margach, "the first Prime Minister to employ news management on a large scale". Nowadays, of course, the techniques of media manipulation and "dirty tricks" are much more advanced and sophisticated, and those who wield them at least as ruthless.

Further reading

Books

- The Zinoviev Letter* by Chester, Fay and Young
 - Twilight of Truth* by Richard Cockett (Weidenfeld 1989). Examines Chamberlain's press manipulation. Has gone into Vansittart papers and boldly exposes Ball's link with *Truth*.
 - Collar the Lot* by Peter and Lenni Gillman (Quartet 1980). Wartime internment and deportation of refugees, with interesting sidelight on Ball and 18B, etc.
 - The Persistence of Prejudice* by Tony Kushner (Manchester University Press 1989). A thorough survey of British antisemitism during the "war against fascism"; also raises questions about attitudes on the Left.
 - The Abuse of Power* by James Margach (WH Allen 1978).
 - The Private Papers of Hore-Belisha* by RJ Minney (Collins 1960).
 - A Class Divided* by Robert Shepherd (Macmillan 1988).
- ##### Articles
- Anthony Adamthwaite: "The British Government and the Media, 1937-1938", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 18, April 1983.
 - Arnold Beichman: "Hugger-Mugger in Old Queen Street" *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 13, 1978.
 - TJ Hollins: "The Conservative Party and Film Propaganda Between the Wars", *English Historical Review*, vol XCVI, no 379, April 1981.

1. *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-45*, edited by David Dilkes (Cassell).
2. *Doctor in the Whips' Room*, by H Morris-Jones, cited in Tony Kushner, *Persistence of Prejudice* (see Further reading).
3. *The Private Papers of Hore-Belisha* by RJ Minney (Collins 1960).
4. "Coy Connection" by Brian Pearce, *The Newsletter* (Socialist Labour League, 19 March 1960).
5. *Anthony Eden* by Robert Rhodes-James.
6. TJ Hollins (see Further reading).
7. Arnold Beichman (see Further reading).
8. *Antisemitism in British Society* by Colin Holmes (Edward Arnold 1979).
9. Quoted by Tony Kushner (see Further reading).
10. Richard Cockett (see Further reading).
11. Tony Kushner (see Further reading).

Yesterday's news

Jewish socialist journalism suffered a deep loss with the death of Paul Novick on 21 August 1989. Lawrence Bush pays tribute to the man and his life's work – the *Morgen Freiheit*.

Until 11 September 1988, Paul Novick, at 97, was the world's oldest active newspaper editor. He sat each day at an antique Yiddish typewriter in the offices of the *Morgn Freiheit*, a 66-year-old left-wing Yiddish newspaper for which he had worked since its inception. Novick had been editor in chief since the death in 1939 of Moissaye Olgin, the founding editor, whose image still appeared as a murky photo in the upper right corner of each edition. Few of Novick's cheerleaders expected him to outlive his life's work; some urged him to retire in time to write at least one volume of his memoirs.

Morgn Freiheit means "morning freedom", but for Novick the job had become an enslavement, a nightmarish reverse image of retirement. The paper was \$50,000 in debt; Novick and his co-workers, Chaim Suller and Israel Freed (both well into their 80s), were struggling to amass big bucks from little people – the readers who had been pitching in more than \$300,000 each year from their savings, pensions and social security cheques.

They gave religiously, supporting the *Freiheit* as a *mitzvah*, an obligation of progressive Jewish life. But fewer than 2,000 of them were still alive. The four-page English section, meant to encourage readership among "the youth" (that is, the under-80, born-in-

America generation whose Yiddish is rusty or non-existent) cost \$18,000 annually to produce and had netted fewer than 300 independent subscribers.

The Angel of Death

The paper's rent for Manhattan office space had trebled; postage had steeply increased. The network of radical Jewish clubs and cultural societies – the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women, the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus – that for decades supported the *Freiheit* as their communications hub had been dwindling like the paper that spawned them. It published daily for half a century and became a 16-page weekly in 1981.

In short, the *malekh a moves*, the Angel of Death, was knocking at *Freiheit's* door – and even a \$50,000 pot of gold would not have sufficed as a bribe for long. Still, Novick put in his days at the office and his evenings on the telephone. He tapped out articles about Gorbachev and *glasnost*, which he rightfully saw as a vindication of his paper's post-1956 stance toward the Soviet Union. ("Since Nikita Krushchev disclosed Stalin's crimes," he would write in his farewell editorial, "*the Morgn Freiheit* was characterised by *glasnost* for 32 years... History has justified us!")

He read and clipped the international Jewish press. He sifted through the press releases from the major American Jewish organisations. He dickered with the Orthodox Jewish typesetters who, ironically enough, had taken over the *Freiheit's* production work and now shared its offices.

He sighed over the death

notices of old *chaverim*, most of whom he knew personally from his half-century of speech-making and fundraising on the *Freiheit's* behalf.

He spent occasional afternoons speaking into young historians' tape-recorders.

He daubed the doorposts in red ink so that the Angel of Death would pass over. He sneaked beyond the barriers of time and inevitability to get the newspaper into the mailbox and out to my grandmother in Queens.

A loyal subscriber

My grandmother, Bessie, is 96 years old. One year after receiving the final issue of the *Morgen Freiheit*, she insists that it would soon be back in gear. She refuses the subscription that I offer to the *Yiddish Forward*, which she labels "social-fascist", as if she were still a Communist Party member living in the sectarian pre-Popular Front days of the late '20s and early '30s.

"My Freiheit will be back," she says, almost boastfully. "I just went to a meeting." Some wealthy businessman, she says, is going to bail out the paper. In fact, Bessie has not attended a meeting, or even a *Freiheit* benefit concert, for at least five years. Only sometimes can she make it off her floor, the ninth floor of a 450-bed nursing home, to go downstairs to the main dining hall for her meals.

I repeat to her the details about the *Freiheit's* emergency meeting that I attended just months before the paper's demise: the disappointing turnout of only 20; the astounding energy and eloquence of those 20, all at least 80 years old; the stubbornness that Novick displayed in his

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remarks about the relevance of the *Freiheit* to the Yiddisher folk. Bessie interrupts to tell me, once again, about her personal acquaintance with the editors. Chaver Novick, she said, has aged nicely; he used to be more aloof toward people. Chaim Suller is a *mentsh*; every once in a while he does indeed call Bessie to ask, *Vos makhstu?* (How are you making out?).

Soon she's fabricating another impossible story about how her long-lost friend from nursing school (that is, from 1911) is now working as a nurse in the home and came to see her.

To what end?

There are gems to be found in this overgrown field of hers, true stories about escaping from Siberia before the Russian Revolution, about helping to found the American Communist Party in 1921, about union organising and unemployed councils in the '30s, about marches for "Negro rights" in the '50s. But I've heard and re-heard it all.

Sometimes I get depressed listening to these vague historical anecdotes that seem almost indistinguishable from her fantasies. My heart sours and I wonder, cynically: what did they really accomplish, these Jewish Communist forebears of mine? A labour movement that's nearly moribund, a Soviet Union that chewed 'em up and spat 'em

out, a social-welfare system that's weaker than most others in the industrialised world. How much of their radicalism, their dream of a united human race, their unsinkable optimism – how much of it has been anything but illusion at best, coercive utopianism at worst?

Maybe I should be working on Wall Street.

"Larry, you should do me a favour," Bessie says, interrupting my effort to wind down the conversation. "I need to give to my *Freiheit*. I want you should send them a cheque for \$25. I'll give it to you when I see you."

She still would read the paper if it were available to her. Wearing her thick glasses and using a magnifying glass, she would read it, or fall asleep trying. The *Freiheit* is the mooring place where her dreams dock and come ashore. The *Freiheit* is her prayer, expressing a lifetime of yearning and faith. The *Freiheit* is the distillation of all the efforts in which she participated, efforts to build socialist institutions within an idiom of *Yiddishkayt*, the culture of her heart and her *kishkes*, her innards.

The *Freiheit* is her tonic; more than any medicine it keeps her heart pumping. The *Freiheit* is her passport; whenever she makes a new friend in the nursing home their first contact seems to be that the person asks to see her *Freiheit*.

"Oy, a leybn af dayn kop", life should crown your head, Bessie sighs to me when I tell her I'll add a few bucks to her contribution.

פארהאנדלונגען וועגן אויסגלייך אין לבנון דורכגעפאלן
ירושלים. — א שארפער קריזיס אין וועלן שטענדיג 61 טויז דג

Anger is a fool

I am 37 years old. From 1979 to 1984 I worked as an assistant editor to *Jewish Currents*, a monthly English-language magazine launched by the Morning Freiheit Association in 1946. A recent immigrant from the Woodstock Nation, a young burnout from Weatherman-type politics, I was at least 35 years younger than the most junior of the magazine's editorial board members.

Daily I had to ask myself, *Why am I here? There's no rock n' roll here. There are no feminists here. There is no future here.* And daily the answer came in small political gleanings from these men who had gone through the fires of left-wing sectarianism and Stalinism, of self-inflicted isolation and McCarthy-inflicted persecution, to emerge with ash on their faces but with a survivors' kind of wisdom.

That wisdom taught that "doing politics" means influencing people, not just being "correct" ("What's the good of a good head," asks a Jewish proverb, "if the feet can't carry it?") It taught that the word "internationalism" needs to have its hyphen restored ("You can't chew with someone else's teeth.") It taught that humility, not arrogance, fuels political change. ("Anger is a fool.") It taught about sectarian mistakes that I would not have time to repeat. ("Enemies cannot do a man the harm that he does himself.")

These were the remnants of a radical Jewish counterculture that had once been a vibrant alternative to the visible poles of synagogue or assimilation that confronted American Jews. At the heart of that counterculture for half a century had been the *Freiheit*, presenting some of the finest and most beloved writers of the Yiddish language (Morris Winchevsky, Moishe Leib Halpern, Moishe Nadir, Avram Reisen, Sholem Asch, Leon Kobrin...) and spawning a fraternal movement that included choral groups, day schools and summer camps, workers' universities, experimental theatres and more.

Isolation and attrition

Time and again the *Freiheit* community had suffered isolation from the Jewish mainstream and attrition from its own ranks thanks to the stupidities and blunders of the Communist Party to which the paper owed its loyalties: in 1929, when anti-Jewish pogroms in Palestine were described as anti-imperialist uprisings for which the Zionist movement itself was to blame (the *Freiheit* had initially printed a carefully balanced treatment of the events); in 1939, when the *Freiheit* engaged in an overweening defence of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact; in the early '50s, when the *Freiheit* remained blind to Stalin's campaign of destruction against Soviet Jewish culture.

Yet the core *Freiheit* activists, when finally forced to reckon with realities of Soviet life and Soviet antisemitism, had not crumbled into despair or cynicism, had not turned into rabid reactionaries, had not gone out to make a buck and numb themselves with material comfort. Instead they had self-consciously engaged in a kind of secular *teshuvah*, the turning, or repentance, that is a core experience of Jewish spirituality – and had emerged with a hard-

tempered sense of Jewish socialism, a welding of the particular and the universal, an acknowledgment of the Talmudic as well as the Marxist roots of their dialectics.

They're all ancient now. Bessie no longer understands the word "dialectics". Yet even as the political vocabulary slips from her mind, she retains command of two basic sounds that summarise the central teaching of the *Freiheit* for years, the central dialectic of Jewish socialism: a Jewish groan of

"...a Jewish groan of realism and a Jewish sigh of hope. They both sound like 'oy'."

realism and a Jewish sigh of hope. They both sound like "oy".

I recognise that sound – as I recognise *Yiddishkayt* as rock'n'roll, a homeland for a counterculture. I recognise the choruses and clubs as communes. I recognise the emigration to the Golden Land of America as a kind of acid trip. I recognise the *Freiheit* as *Tikkun*, *Present Tense*, *Genesis 2*, *Lillith*, *New Outlook*, all the progressive Jewish magazines that are crowding the so-called margins of Jewish life. I recognise Sholem Aleichem as John Lennon, artists whose personal reflections mirrored the experiences and inchoate yearnings of hundreds of thousands of people.

Paul Novick would have understood these oddball analogies. During the week following Lennon's murder, Novick wrote a column expressing his amazement at the hundreds of thousands of young people around the world who had poured into the streets to express their grief at the death of their poet. He spoke of his realisation that John Lennon and the Beatles had meant far,

far more to their fans than Novick and others of his generation had ever realised. He chided himself gently, saying, "Let us not think we know everything and understand everything."

To read such open-hearted words from a man three times my age filled me with awe. Novick was living in many eras at once, intensely aware of the meaning of history but always alert, too, to what was new in the world. I resolved that day to stop thinking and acting condescendingly toward young people who had not lived through the '60s, but to learn about their lives rather than bemoan their supposed loss – in a word, to remain a radical or, at least, avoid being a fuddy-duddy.

Strong currents

The *malekh a moves* was a stiff city wind that was pushing against him as he made his way on West 79th Street to a winter 1981 meeting of the Jewish Currents advisory committee.

I came running out of the subway, late for the meeting. I saw and recognised him from a block away – a small figure without a cane, without a walker, starkly vulnerable, staunchly pushing on.

I approached without running to arrive without startling him. He knew me without introduction and took my arm. I told him how much I appreciated the John Lennon column. He reiterated his feelings of surprise at the depth of mourning that he had witnessed.

Our mutual satisfaction was immense. My presence assured that he would get where we were going, despite the bitter wind. And his presence assured that I wasn't late – it couldn't have begun without Paul Novick.

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Intifada: Zionism, imperialism and Palestinian resistance by Phil Marshall, Bookmarks £5.95

Khamsin no 14/15, Profile of an Occupation, Zed Press £9

A socialist understanding of any international conflict demands a dual approach. One requires a breadth of vision able to discern the "broad sweep of history" operating within the narrowest of confines – the ability to locate local, social, regional, continental and even a global context. This "wider" vision needs to be complemented by an appreciation of the peculiarities of the local situation: an understanding of what forces are influencing people's thoughts and actions and what is important to them.

Last year saw the publication of two books inspired by the Intifada, one purporting to take the wider view, and one analysing more local aspects of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Phil Marshall's book, *Intifada: Zionism, Imperialism and Palestinian Resistance*, uses the Intifada as a starting point from which to develop a comprehensive analysis of the historical role of Zionism and imperialism in the Middle East. *Palestine: Profile of an Occupation* is a collection of essays published by the Khamsin Collective that examines a number of crucial material and ideological aspects of the oppression of the Palestinians.

The two books, like the two approaches, should complement each other, but they do not. The central thesis of Phil Marshall's book is that Zionism and Israel

are entirely the creatures of imperialism; therefore no solution to the conflict is possible without confronting and defeating imperialism. It follows that this task is beyond the Palestinians unless their struggle is incorporated into that of the only social force capable of completing this task – the working class throughout the Arab world.

Marshall regards the Intifada as an exemplary model of struggle for the Arab world; but as a solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict he sees the Intifada and other initiatives springing from the Palestinian people as ultimately futile. The PLO is dismissed as essentially a bourgeois nationalist-led movement whose policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab states flows from its "class collaborationist" strategy. Thus the PLO is fated to betray the aspirations of the Palestinian people; indeed, it has already done so by its acceptance of the "two state" compromise. For Marshall, a settlement based on the establishment of a "mini" state in the occupied territories offers nothing of real value to the Palestinians. The only path to a solution that Marshall offers is to build revolutionary Marxist tendencies and, eventually, parties, prepared to take the "long view" throughout the Arab world, though especially Egypt, the country where the working class,

potentially, has the most clout.

The central flaw in Marshall's argument is that he does not seriously consider the "national question". He sees no specific role for the Palestinians except as part of the Arab working class; and in this he mirrors the long-time Zionist denial of the legitimacy of a specific Palestinian national identity as opposed to the general Arab one. As for the existence of an Israeli nation on the soil of Palestine, at no point does he touch on the question or refer to the possibility. A clue to his approach comes early in the book when, attempting to deal with the "Jewish question", he dismisses the Bund (in a footnote, of course) as merely a current within Jewish nationalism. Not even Lenin did that!

Reading Marshall is like being caught in a time warp and being dragged back to the 1960s and '70s when much of the European Left substituted simplistic and sterile nonsense for serious analysis of the conflict. Phil Marshall and, one assumes, the Socialist Workers' Party (of which he is a member) have come up with arguments that really let them off the hook. They are able to ignore the complexities of the national question and to deny that Zionism has its own internal dynamic, not always in accord with imperialist interests.

They have no need to pay any great attention to the situation of the working class in Israel, since they claim that that class has produced not a single act of solidarity with the Palestinians. Thus, unlike Israeli and Palestinian socialists, Marshall never asks the question: how can the working class in Israel be won from Zionism? He merely asserts that it cannot.

It is frustrating, these days, to come across a book about the Middle East that contains arguments formulated at long distance, short on knowledge and dismissive of the thinking and the struggles of people in the area. Thankfully, his analysis has been

bypassed by events.

The Khamsin Collective has honourably kept alive socialist analysis of Middle East issues for a number of years. *Palestine: Profile of an Occupation* continues this tradition. The essays in this collection display serious scholarship, unquestioned commitment to justice for the Palestinian people and perceptive analysis. Though the various writers deal with particular, rather than general, aspects of the conflict, one feels that they need not look to Phil Marshall or the SWP for an appreciation of the "broad sweep of history". This collection admirably lives up to its title in providing a detailed profile of the mechanics – material, legal and ideological – whereby Palestinian human, civil and national rights are denied.

Rosemary Sayigh and Laila al Hamdani (the latter in an interview) paint a moving picture of the courageous and liberating role of Palestinian women's initiatives and organisations in the struggle. Adel Samara describes how the development of the economy of the West Bank has been distorted and "peripheralised" due to its enforced subjection to the dictates of Israel's economy. Toby Shelley outlines the plight and the struggles of Palestinian workers virtually forced to provide Israel with a pool of migrant labour. Ben Cashdan, in an essay entitled "Colonial law and ideology", clearly illustrates the double standards of a legal system specifically designed to deny Palestinians any remedy in the courts against land seizures and abuses of civil and human rights.

Two essays by Ehud Ein Gil and Haim Bereshith look at the responses to the Intifada of some Israelis prepared to recognise the legitimacy of Palestinian nationalism. Ein Gil examines solutions proposed by two Israeli politicians. Bereshith analyses images of Jews and Palestinians mirrored in recent Hebrew literature, specifically in the works of liberal or leftist writers like Amos Oz. What

emerges from both these essays is the reluctance of many Israelis prominent in the peace camp, perhaps even willing to accept a Palestinian state in the territories, to break with some of the essentially racist assumptions implicit in Zionist ideology. Bereshith identifies a tendency that grudgingly acknowledges Palestinian rights, but asserts that these rights, when necessary, must give way to superior Jewish rights and that the Palestinians must accept the historic justice of the Zionist project. Thus, Ein Gil's proffered solutions propose a "demilitarised" Palestinian state which must accept Israeli-dictated constraints on its sovereignty. In the Hebrew literature reviewed by Bereshith, Palestinian characters often appear as strange alien figures, the "other", while the reasonable, familiar and civilised Israeli archetype nevertheless expresses a strong sense of kinship and belonging, even when visiting the most reactionary, fundamentalist Zionist settlements on the West Bank.

Perhaps the contrast between Marshall's book and the Khamsin collection is best exemplified by Marshall's tendency to arrogantly prescribe formulae for the resolu-

tion of the conflict at long distance, something notably absent from the latter work. Thus, for Marshall, the creation of a Palestinian state, without its being preceded by the defeat of Zionism and imperialism, is bound to be a betrayal.

The Khamsin writers barely refer to the "two state" solution. One suspects that for them also it is no "solution" at all. Their essays, however academic in content some of them might appear, nevertheless breathe commitment to justice and equal rights. Another national state existing alongside the national state of Israel, with its edifice of racist laws and practices untouched, provides no long-term solution to the problems of the region. However, one suspects that the Khamsin writers would acknowledge that, despite all its shortcomings, the "two state" policy would offer the Palestinians an infrastructure capable of providing at least some shield against further tragedy. It may also provide, at present, the only opportunity to begin a process of mutual national reconciliation and a genuine alternative to massive bloodshed.

CLIVE GILBERT

QUIZ ANSWERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Rosa Luxembourg | detective (b) Her mother Ruth First's imprisonment by the South African authorities is recounted in 117 Days. And the father of (a) and husband of (b) is Joe Slovo, formerly commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, which means "Spear of the Nation". |
| 2. 1919. She was murdered by militiamen and her body was thrown into a canal | |
| 3. Angela Davis. | |
| 4. Taurus. 5 May. | |
| 5. The Jolie Rougier (red and beautiful); also known as the Jolly Roger – in other words the Red Flag. They were pirates. | |
| 6. The Yippies. | |
| 7. Benjamin Zephaniah. | |
| 8. Karl Marx | |
| 9. David Ben Gurion | |
| 10. They are the only two current heads of state born in Ireland | |
| 11. Meyer London, a Jewish socialist, represented one of the districts of New York in Congress from 1914 to 1918 and again from 1920 to 1922 | |
| 12. Vladimir Medem, one of the early leaders of the Bund, becomes Carlos Menem, President of Argentina, who is of Syrian origin | |
| 13. (a) Myra Hess is the great aunt of (b) Nigel Lawson (did we say they all had to be socialists?) | |
| 14. (a) Gillian Slovo is the author of books featuring Kate Baier, the saxophone-playing | |
| | So how did you do? Score 2 for each completely correct answer and 1 for a near miss. |
| | Over 25 You know the compilers / are (one of) the compilers / have the same devious mind as the compilers. |
| | 10 to 25 Keep on reading Jewish Socialist. You'll get there – eventually. |
| | Under 10 Go and join the Board of Deputies' Securitate! |

Man, Superman and Nazi Ideology

Male Fantasies. Volume 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History; Volume 2: Male Bodies, Psychoanalysing the White Terror by Klaus Theweleit, translated by Stephen Conway, Erica Carter and Chris Turner (Polity Press Vol 1 £27.50 hbk, £8.95 pbk; Vol 2 £35 hbk, £8.95 pbk)

There has been much more debate in the rest of Europe than in this country in recent years about how fascism and Nazism are to be read in the light of wider developments in sexual politics, post-structuralist theory and psychoanalysis. The debates here have tended to focus either on the personalities of leading Nazis, or on the character of the Nazi state or the relationship between capitalism and fascism. However, some major contemporary European writers on the cultural and psychological issues are now beginning to be published in English.

The work of Klaus Theweleit is essential background to the

representative of all active Nazis, let alone of other fascists in Europe at the time. Other fascisms, such as Franco's reconstitution in 1938 of the Falange, were quite different from both Nazism and its embryonic form in the Freikorps.

Theweleit's work analyses the brutal, partly sexual, hatred of women by a number of writers associated with the Freikorps in the 1920s and 1930s. From these writers, he draws an account of a psychological type, in which is found a number of traditional features of psychoanalytic interpretation, such as fear of castration, incestuous desires and obsessive violence towards women. In these writings women appear either as terrifying, apocalyptic "rifle-women" or else as pale, dead, pure mothers or sisters.

These men, he argues, never completed the usual processes of developing an ego. Because, he believes, they have not passed through the oedipal stage, nor repressed their primal passions, they never mark out the ordinary boundaries of self. He goes on to claim that this type of fascist individual ego is the product of a European history in which over the centuries men developed a split between their interior "feminine" fluidities and their more rigid "masculine" disciplines. This is problematic, since it leaves poorly explained men's relationships in fascism with the military and civilian collectivities of army, youth movement, party and Führerprinzip.

He points to the routine beating of children, to the meticulous instilling of pain through drill and the mess-room camaraderie among soldiers in training, and the military manners of civil society. These practices are supposed to be responsible for the brutalisation, destructiveness and brittleness of masculinity

characteristic of his early fascists. These fragments cannot be made into a complete account of a highly specific psychic type.

The fundamental problem is that Theweleit's concept of fascism is impoverished by his own limited study. For all that the Freikorps and many of the Nazis were in love with an idea of the military self, Nazism and fascism in general were not militarism writ large. Nazism was an extraordinary mobilisation of civilian values into a specific form of tyranny, terror, reaction and racism. The military moment in Nazism is central, but explains neither the Nazi state and party practice nor the mass appeal of Nazism. If it were a matter of militarism in childhood, education and youth culture alone, then the 19th and early 20th century British public schools ought to have produced a society as militarist as post-Wilhelmine Germany.

In the second volume, he argues that fascism identifies Jews with sexual desire and lust: the things which most threaten the fascist self-image of phallic masculinity. He cites the association in fascist language between "Jewishness" and syphilis, sexual corruption and effeminacy. These associations are relevant, but they hardly suffice to explain the Holocaust: after all, sufferers from syphilis, the sexually active and effeminate men were not the main objects of the Final Solution. Antisemitism has much deeper roots in European culture than can be explained by a particular moment of masculinity. The projection of sexual fears and desires on to particular groups will not, of itself, suffice to explain political projects such as Nazism.

Nazism was not, as Theweleit sometimes suggests, a monolithic culture of military masculinity. Its appeal to men depended

upon containing within its ideology several mutually inconsistent masculinities. On the one hand, there were the romantic, neo-Wagnerian mystics such as Alfred Rosenberg, and on the other, the modernising technologically obsessed men like Speer.

By focusing on masculinity, Theweleit poses more clearly than many authors the problem of explaining the bloodlust, the adulation of destruction and

slaughter among Nazis from the Freikorps to the last of the SS men. Here it touches the debates on the Holocaust, as to whether it is to be seen as a transcendent, metaphysical moment of near-apocalyptic evil, after which only the silence before the sacred and taboo is appropriate. The importance of Theweleit's project is not that it purports to give a complete explanation of the rise of Nazism, but that it shows that psychoanalytic

methods have a role in explaining the profoundly human possibility of vicious killing. It is not necessary to accept Theweleit's particular dialect of psychoanalysis to see that we may yet develop a more sophisticated historical project within which psychoanalytic tools will be used together, with those of other disciplines, in order to explain how the Holocaust was possible.

PERRI 6

Screening Communists

Fellow Traveller has been widely acclaimed as one of the few films to have the courage to deal with McCarthyism and the first to address the element of antisemitism within it. Consciously borrowing many of its images from film noir, it tells the story of Asa Kaufman, a Jewish screenwriter and communist fellow traveller, in exile in grey, cold London as a refugee from McCarthyism. Isolated in a bedsit complete with eccentric, repressive landlady fresh out of an Ealing comedy, Asa struggles to earn a living. He ends up writing the screenplays for a children's television serial, *Robin Hood*, under an assumed (English) name. In a slightly unconvincing happy ending, he is finally reunited with his wife and family.

Set against Asa's experiences of drab England are flashbacks of a technicoloured Hollywood. This forms the idealised backdrop for his memories of his wife, family and best friend and famous movie star, Cliff. Cliff shoots himself in

his swimming pool but his memory continues to haunt Asa. We know Cliff is Jewish because an enormous gold *Magen David* nestles on his manly chest (and he calls Asa "boychik" a lot).

Another key theme in the film is Asa's relationship with the sinister psychoanalyst, Gerry (Irish, not Jewish) Leavy. Melodramatic monochrome scenes of Asa's recurrent dream of an FBI man raping his mother recur throughout. As you may have guessed, subtle it ain't. Unsurprisingly, Dr Leavy turns out to be the villain of the piece—a stoolpigeon for the FBI, leaking the confidential revelations of his patients.

The material is exciting and important and it should have been a wonderful movie. It deals with important themes, but glosses over the surface rather than trying to undertake any serious analysis. For instance, the women in the film are unconvincing, merely foils for the main narrative which is more interested in best buddies Asa and Cliff. Yet

even that relationship remains fundamentally unexplored. They are clearly very close and there are hints (insofar as this film can do anything oblique as hint) that their relationship has homo-erotic undertones (lots of shots of them rolling about in swimming trunks on a bright Californian beach).

Even the film's concern with things Jewish is on the surface rather than an integral part of its concerns. The shot of Cliff's *Magen David* is typical. We see the symbols of Judaism, the *menorah* in the background at a family dinner for example, but no affirmation of Jewishness and conversely no examples of antisemitism. The fact that Cliff and Asa are Jews is incidental.

Visually, the film is slick and stylish, with some good jokes and some of the cast acting their socks off, especially in the cameo parts. It's also stuffed full with references to other films. It is Hollywood mythologising its own myths to produce a good evening's entertainment but nothing more.

MARIAN SHAPIRO

Fellow Traveller dir Philip Saville (1989)

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