

## JEWISH SOCIALIST

is a quarterly magazine launched by the Jewish Socialists' Group in 1985 as a forum for radical ideas and opinions on issues directly affecting the Jewish community here and elsewhere and on questions vital to minorities and socialists everywhere.

Through this forum we aim to:

- ▶ highlight the clash of political, economic and cultural interests in our community;
- ▶ encourage the democratisation of all aspects of Jewish life and publicise and support all democratic forces in the Jewish community;
- ▶ highlight the struggle for equality for women and gays and lesbians within and beyond our community;
- ▶ promote views that link the interests of Jewish people to the interests of other national and cultural minorities and oppressed groups, locally, nationally and internationally, and to a common socialist future;
- ▶ counter myths about the 'shrinking', 'dying' and 'assimilating' diaspora by affirming the vitality of Jewish communities across the world;
- ▶ counter Zionist ideology, which subordinates the needs of diaspora Jews to the demands of Israeli state nationalism, and justifies exclusivist, discriminatory and repressive practices towards the Palestinian people;
- ▶ promote ideas and perspectives that offer a progressive solution to conflicts involving the Jewish people such as the Israel/Palestine conflict;
- ▶ expose and oppose fundamentalist ideas and religious coercion within and beyond our community;
- ▶ reclaim a 'people's history' of the Jews which connects our historical experience to the struggles of other working people and the oppressed;
- ▶ highlight the problems facing minorities in society and within progressive movements and make these concerns central to discussions of socialist strategy here and now;
- ▶ support and promote radical progressive cultural initiatives within and beyond the Jewish community;
- ▶ promote views which link the struggle to build socialism with the struggle for a healthy and sustainable environment;
- ▶ promote a socialism that is culturally pluralist and fully democratic both in its ends and means.

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The JSG is a campaigning organisation which is active on issues directly affecting the Jewish community, other minorities and oppressed groups, and the wider labour movement.

The group works and campaigns with other organisations sharing some or all of our aims and always welcomes new members who support our political principles. All members receive a regular internal discussion bulletin, a frequent newsletter detailing meetings and events and can participate fully in our annual conference and in any aspect of the group's work.

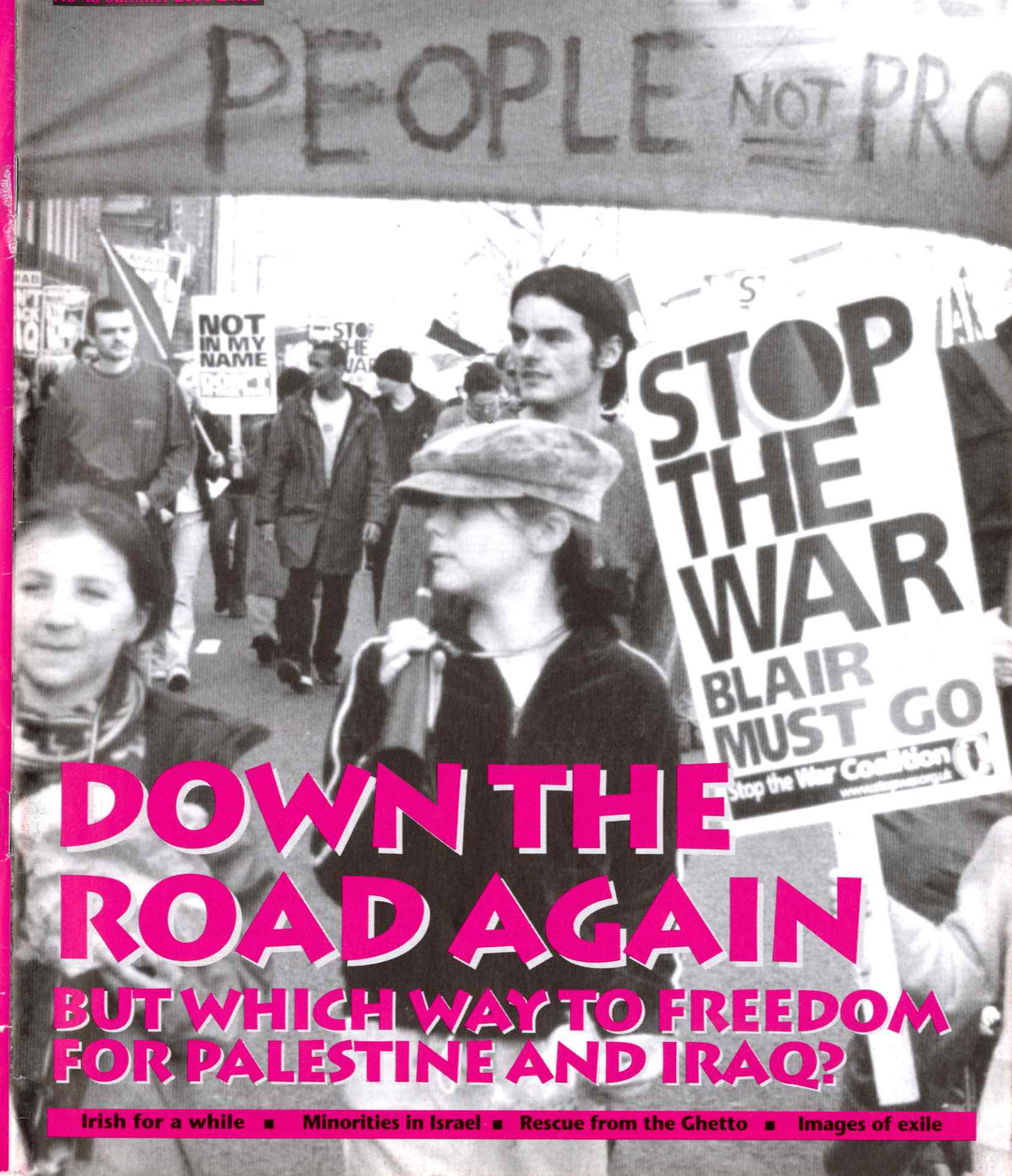
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# JEWISH ★ SOCIALIST

THE MAGAZINE OF THE JEWISH SOCIALISTS' GROUP

No 48 Summer 2003 £1.50



# DOWN THE ROAD AGAIN BUT WHICH WAY TO FREEDOM FOR PALESTINE AND IRAQ?

Irish for a while ■ Minorities in Israel ■ Rescue from the Ghetto ■ Images of exile



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## EDITORIAL

In the wake of the first Gulf War in 1991, Britain and America promised moves towards stability, peace and progress in a region beset by massive inequalities, dictatorial regimes, increasing fundamentalism and the running sore of the Israel-Palestine conflict with its longstanding military occupation. There seemed to be some grounds for optimism at the start of the Oslo peace process but these evaporated as it became clear that far more concessions were being demanded from the occupied than from the occupying power, and that continued Israeli settlement and brutality in the territories would bring little more than occasional murmurs of disapproval.

The price paid by the Palestinian movement for the West's failure to promote a just peace has been impoverishment and desperation among the Palestinian population and the growth in influence of fundamentalist forces which are used cynically by the Israeli and American governments to justify further intransigence.

In the aftermath of the even more controversial second Gulf war, there are again glimmers of hope. A Road Map has been declared which has at its end a viable Palestinian state. On page 6 a leading Palestinian voice, Afif Safieh, assesses its prospects. The dynamism of the global anti-war movement failed to prevent the war and subsequent occupation of Iraq and the redistribution of its oil resources to American interests but that movement remains powerful and might yet win gains in the peace. Mark Levene suggests how it can move forward (page 27). The 'war against terror' which blithely talks of 'freedom' and 'democracy' is taking a toll of civil rights on the home front. Steve Cohen looks at the historical precedents (page 16). But the coming months are looking increasingly hazardous for the warmongers. We must strengthen our movement and seize the opportunities that will be presented.

### OBITUARY: BERNARD MISRAHI 1952-2003

Jewish Socialist magazine and the socialist and anti-racist movements suffered a great loss when Bernard Misrahi died earlier this year, aged 50, after a long hard fight against cancer. A large crowd attended the funeral service, Bernard's family being joined by friends from the many fields in which he was active, including the Jewish Socialists' Group, Chartist magazine, the Mennonite Church, peace campaigns, and nursery education in Hackney.

Born in Malta, though his Sephardic-Jewish father's family hailed from Turkey, Bernard was brought to London at an early age and spent part of his childhood in Norwood children's home. Joining the Labour-Zionist youth movement Habonim and attending its summer camps, he retained his taste for outdoor pursuits, such as hiking, long after turning to more radical politics. He was a 'bolshy' member of the Schools Action Union before joining the Young Socialists and the Labour Party. With Chartist he moderated his youthful Trotskyism. Ever optimistic and always inclined to believe the best of people, Bernard clung to his Labour Party card, but he could not go along with Blairism, and confided to friends after the last election that he had voted for the Socialist Alliance in his constituency.

Fuelled perhaps by his own childhood experiences, Bernard's concern for child welfare led him to work in nursery education, gain a distinction for his academic studies and eventually become an inspector of nursery education in Hackney. Together with his partner Lesley he raised two children of his own, Adam and Esther.

Bernard was a respected and well-liked member of the Jewish Socialists' Group for 15 years, and brought to it his wealth of campaigning experiences gained in anti-racist and anti-deportation campaigns and in internationalist activity, especially around Zionism, Israel and Palestine. He was a frequent contributor to Jewish Socialist and Chartist. He helped found JustPeace UK, campaigning for Israeli withdrawal and a just peace in Palestine. Among tributes to him after his death were messages from Afif Safieh, head of the Palestinian delegation to the UK, and Karma Nabulsi, former deputy representative for the PLO in Britain.

Though he and Lesley combined their socialist principles with seeking religious truth, Bernard was never one to preach but he won respect from people of a wide variety of beliefs by his kindness and example. His quiet, calm and persuasive style in political discussion, avoiding rancour or negativity, went with a stubborn and determined courage. After an earlier bout with cancer in the 1980s, he came out of hospital and walked the Thames from the source to the sea to raise money for cancer research. In between more recent spells of treatment he came on the first mass Stop the War demonstration in his wheelchair, pushed by his children, and gave out leaflets. To the end, he wanted to listen to news and politics, and managed the odd joke. One of his last requests was that rather than flowers, people donate money in his memory to the National Stop the War Coalition. He was a rare gem that shone in his darkest hours, and will continue to help light our way in the future.

Cover picture: Anti-war demonstration 15th February 2003. Photo: Simon Lynn

# Remembering the Rosenbergs

Rebecca Faulkner reports from New York

At a minute before 8pm on Friday 19th June 1953, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed at Sing Sing prison in New York.

Sentenced to death by electric chair after refusing to confess falsely to giving the 'secret' of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union, or to implicate others in what the United States government claimed was a 'communist conspiracy', their state-sanctioned lynching took place at 8pm rather than 11pm, so as not to interfere with the Jewish sabbath.

Throughout the world, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in solidarity to mourn the terrible tragedy of a family torn apart, and to protest against an administration that was blind to the outrage of its citizens.

Last month, exactly 50 years to the day, over 2,000 people attended an event

commemorating the execution and to benefit the Rosenberg Fund for Children. Held at City Center, a former union hall in midtown Manhattan, the event attracted many people who were old enough to remember

protesting in Union Square that fateful night. Among the younger faces in the audience were my husband and me, who, like many of our friends in New York, were raised to believe in social justice and equality. We knew only too well of the fate that befell the Rosenbergs for daring to dissent in a climate of fear and intolerance. And living in present-day America we are familiar with such a climate – one in which the anti-communist rhetoric of the 1950s has been replaced by a dangerous, stifling 'anti-terrorist' agenda.

I grew up in a left-wing family in London during the Thatcher years, haunted by images of the McCarthy witch-hunts and the Hollywood blacklists. There were at least three copies of the devastating Rosenberg Letters on our bookshelves. My husband,

Adam Lubinsky and his family are friends of Robert Meeropol, the youngest son of the Rosenbergs, so the evening was even more potent for him and for my in-laws who accompanied us.

As a tribute the event was deeply moving, with performers including musician Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul & Mary) and actress Tovah Feldshuh reading excerpts from the family's letters. Harry Belafonte was among the many celebrities who conjured up the personal accounts of protestors from 1953.

Many of the voices were those of seasoned radicals but some were schoolchildren, frightened parents, bystanders.

Choreographer Bill T Jones danced a mesmerising solo, celebrating life and resistance, and the music of folk legend Ronnie Gilbert spoke of the struggle as ongoing. Above the stage on a resplendent banner, the faces of Ethel and Julius looked out from atop a distorted American flag.

Hauntingly provocative, they remind us that it was indeed patriotic to resist and to speak out.

But in addition to commemorating a tragedy of such historic proportions, Robert and his brother Michael Meeropol encouraged the audience to celebrate the legacy of justice that their parents imbued them with. In the words of activist and death row inmate Mumia Abu Jamal (whose son Mazi Ibn Jamal read a powerful statement about his father's legacy), it may be 50 years later, but what have we achieved?

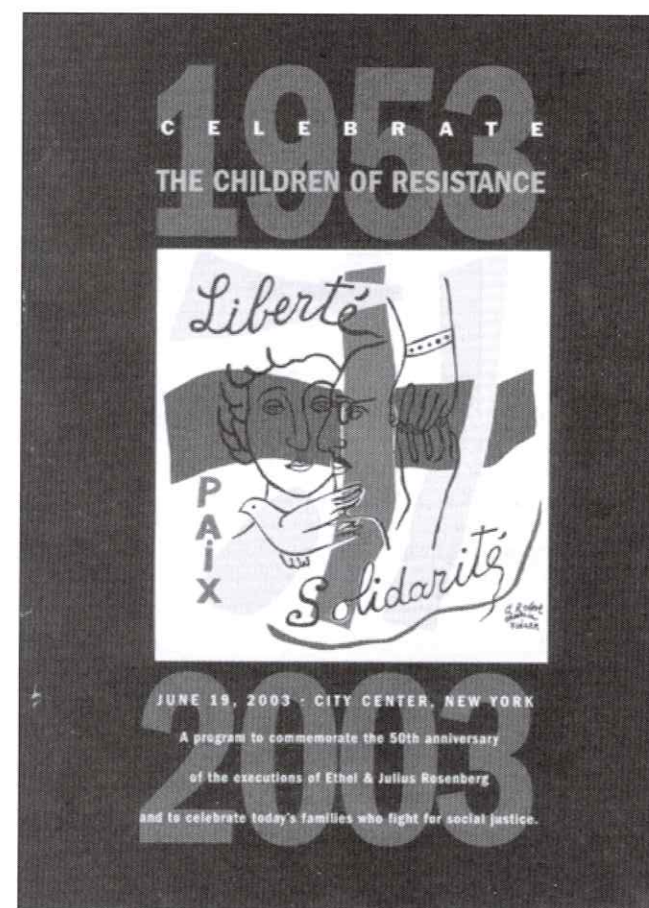
In 1990 Robert Meeropol started the Rosenberg Fund for Children, a public foundation to support children in the United States whose parents have been injured, harassed, jailed or killed as a consequence of fighting for freedom and social justice. The funds from the benefit directly support the foundation's aims and go towards providing grants for

children and families in need.

Towards the end of the evening some of these children were given the opportunity to tell their harrowing, inspirational stories, bringing the events of the past 50 years into sharp focus. By highlighting that now, more than ever, we must continue to 'carry it forward and pass it on,' in Robert Meeropol's words, these young adults are helping to build a more just society, and are keeping the Rosenbergs' flame of resistance burning.

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Website: www.rfc.org

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# B'tselem

The Israeli Information Centre  
for Human Rights in the  
Occupied Territories

B'tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, is campaigning against the Israeli Government building a barrier wall along the entire West Bank. B'tselem is highlighting the seizure of land involved and the impact this barrier will have on the Palestinian people.

Thirteen communities, home to 11,700 people, will become enclaves imprisoned between the barrier and the Green Line.

The winding route of the wall (see map on B'tselem's website, address below) together with the closure of areas as a result of another barrier ('a depth barrier') will turn 19 communities, in which 128,000 residents live, into isolated enclaves.

Thirty-six communities inhabited by 72,000 Palestinians, which are

located to the east of the wall or the depth barrier, will be separated from their farmland.

The planned Israeli-controlled crossing points in the barrier will leave Palestinians dependent on Israel's security system. The resulting restrictions on movement will cause grave harm to Palestinian farmers who will have difficulty getting to their fields and selling their produce. The wall will also impede the access of rural people to hospitals in Tulkarm, Qualqiliya and East Jerusalem.

The wall is intended to 'create facts' prior to any future arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians. If this were not so, it would follow the Green Line. Instead it snakes around to include illegal settlements as well as other Palestinian land on the Israeli side of the barrier.

The Israeli government intends the first 145 km (Stage 1) to be operational by July 2003.

B'tselem publishes regular reports. These include: Lethal Curfew, on the Israeli army's use of live ammunition to enforce curfews; Human Shield, on the Israeli army's use of Palestinian civilians as human shields; Standing Idly By, on settler attacks on Palestinian civilians in Hebron; Forseen but not Prevented, on settler attacks on Palestinian olive pickers; Al-Mawasi, Gaza Strip – intolerable life in an isolated Enclave, and Abuse of Palestinians by IDF Soldiers in Hebron, 3 December 2002. All these reports are available free from B'tselem.

Contact: 8 Hata'asiya Street (4th floor), Talpiot, Jerusalem 93420. Email: mail@btselem.org Website: www.btselem.org

This hopeful headline apparently heralding the overthrow of the Evil Empire was published, of all places, in London Jewish News. And not before time for a hyperpower that has oppressed and impoverished millions across the globe. However, on closer examination it turns out to be a disappointment. The US it refers to is the United Synagogue.



# Campaign Against Criminalising Communities



The Campaign Against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC) was set up to link political activists, lawyers and migrant communities in opposition to the Terrorism Act 2000. The Act had broadened the definition of terrorism to include 'the threat' of 'serious damage to property' in ways 'designed to influence the Government' for a 'political cause'. Organisations could be banned here because of their activities in other countries.

On May Day weekend 2000, a few dozen people assembled at Highbury Fields for a photo shoot. Dressed up as famous freedom fighters, they protested against new powers, which could have criminalised Nelson Mandela as a terrorist.

Under the Act, the Home Office banned 21 organisations, many of which had roots in ethnic minority communities here, including the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Tamil Tigers. In response, CAMPACC helped to organise a protest at the Home Office, where over 6,000 demonstrators ridiculed the ban on various organisations. Many wore T-shirts which said, 'I am the PKK,' while asking why the police did not arrest them as 'terrorists'.

In 2002 some of those protesters were prosecuted for their association with the PKK. In court, the defence was able to educate the jury about Turkey's oppression of the Kurds, and comments from the activist comedian, Mark Thomas, led the jury to break out in laughter at the prosecution. The jury would not convict, and the court case was

eventually abandoned.

After the 11th September attacks, the Government claimed we faced a public emergency that required even greater powers. The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001 authorised the internment of non-UK citizens in circumstances where the state had a suspicion of 'terrorist' links but where the person could not be safely returned to their own country. Since December 2001 several Muslims have been interned and have appealed against their detention to the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC).

At SIAC hearings in July and October 2002, CAMPACC handed out leaflets denouncing the fake 'public emergency' and attacking SIAC itself as a 'star chamber' that colluded in the deprivation of liberty. Members held placards in front of the court building, and their press interviews were reported in the news.

In the run-up to the US-UK attack on Iraq, the government sought to link Iraq with 'terrorism' threats here. A CAMPACC leaflet emphasised that the 'war on terror' made us all targets of the state, vulnerable to political intimidation and to scare stories about threats to our lives. CAMPACC organised a public meeting on the night before the anti-war demonstration on 15th February 2003. Speakers emphasised how the 'anti-terrorism' powers were being used to intimidate migrant communities.

CAMPACC continues to emphasise that the so-called 'war on terror' threatens us all. This

was the title of a public meeting held on 13th May 2003 in the incongruous setting of the Moses Room in the House of Lords. Beneath a painting of the prophet, several activists and lawyers told a packed audience how the 'anti-terrorism' laws are being used to persecute refugees, often in collusion with oppressive regimes abroad. Mike Mansfield argued that the government was portraying asylum seekers as bogus, criminal and potential terrorists and in response people must act in solidarity to oppose any use of the Terrorism Act.

CAMPACC is intervening in the current parliamentary review of the 'anti-terrorism' legislation. Civil liberties organisations have already denounced the injustice of the special powers. CAMPACC has shown how these powers are used to persecute activists and terrorise entire communities – especially migrants, refugees and Muslims. Indeed, that is the Government's main purpose. CAMPACC has circulated a draft statement (available on request) to such communities in order to gather more evidence before finalising its submission to the Privy Council. In this way, the campaign is encouraging a wider debate, which could help to counter the widespread fear of British State terror at home.

The campaign welcomes more supporters and attendance at its monthly planning meetings.

For more information, contact: Campaign Against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC). Tel: 020 7586 5892 Email: estella24@tiscali.co.uk Website: www.cacc.org.uk

## WISEWORDS

Have you read a quote that's got your goat or inspired you? Send it to us and we may share it with our readers. Our address is JS, BM3725, London WC1N 3XX.

One writes out of a need to communicate and commune with others, to denounce that which gives pain and to share that which gives happiness. One writes against one's solitude and against the solitude of others. One assumes that literature transmits knowledge and affects the behaviour and language of those who read. One writes in reality for the people whose luck or misfortune one identifies with – the hungry, the sleepless, the rebels, and the wretched of the earth – and the majority of them are illiterate.

...We are what we do, especially what we do to change what we are. In this respect a 'revolutionary' literature written for the convinced is just as much an abandonment as is a conservative literature devoted to the contemplation of one's own navel.

...Our effectiveness depends on our capacity to be audacious and astute, clear and appealing. I would hope that we can create a language more fearless and beautiful than that used by conformist writers to greet the twilight.

Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan journalist and writer, author of *The Open Veins of Latin America*



# WHERE NEXT?

**Afif Safieh, Palestinian General Delegate to the United Kingdom and to the Holy See, talks to Julia Bard and Vivien Lichtenstein about the prospects of the Road Map leading to a lasting and just peace**



I fully support the Road Map. It involves steps that both sides have to take simultaneously and in a reciprocal fashion. On our side factions should abstain from using violence, but the Israeli side should announce, implement and commit themselves to the cessation of physical elimination and political assassination. They should freeze settlements, free the movement of Palestinian people and products and free Palestinian prisoners.

Unfortunately physical elimination and political assassination by Israelis have continued. So each time we succeed in helping the articulators of hope within Hamas to have the ascendancy, this policy inflames the debate, bringing the vehicles of anger to the forefront again. Yet my analysis is that this is not the final word of Hamas and since we, the Palestinian side and the Arab side, have been highly encouraged by the personal involvement of the American President in both summits, and we want to give that peace process every possible chance, I believe we will succeed in convincing Hamas of the notion of the unilateral Palestinian ceasefire. We need to rally Hamas, to convince Hamas's constituency, and I believe that this is do-able.

What we want from the White House is to secure Israeli compliance with the principles of the peace process – something we haven't seen any tangible proof of. I think the Americans should deliver Israeli compliance. This would be the most helpful argument in our internal Palestinian debate.

Within Israel there is an element that would like to push Palestinian society towards a civil war. I don't even want to contemplate that scenario, and I don't think it's in Israel's interest to have a Palestinian civil

war next door. In international relations there are two schools of thought: I'm happy if my neighbour is unhappy, or I'm happy if my neighbour is happy. I belong to the second school of thought but there are some Israelis who, unwisely, still nurture the dream of a Palestinian civil war.

I'm an old fashioned democrat in all the meanings of that word and, as a diplomat and a future potential citizen, I prefer political differences to be solved through dialogue and persuasion rather than by coercion and repression.

## INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

First of all we need help from the international community to make Sharon abandon his policy of physical elimination – and we have an average of four Palestinians killed on a daily basis. And you know that since the Americans delivered the Road Map to the two parties concerned, we have had 75 Palestinians killed and over 750 wounded. This also has to be considered in the macabre accountancy of the Middle East. I believe that those who only see Palestinian violence but shut their eyes to the obvious daily Israeli violence, are being selective in their indignation. That partiality is not helpful.

The assassinations and targeted killings disrupt the equilibrium. Sharon is an expert in manipulating internal Palestinian dynamics. He's a brilliant political strategist – the way he has twice outmanoeuvred Netanyahu for the post of Prime Minister shows his brilliance – and this is how he manipulates Palestinian dynamics.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR AMERICA?

I believe that with the end of the bipolar system, we have witnessed the emergence of unipolarity with the Americans in the hegemonic position. A superpower – or a hyperpower – has the choice between being loved or being feared and hated. There is an element within American decision-making circles which knows that the reason why America is hated in large parts of the world is because of their perceived complacency about, if not complicity with, the Israeli territorial appetite, and their insensitivity to the plight and suffering of the Palestinians. Some recent opinion polls indicate that most Americans would like the USA to be more even-handed and to distance themselves from the Israeli player in the regional arena. I believe that it is in the American national interest to be perceived as

OUR DEMANDS ARE UNREASONABLY REASONABLE AND THEY ARE NOT IN CONTRADICTION WITH AMERICA'S POLICY OF COMMITMENT TO ISRAELI SECURITY. BUT SHOULD AMERICA BE COMMITTED TO THE TERRITORIAL APPETITE OF THE ISRAELI POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT?

even-handed, sensitive to the plight of people and one of the instruments of justice rather than a supporter of a protracted unjust situation.

So there is a dynamic and significant debate among American decision-makers, and the fact that we, the Arabs, have become unreasonably reasonable – that we all accept the two-state solution and are ready to recognise Israeli existence but still challenge Israeli expansion – makes it easier for that school of thought to one day prevail.

Articles written over the last six months by Brent Scowcroft and Zbigniew Brzezinski, both former National Security Advisers, one for a Democratic president, the other for a Republican president, signify that there is a debate on how the American-Israeli relationship fits into the American national interest. One analysis of this intriguing relationship is the Noam Chomsky view, which says that America is contemporary Rome and Israel its regional belligerent Sparta. I often have the impression that America is a superpower all over the world except in the Middle East, where it has abdicated that role in favour of its regional client state. We have suffered from what I call the self-inflicted impotence of America in the Middle East – self-inflicted because it suited the regional client better.

## WHY ATTACK IRAQ?

I opposed the latest war on Iraq as unnecessary and illegitimate. For me it was not a war for democracy but for regional docility, European docility and global docility. It was the result of the collusion of American and Israeli agendas which put America and its war machine on a collision course with the Arab world. And in that war America, in a way, was the belligerent Sparta of Israel, which was undertaking a war by proxy to crush the country that could be a regional competitor.

In the Arab world, as a result of the colonial legacy, we have 20 countries where you either have too much demography and almost no geography and resources, or too many resources and almost no demography. The only country where there is a sort of harmony between the demographic weight and the geographic size and resources is Iraq. I believe this is why there has been an obsession, a fixation, about repeatedly crushing Iraq to a pre-industrial stage, making it unmanageable and unmodern, always under the pretext of introducing it to modernity and democracy.

## TERRITORIAL APPETITE

The Americans should understand that their attitude vis à vis the plight of the Palestinians has antagonised the Arab world. We understand that America is committed to Israel's security but does that mean it is committed to Israel's expansion? Today the Arab world has unambiguously offered a historical compromise: they have invited Israel to withdraw from the expansion of '67 and have showed their readiness to recognise Israel in its pre-'67 existence. That should suit America. Our

demands are unreasonably reasonable and they are not in contradiction with America's policy of commitment to Israeli security. But should America be committed to the territorial appetite of the Israeli political establishment?

What does Israeli expansion into a few hills of the West Bank mean in global terms? It's insignificant, stupid! And all the battles we are witnessing today, the Intifada and its brutal, ferocious repression, is not about the existence of Israel; it's about those small settlements and nothing else. And I don't see American global interests as being positively affected by Israeli territorial expansion into a few settlements. So one day, hopefully soon, the American strategy and the Israeli strategy will collide.

Many Americans were openly irritated by the Israelis' intransigence and inflexibility in 1973, after the October war. Kissinger told the Israelis: 'If you don't make an agreement of disengagement with King Hussein now, tomorrow you will have to deal with Yasser Arafat and the PLO.' Nineteen years later, this is what has happened.

Our role now is to find historical shortcuts. In America there will always be a debate about whether Israel is a strategic asset or a strategic burden. As the Arab world is no longer made up of radical, militant, nationalist countries as it was in the 1960s, but mainly by profoundly conservative, totally pro-western governments, the Americans might start to see Israel as a nuisance factor and Israeli intransigence as defying, destabilising and delegitimising this favourable conservative and pro-western regional system. So they might pressurise the Israelis to change course. I don't see a peace process succeeding, including today's Road Map, without the Americans playing an indispensable, decisive role and without them entering into a collision course with Israeli policy particularly because, on the Arab side, we are ready to satisfy the Israeli requirements of recognition and regional acceptance.

## PALESTINIANS ARE THE KEY

I believe that the Americans have understood that security comes from regional acceptance and not from territorial aggrandisement and that we, the Palestinians, are the key to Israel's regional acceptance. The Americans have seen how, when the peace process was moving smoothly on our track, doors opened for Israel from Morocco to Muscat in Oman; and when it proceeded in a rough, tough, ferocious manner, the same doors from Morocco to Muscat from Rabat to Riyadh were closing. So we are the key for the regional acceptance of Israel which is the sine qua non for peace and security – not territorial aggrandisement. So we should work for a collision between the American approach and the Israeli approach. And I don't agree with the theory that says it's America that manipulates Israel and Israel is an instrument of American strategy. No, unfortunately, in this case, it's the tail that wags the dog and not the dog that wags the tail.



IS 95% A GENEROUS OFFER WHEN WE REMEMBER THAT THE PEACE PROCESS HAS THE TWO PILLARS AND THE TWO PRINCIPLES: LAND IN EXCHANGE FOR PEACE? I'M IN FAVOUR OF 100% PEACE. AND NO ONE SHOULD BE SURPRISED IF I'M IN FAVOUR OF 100% RETURN OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OR MINOR TERRITORIAL RECTIFICATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF AN AGREEMENT OF TERRITORIAL SWAPS OF EQUAL QUALITY AND QUANTITY.

### LABOUR'S LONG SLIDE

The Israeli Labour Party has enjoyed an undeserved reputation in international and left-wing circles. For me, as a Palestinian, the ethnic cleansing of 1948, the war of '56, the initiative of '67, the beginning of illegal settlement – that was Labour, Labour, Labour, Labour. It was Labour that made Palestine unliveable for us Palestinians; what Likud does is make Israel unliveable for many Jews.

I believe that Labour and the Israeli Left should do some serious soul searching to explain their decline with the Israeli electorate. They have found a simplistic answer: that they were betrayed by the absence of a Palestinian partner; by the irrational, violent Palestinian Intifada which showed that the Palestinians had a hidden agenda – that they were not struggling for the end of the Occupation but against the existence of Israel as such, and this is why they lost support.

This explanation is too simplistic and too convenient to be convincing. I believe that the Labour Party in Israel has suffered a historical decline for tribal, sociological and anthropological reasons. It has never attracted a significant number of the oriental Sephardic Jews – and in 1990 the Sephardic Jews were almost 65% of Jewish Israel. In the 1990s, a million Russian Jews and non-Jews came into the country, changing the equilibrium between Ashkenazis and Sephardis, but only an insignificant number joined Labour, which just deepened and accelerated its decline.

And since accumulated Labour mistakes and blunders – such as the unnecessary war on Lebanon in 1996 which ended in the Kana massacre, and the brutal repression of the non-violent solidarity demonstration in October 2000 which was showered with lethal bullets rather than water – Labour has also lost the 50% of Palestinian Israelis who traditionally voted for them. So, a party that has never attracted the orientals and has not attracted the Russians and has lost the Palestinian Israelis is not a party on the verge of taking power. You only have to look at the composition of the Knesset from 1948 to the present to see that from election to election, even when they won, their parliamentary representation was shrinking. The second reason for their collapse in the last election was that for two years they were prepared to be junior partners in a Sharon-led government where they were used as a figleaf, to obtain respectability and acceptability around the world. I believe the reason for that was because Peres and Ben-Elazar were afraid that if they remained in opposition they would move from the 'Who's Who?' to the 'Who's He?'.

The third factor – and it's one that's important in Israeli-Palestinian relations – was that the Labour leadership convinced themselves and Israeli public opinion that, at Camp David, they had made a generous offer of 95% which was

rejected, generating a violent reaction from Palestinian society.

In the first place, I believe that, given the history of oppression and persecution, the use of the term 'generous' is offensive.

Secondly, I would say that an offer of 100% wouldn't have been generous enough because we are only talking about 22% of what was legitimately ours at the beginning of the 20th century. Thirdly, is 95% a generous offer when the peace process has the two pillars and the two principles: land in exchange for peace? I'm in favour of 100% peace and no one should be surprised if I'm in favour of 100% return of the Occupied Territories or minor territorial rectifications within the framework of an agreement of territorial swaps of equal quality and quantity.

And finally, was it really 95%? No. Even Barak himself wrote two years ago a comment piece in the New York Times where he said that Israel needs to keep 15% of Judea and Samaria and maintain its settlements and military presence in the Jordan valley – and that's an additional 10%.

Now an Israeli society that was convinced by the Labour leadership that the Palestinians had rejected an offer where almost all their demands had been satisfied, understandably moves to the right because they have a choice between Likud or a pale imitation of it. I believe Barak reacted in a very childish manner, as though Arafat and the Palestinians cut short his very promising career. Since then he has held a grudge against Arafat and the Palestinians, which has done a lot of damage to the Palestinians but also to himself and to the party he led.

And the notion that 'there is no Palestinian partner' is totally unjustified. The Palestinian partner is there but the Palestinian partner has to be offered a convincing package and this time we have to do it fast. Slowness in the process does not increase trust; on the contrary it inflames distrust about the hidden agendas of the other side and it gives time and opportunity to hostile forces of whichever camp to torpedo it. This is why, if I have any grievance about the Road Map, it's that it speaks of a three year process. I believe that a territory occupied in six days can also be evacuated in six days so that the Israelis can rest on the seventh and we can engage in our fascinating trip in nation-building and economic reconstruction.

So Labour has to consider the sociological, tribal and anthropological dimension – it's unusual because the poorer classes in Israel vote to the right and the more advantaged and leisured classes are more liberal and vote to the left. The Left needs to keep its existing supporters but it also needs to attract its normal constituency of the oriental Jews.

### ORIENTALS COULD BE THE BRIDGE

I believe the best argument is to tell them: don't ignore the fact that the Palestinians have had to pay

an enormous individual and collective price for the birth of Israel. Your situation in the Arab world was not as horrible as you now tend to believe: you belonged to the privileged classes and often to the ruling classes. You might have made a mistake in aligning yourself with colonial powers, as in Algeria, which must have damaged your relations but don't tarnish your experience in Arab countries too much. And if there is peace in the Middle East, you might be the most advantaged category because, being Jews and Israelis but of Arab origin, you might be the ideal bridge, politically, culturally and economically, between Israel and its environment. You may be the category that profits most from peace so it would be to your advantage to stop feeling that you are second class citizens who need a third class citizen to snub. The Labour Party is wooing the Russians but even though they were the last to arrive, they have aligned themselves with the most excessive territorial appetite based on theories of *lebensraum*, which they, as Russians, have suffered in previous eras and wars.

### LAND COMES WITH PEOPLE

There are over 400,000 settlers today, around 10% of the Israeli Jewish electorate, and the Israelis have mutilated Palestinian geography with this rush to grab land. Jerusalem is becoming suffocated. If we get it back and it becomes the capital of Palestine, many Jerusalemites will come back to live in there. And since it will be the seat of government and administration, we will need new neighbourhoods, office spaces and ministries and housing units for all those people -- and I don't know where we are going to expand to, because we already are suffocating. For instance, I grew up seeing the convoy bringing supplies once a week to what you call Mt Scopus, Hadassah University, which was three, four buildings, an Israeli enclave in Palestinian territory. Now it's the entire mountain and the Hebrew University is a settler university. I will say that if the Israelis want to expand in Jerusalem in the future, they can expand to the west of Jerusalem and their consolation will be that they'll be expanding on to Palestinian territory!

### THE QUARTET

I believe that the birth of the Quartet in 2002 was a very constructive event. The quartet has a double advantage. Firstly, it reintroduces important players that have been marginalised and ignored over the last 10 years of theoretical peacemaking. Secondly, the presence of those additional players, reinforces the more sensible school of thought within the American administration. The Quartet represents a superb window of opportunity because it incorporates a new constellation of several favourable factors.

And the Road Map is balanced in the sense that the Israelis have many things to do and cannot avoid doing them on the pretext that we might still have some violence to perpetrate. We have to do this, and they have to do that. The second phase is Palestinian

IN THE ARAB WORLD, AS A RESULT OF THE COLONIAL LEGACY, WE HAVE 20 COUNTRIES WHERE YOU EITHER HAVE TOO MUCH DEMOGRAPHY AND ALMOST NO GEOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES, OR TOO MANY RESOURCES AND ALMOST NO DEMOGRAPHY.



elections and a new constituent assembly and the adoption of a constitution by referendum, so I'm not unhappy with the second phase. And I'm not even unhappy with a state with temporary boundaries – which is unprecedented in international relations – if there is the minimum of trust that is needed – and here I'm talking about the external parties and their commitment and involvement.

I have no trust in the Israelis, I'm sorry to say. For obvious reasons I have no trust because I still believe that the aim of successive Israeli governments has been to get as much of the Palestinian geography as possible with as little of Palestinian demography. When Sharon explained to his own people why he used the word 'occupation', he said he was not referring to the occupation of land but: 'When I used the term "occupation", I meant it is undesirable for us to rule over a Palestinian population.' In other words, we might want not to rule over the 3.5 million but we will try to end up with as much of the geography and territorial assets of that people.

I will continue my dialogue with Israeli and Jewish circles but my bet on is the involvement and commitment of the international community in the process so I'm not worried if that includes the temporary nature of the state with temporary boundaries. I know from the start that Sharon would like to see it permanent, but if the others say it's only going to be a phase of six to nine months, ok, I can wait six to nine months. We have waited 55 years, so my guarantee is the American Presidential commitment, which we haven't yet secured.

The Road Map has two advantages over the Oslo agreement of 1993. Firstly, it has an explicit commitment by and involvement of the international community and of external parties and third parties, while the Oslo agreement left too much to the local belligerent parties to sort it out. Secondly, the finality of the exercise is very well defined, while Oslo was left ambiguous. In the Road Map, the clear, unambiguous end of the process is the end of the occupation that started in 1967 and the birth of a Palestinian state.

The Quartet: does it bring new hope for a lasting peace?



International human rights lawyer **MICHAEL ELLMAN** visited Israel as part of a factfinding mission into the situation of migrant workers there

Since the start of the Second Intifada in 2000, and the closures of the Occupied Territories which mean that Palestinians cannot get to work in Israel, Israeli employers have looked further afield – to the Far East, Latin America and Eastern Europe – for temporary workers. In 1991, 14,700 undocumented migrants were working illegally in Israel; today there are about 200,000 (in 1993 Israel issued 5,000 work permits; in 1994 they issued 15,000).

It is believed that up to 250,000 Israelis are unemployed. Inevitably, the foreign workers are the first to be dismissed and some are arriving in Israel to find that, despite the contract they signed in their home countries there is no work for them. Many of them then find themselves penniless and jobless – and have large debts to repay in their home countries. Nevertheless, employers, and particularly agencies, continue to recruit more – and the Israeli government continues to grant visas while expelling established workers. Generally migrant workers in Israel take the low-status or low-paying jobs that most Israelis refuse, but many Israelis blame illegal migrant workers for taking 'their' jobs.

#### WORKERS' RIGHTS

Israel is party to a number of international conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions such as Convention No 97, which contains a series of provisions designed to assist migrants in matters of employment. Israel is clearly in breach of a number of provisions of these instruments – but one does not have to look that far, because Israeli law covers the situation.

Israeli labour regulations contain a certain number of rules that apply to all workers. These include: 12 days paid holiday a year; 9 days paid religious holidays; payment of wages by the 10th day of the next month; maternity pay, sickness pay and severance pay; hours of work and rest; protection of salaries and minimum wages.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, 4.4% of Israel's employees are paid below the minimum wage; migrant workers account for 70% of such employees.

There are also rules contained in the Foreign Workers Law 5751-1991, and Statutory Instruments made under that law, covering: provision of medical insurance; contract of employment setting out the terms as to salary, deductions, length of working week etc; provision of residential accommodation; protection of any migrant worker making complaints against his employer.

There are severe penalties for the breach of any of these provisions but prosecutions of employers are almost unknown even though, in the case of migrant workers, these rules are almost totally ignored. These employees are tied to their employers with the result that their bosses can treat foreign workers as they please. Paradoxically, it is only when these workers begin working illegally that this relationship of enslavement disappears. The illegal migrant is not bound to an employer and can choose between various jobs and even undertake several small jobs.

#### PRECARIOUS STATUS

Foreign workers now constitute some 13% of the workforce in Israel – more than any Western country except Switzerland. It is generally accepted that there are over 300,000 foreign workers in Israel, of whom 200,000 are illegal migrant workers who can face deportation at any moment. Overseas workers in the country on a temporary basis do not acquire permanent rights.

In 1997 Benjamin Netanyahu, then Prime Minister of Israel, paid a visit to Beijing, and agreed with the Chinese authorities to take several thousand Chinese workers a year into Israel, as part of a trade agreement to promote Israeli business. However, no details were established regarding this arrangement, and it is doubtful whether either side foresaw the problems which would arise. Ha'aretz (11th April 2003) reported on a similar deal between the Israeli and Turkish Government, in which 800 Turkish construction workers have been permitted to work in Israel as part of a US\$687 million deal with Israel's military industries to upgrade Patton tanks for the Turkish armed forces.

Former Israeli Minister of Labour, Shlomo Benizri, estimated that the importation of foreign labour, including the trafficking of human beings, is worth about US\$3 billion a year. This is facilitated through the Israeli system of *protektzia* (using connections for personal gain). In one leading case a group of migrant workers sued the agency that had brought them to Israel when they discovered that there was no work.

In order to escape the legal, social and fiscal obligations, recruitment agencies set up fraudulent strategies which are now well known: after a few months of existence they disappear. The consequences are: unpaid wages, lost and confiscated passports, and legal migrant workers suddenly becoming illegal residents.

#### INDENTURE OR TIED CONTRACTS

Most migrant workers come to Israel through an agreement signed between a contact in Israel and an agency in their country of origin. A nurse from the Philippines explains: 'I worked as a nurse in the Philippines and I contacted a private agency to go to work in Israel. Everyone said there was plenty of work there. Here, in Israel, I look after an elderly person. In the contract I signed, it said I needed to stay two years in Israel and that I would be paid US\$700 a month. But in fact I only get US\$500 and I am not paid in dollars. Sometimes, I am paid very late. I need to send money to my family and I need to repay the money I paid for the trip, because I paid US\$4,000 to come here.'

#### CONFISCATED PASSPORTS

In an increasing number of cases, migrant workers' passports are confiscated by their prospective Israeli employers, and then the workers may be denied a job. Israeli law requires every foreigner to carry a passport but these migrants cannot do so.

Passportless workers not only risk deportation, but also cannot return to their home country. They

cannot open a bank account in Israel or send money home securely. They must either carry the money on them or go to the Occupied Territories and deposit the money in a Palestinian bank.

Many foreign workers become illegal without knowing it, if their employer dies, or they are the subject of an inter-company transfer: this is in effect the sale of a worker, which amounts to trafficking, in breach of the UN and ILO Conventions listed above.

#### CLOSE TO SLAVERY

We were shown an advertisement by an Israeli firm offering a reward of US\$3,000 each for the return of six Romanian 'escaped' workers; the motivation for the advertisement is that an employer cannot use a work permit again if the worker leaves and remains in the country. However, if the employee leaves the country, the employer can re-use the permit and again claim a commission from the new worker! Some employers will not return the passport until the worker is in the airport on the way out of Israel.

#### THE COUNTRIES THEY COME FROM

##### China

Chinese migrant workers in Israel have all paid substantial sums – between US\$6,000 and US\$10,000 (several years' wages for a Chinese worker, which is often borrowed from friends and relatives) to the Chinese agency in order to work in Israel. The agency is licensed or controlled by the Government – it was confirmed in the Knesset on 1st January 2002 that the Chinese Government agency takes 25% of the worker's salary over two years as a commission); the Chinese and Israeli agencies pay for the visa fee and the transport and divide the profits between them. For example, Liu Ming of the China Manpower Company admitted that they received US\$1,200 from each Chinese worker who came to Israel through their agency.

There have been cases of Chinese workers being dumped by the roadside and told there is no more work for them. One Chinese worker was beaten and locked in a cabin with a view to deportation – and even though the Chinese boss (a sub-contractor for the Israeli employer) was sentenced to prison for this, the Chinese Embassy did not intervene.

##### Thailand and the Philippines

Thai and Filipino workers are better protected by their governments, which insist on proper contracts with protection for the workers – and supply new travel documents if necessary.

##### Eastern Europe

East Europeans are nearer home, and usually have some common language with Israelis (Russian is widely used in Israel), but are still exploited. Romanians, in particular pay relatively large sums to obtain work contracts in Israel but again the Romanian Government is implicated in the recruitment agencies.

##### Africa and Latin America

The Africans, mainly from anglophone West Africa, and some from the Democratic Republic of Congo, usually come as tourists on pilgrimage, or even as kibbutz volunteers, and stay on to work illegally.

Some also enter illegally by land from Egypt or Jordan. Because they are conspicuous, they tend to work in house-cleaning or in the kitchens of restaurants or hotels, where they cannot be seen from the outside.

#### THE DEPORTATION POLICY

In view of the increase of unemployment, the rise of xenophobia and the substantial number of foreign workers who do not leave Israel after the end of their contracts, the Israeli Government decided from 2002 to begin a policy of deportation, undertaken by the Ministry of Immigration and Integration. The stated objective is to fight clandestine immigration by expelling 50,000 people a year. From 1995-98, the number of expulsions reached 13,000 for the whole period. In 2002, around 6,000 people were expelled.

Despite the provisions protecting workers from precipitate deportation, there have been many cases of parents abducted in the streets leaving children at home to fend for themselves. Also, humiliating procedures have been introduced, whereby relatives visiting prisoners are arrested themselves and sometimes shackles are used.

While expelling legal migrant workers, the Israeli government continues to issue new work permits. This achieves two objectives at the minimum cost: first, a frequent rotation of migrant workers guarantees the docility of the newcomers and ensures social peace, as new migrants are isolated, ignorant of Israeli laws, and have substantial financial debts to be repaid in a short period. Secondly, it helps keep wages down.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

##### Legal Workers

Israeli 'residents' are entitled to full health services, however, migrant workers' work permits give them a lower status, with access only to limited services. The Minister of Health has discretion to extend other rights to migrant workers, but has not done so, even for legal workers. However, Tel Aviv Municipality has adopted a pioneering role, providing health services to approximately 1,500 children of migrant workers.

Female migrant workers often find it difficult to obtain medical care when giving birth, even though they have paid their contributions. Hospitals normally do not refuse deliveries and emergency care, but since the cost of emergency care is thousands of shekels per day, hospitals are concerned about payment from the moment a patient appears in the emergency room. As a result, the medical team press patients for money, and may take short cuts in the treatment. In one exceptional case, a Nigerian man died after discharging himself from the Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv because he could not pay.

##### Undocumented workers

Illegal migrants are not eligible for any primary or secondary medical care and have no access to treatment for chronic diseases such as HIV or cancer. This lack of access to medical care contravenes note 12 of article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which provides that the 'countries ... are obliged to refrain from imposing restrictions or preventing the equal access of any person – including prisoners,



detainees, minorities, asylum seekers and non-documented migrant workers, to preventative, therapeutic and palliative medicine....'

#### Trafficking in women

Over 200 brothels exist in Tel Aviv where foreign women are forced into prostitution. Forced prostitution, and the trafficking in workers, are contrary to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime 2000, and its Protocol to suppress Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, which Israel has signed but not ratified.

#### NEW DEPARTMENT

In response to the increase in undocumented foreign workers, and to show that the authorities were taking action, a new department was created in autumn 2002 to tackle the problem of illegal immigration, using a fresh, more conciliatory approach.

The Police Immigration Administration Department says it is in contact with the different communities, encouraging them to persuade the illegal migrants to leave voluntarily. The US\$17 per month fine for overstayers is waived for those who leave voluntarily and also for enforced departures (though they have their passports stamped 'deported'). The Police also pay for the flight home.

This Department tries to ensure the law is enforced, insisting that every foreign worker is given a contract in his language stating the minimum salary and other information. They have removed some 8,000 passports wrongly held by employers and returned them to the workers, or if that was not possible, to their embassies. In the first two months of their work, they interrogated some 13,000 employers resulting in 1,614 cases being brought for offences such as confiscation of passports, exploitation of workers and use of forged documents.

They insist that minors, and parents who are responsible for a child, are not deported, and that they strive to protect the rights of the workers and their children. They encourage complaints by migrants where there has been a criminal offence. The initial impressions of Kav La'Oved and other NGOs are that this new department was beginning to make a positive change in the situation of migrants. However, the Government's stated goal in setting up this department was to deport 50,000 undocumented workers within a year (although no one we met believed this would happen).

#### VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

##### The Histadruth

The Histadruth, the Trade Union organisation of Israel, is extremely well-established and powerful, runs its own enterprises (such as Egged, the national bus company) and is closely linked to the state itself. Under its own statutes, the Histadruth can only admit Israeli citizens to full membership. The Histadruth only 'provides information' to migrant workers who come to see them individually with questions about the payment of wages, sending money home and concerning their social rights.

#### NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The Association of Civil Rights in Israel, Kav La'Oved, Physicians for Human Rights, HaMoked (Hotline for Foreign Workers) and other voluntary organisations

take up cases on behalf of migrant workers. They press the police on behalf of workers in trouble, and take action against defaulting employers, and the police are beginning to take notice of them.

#### THE COURTS

The Courts are reluctant to intervene on behalf of migrant workers, and even held that it was legal (if deplorable) to deport the foreign partner of an Israeli, with her children. A significant case was that of Elyahu & Elyahu Construction in November 2002. This company imported workers with 24-month contracts, but provided them with no jobs. The Court found the state liable, as it had an active role in providing the construction company with migrant workers' employment permits.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of foreign workers in Israel reveals a clear and open policy of substituting Palestinian workers with a workforce from overseas. The deterioration of the migrant labour situation in Israel resulted from the destabilisation of Israeli-Palestinian relations, and foreign workers have been brought in to replace Palestinian workers. But the Government is anxious not to have a settled workforce, partly because it is regarded as a temporary phenomenon, and partly to preserve the 'Jewish nature' of the state, so it has restricted foreign workers to a maximum stay of two years, with virtually no civil rights.

##### The fact-finding mission urges the Israeli Government:

1. To comply with its obligations under the international instruments, and particularly: To sign and ratify the UN International Convention on the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their families; To respect the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; To respect the relevant International Labour Organisation Conventions; To sign and ratify the Protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, 2000. To ratify ILO Convention No143
2. To enforce compliance with its own law, notably in relation to:

- workers' rights (salary, holidays, and conditions of work including satisfactory accommodation, salary reports, health insurance and deposits in the pension fund, which it should now set up) - and to ensure that foreign workers understand their rights;
  - trade union membership;
  - the crime of retaining a foreign worker's passport.
3. To abolish the inhuman practices of requiring payments from workers for their work contracts and tying workers to their employers, to prosecute and impose severe penalties on employers for breaches.
  4. To stop issuing visas for foreign workers until all 'undocumented' workers currently in Israel have been absorbed into the market.
  5. To regulate companies which import migrant workers and particularly to prosecute those involved in trafficking of people.

We also urge the Histadruth to welcome foreign workers into its membership, and to take up their rights in the same way as it defends the rights of Israeli workers.

# DESERT-ED

The White House's hoped-for restructuring of the Middle East has begun: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has been ousted from power by US and British troops who now patrol the streets of Baghdad, while a few hundred miles away Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has been shunted aside in favour of the more Washington-friendly Mahmoud Abbas. With these tectonic shifts dominating Middle East coverage, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has been preparing a smaller-scale reordering of the region which he hopes will escape attention. He has devised a plan to rid the huge semi-desert area of the Negev, located in the south of Israel, of its Bedouin farmers.

The Bedouin, who comprise some 15% of the one million Arab citizens of Israel, are divided into two main groups. A few tens of thousands living in the Galilee in the north are descended from tribes that arrived from Syria. A southern group, the majority, reached the Negev from Sinai and the Arabian Peninsula. Before 1948, when the state of Israel was created, the Negev was almost exclusively inhabited by Bedouin tribes, whose historic claims to the land had been recognised by the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate authorities.

Israeli governments have tried consistently to foster divisions within the country's Arab population to prevent it from mobilising against discriminatory state policies. The Negev Bedouin in particular have found themselves separated both geographically and socially from other Arab citizens. One successful way of isolating the Bedouin from the main Christian and Muslim communities has been to pressure them to serve in the army, mainly as low-ranking desert trackers (only the small Druze community is conscripted).

During the 1948 war, and afterward, it was considered a priority by the fledgling Israeli state to clear the Negev of its Bedouin population. Israel's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, wrote to his son 11 years before the birth of the Jewish state: 'Negev land is reserved for Jewish citizens whenever and wherever they want. We must expel the Arabs and take their place.' By 1951, fewer than 13,000 inhabitants remained of a community that numbered somewhere between 70,000 and 90,000 in the late 1940s. As late as 1953, the United Nations reported the expulsion of some 7,000 Negev Bedouin into adjacent areas of Jordan, Egyptian-occupied Gaza and the Sinai, though many later slipped back over the borders undetected.

Moshe Dayan, commander of Israeli forces in the 1967 war and the country's most renowned military hero, gave voice to a common wish when he predicted in 1963 that 'this phenomenon of the Bedouin will disappear.' The reasons for the antagonism shared by Israeli leaders were manifold: Israeli governments, aiming for control of the land and its demographics, were concerned by the Bedouins' fertility rate - one of the highest in the world. Their semi-nomadic lifestyle made it all but impossible to contain their movement across territory and to monitor their political activities as the state kept watch over the sedentary Arab

communities. Farming, the economic lifeblood of the Bedouin, was regarded as labour suitable only for Jews. According to the pioneer ethic within Zionism, working the land was synonymous with redeeming it. The Negev, some two thirds of the new state's land mass, was viewed as a huge tract that could absorb future Jewish immigration. Finally, the desert's barren expanses, difficult to infiltrate or traverse unseen, were considered the ideal setting for military bases and sensitive operations. Israel's nuclear reactor, for instance, is located near the Negev town of Dimona, as is its implicitly acknowledged nuclear arsenal.

In the decades following the 1948 war, Israeli governments worked relentlessly to make the Bedouin 'disappear'. The Bedouin who had not fled or been terrorised from their tribal lands during the war were 'transferred' in the 1950s, either to the centre of the country, to ghettos attached to towns like Ramle and Lod, where many work as low-wage manual labourers, or to a small area close to the town of Beersheva, in the northern Negev. The rest of the Negev, some 85% of the total land mass, was declared off limits, designated as blocs of military zones and conservation parks.

The Negev area in which the Bedouin were concentrated came to be known as the 'siege zone': a ring of Jewish settlements was established to contain the Bedouin, while their lands were further whittled away through the construction of industrial areas, more military zones and conservation parks, and an airport. Each village was encircled and separated from its neighbours by new Jewish farms, settlements or development towns. Today the Bedouin, a quarter of the Negev's population, occupy just 2% of its land.

Since the mid-1960s, Israel has classified these Bedouin communities in the Negev as 'scattered' and put great pressure on the inhabitants to give up their traditional lifestyles as farmers. The state has offered only to move these Bedouin into one of seven deprived urban reservations created in the 1970s. Half of the 130,000 Bedouin in the Negev now live in these townships, all of which languish at the bottom of every socio-economic index.

Israel has had a consistent policy of isolating the Bedouin who live in the Negev and driving them off their land.

**JONATHAN COOK** reports





Those who refuse the state's offer of relocation live in 'unrecognised' villages, meaning that provision of public services, such as water, electricity and sanitation, as well as medical clinics and schools, is illegal. In the Bedouin village of Abda, for example, the children must make a round trip of 87 miles each day to a 'recognised' area with a school. All buildings are unlicensed (there are no municipalities to apply to for a permit) and are therefore subject to demolition orders. Some 30,000 Bedouin structures in the Negev are under constant threat of destruction. As a result, most villagers are forced to live in tents or metal shacks. (The problem of the unrecognised villages also afflicts the northern Bedouin population, although on a smaller scale.)

Sharon, who owns a large ranch in the Negev, has been one of the prime movers in the long-running, low-intensity war to transfer the Bedouin off their historic lands. In the late 1970s, when he served as agriculture minister, he established a paramilitary police force for the Negev, misleadingly entitled the Green Patrol, to enforce the demolition of Bedouin homes and to confiscate farmers' herds of cattle, sheep and goats. At the time, Sharon promised that the activities of the Green Patrol would generate a 'revitalisation' of the Negev. Now, as Prime Minister, he has the chance to finish the job he started.

Last April, Sharon's government approved a five-year plan, backed by a budget of more than US\$200 million, as 'a real attempt to deal with problems faced by [the Bedouin] sector, as well as the land issue'. The government is due to begin implementing the programme later this year. Although the plan was reportedly the work of a special ministerial committee, advised by the local councils of Jewish towns in the Negev, most of its inspiration came from Sharon himself.

The Hebrew media enthusiastically characterised the programme as a way to provide mechanisms to settle land disputes and develop infrastructure for the Negev's Bedouin, including proposals to establish new Bedouin communities.

A local council leader, Shmuel Rifman, who represents 4,500 Jews in the Negev, mostly ranchers, told the daily Ha'aretz newspaper on 7th January: 'Anyone who talks about a powder keg in the Negev when relating to the region's Bedouin must unhesitatingly adopt this plan.'

Bedouin leaders reacted differently, however. The Bedouins' main lobbying group, the Regional Council for the Unrecognised Villages, stated in a press release: 'We see this plan as a declaration of war on the Bedouin community of the unrecognised villages.' It added: 'This plan was never discussed with any of the population or their representatives.' That may be because not one Bedouin or Arab representative has been appointed to the 17-member Southern Regional Planning Committee, which oversees planning issues in the Negev. The same Ha'aretz report hinted at the cause of the Bedouins' alarm. The five-year plan's secondary goal, it was revealed, was the 'massive reinforcement of officials responsible for enforcing planning and construction ordinances in the Negev', including an expanded Green Patrol and more staff for the Justice Ministry and the courts dealing with land claims.

In fact, while the five-year plan masquerades as an attempt at disinterested adjudication of land disputes between the Bedouin and the government, it is really a co-ordinated policy of using force to transfer all the Bedouin from their 'scattered' villages into three new reservations, based on three former unrecognised villages and designed along the lines of the existing seven townships.

Negev land will then be freed for one of Sharon's long-cherished dreams, to settle new Jewish immigrants in the arid region, either by offering large subsidies to encourage them to move from the densely populated centre of the country or as part of a World Zionist Organization (WZO) scheme to bring 350,000 immigrants to the Galilee and Negev by the end of the decade. Land will also be made available to individual wealthy farmers for more 'ranches' similar to Sharon's, where crops such as grapes and dates can be grown intensively or sheep and cattle reared. Subsidised water and electrification for the farms have already been approved.

Work on 14 new Jewish settlements in the Negev is due to begin early this summer, as originally conceived by Sharon when he was housing minister in the early 1990s. The new construction will mark the first time in 25 years that the WZO has financed settlement-building in Israel rather than the West Bank and Gaza. The first Jewish community, Givat Bar, is to be built on the land of Araqueeb village, south of the Bedouin township of Rahat, which was 'temporarily' confiscated from the local Bedouin tribe in 1953.

The reordering of the Negev will be achieved in two stages. First, most of the 70,000 Negev Bedouin who live in 45 unrecognised villages will gain a new legal designation under an amendment to the 1981 Law on Public Land being hurried through the Knesset. The 'Eviction of Trespassers' amendment will give officials the power to classify anyone as a trespasser living on state lands without going through lengthy court procedures. The designation can be applied retroactively to encompass Bedouin who have 'trespassed' in the past three years.

The trespass law will criminalise the Bedouin, as

well as their villages. Offenders – anyone who tries to encamp or farm on their own historic lands – will face six months in jail and a fine. Repeat offenders will get two years of imprisonment and a doubled fine. Bedouin villagers will be obliged to prove that they are not trespassing. It will not be possible for a defence lawyer to argue that the villages have existed since before the creation of the state, or in other cases that the land where villagers now dwell is where they were moved by the state when their original lands were confiscated. To avoid being designated as trespassers, the villagers will therefore have to register their lands individually. Given the extant court decisions that unrecognised villages are built on state land, the chances of winning this argument are virtually nil.

The Negev programme lays aside a budget for compensation of displaced Bedouin, although if the precedent of the former wave of registrations in the 1970s is followed, reparations will be meagre or will take the form of offers of subsidised homes in the new townships. A clue to the government's thinking was provided by the Israeli Arab lobbying group Mossawa, whose analysis shows that for the year 2003 the government has actually cut the land compensation budget for the Bedouin to US\$26 million from an average annual fund of US\$30 million. Only US\$65 million has been allocated for the remaining four years of the plan, nearly half what normal projections would suggest. That allows for less than US\$1,000 in compensation for every Bedouin in an unrecognised village – and less than the US\$80 million allocated for the destruction of their homes.

It will be possible to appeal disputes between individual Bedouin and the Israel Lands Administration (ILA), the government's land-holding arm, over the status of land. But such appeals will be referred to a ministerial committee or to the 'responsible minister' – that is, to the more powerful party in the dispute. Until recently, the 'responsible minister' would have been the interior minister, but in the new coalition government that job has gone to the dovish Avraham Poraz of Shinui. Instead, therefore, Sharon transferred planning responsibilities temporarily to his own Prime Minister's office, before passing them on to his hawkish trade and industry minister, Likud member Ehud Olmert, who presided over numerous demolitions of Palestinian houses as mayor of Jerusalem. Olmert was quoted in Ha'aretz on 11th April saying that 'we will conduct contacts with [the Bedouin]. However, I assume that they will absolutely oppose [the plan]. We will not be deterred from implementing the decision, because there is no other way that we can fulfill [our mandate]. If [this issue] was subject to an agreement, it would never be given. It is a question of the government's determination in implementing its decisions.'

The five-year plan's second thrust is the creation of three new townships based on three Bedouin villages that have been recognised, Bir Hadaj, Dariyat and al-Madbah, which are respectively to be given the Hebrew names of Bir Heim, Mari'at and Beit Felet. The villages were chosen because they are home to three of the largest tribes, whose combined opposition might have posed the biggest threat to implementing the plan. Tens of thousands of other Bedouin will be left with no choice but to move into

the three new or seven existing townships.

For varying tactical reasons, over the course of the 1990s another four of the 45 unrecognised villages were also recognised, though public services in those villages have not improved. The exclusively Jewish Southern Regional Planning Committee has refused to approve local master plans for the recognised villages, thereby condemning Bedouin residents to life without water and electricity supplies indefinitely. The sham of recognition is illustrated by the case of Abda, which won a supposed change of status in 1992. The community, however, was not recognised in its entirety, only the homes of seven families who were to be incorporated into a planned national park to include the historic village of Abda and its Nabatean ruins.

The government's likely intentions toward the partially recognised villages, as well as the unrecognised ones, emerged on 4th March this year when, without warning, the Israel Lands Administration sent helicopters loaded with herbicides to Abda and sprayed some 375 acres of crops being grown by the villagers. Children playing below were covered in the toxic mist, the pilots apparently undeterred by their presence in the fields. Although the government later advised residents that the herbicides were not harmful to humans, several children needed treatment for shock after they and their parents thought they had been the victims of a chemical attack from Iraq. The crop destruction was repeated on 2nd April, when some 1,300 acres were sprayed – more than 300 acres of which belonged to the family of Sheikh Jabar Abu Kaff, head of the Regional Council for the Unrecognised Villages.

The spraying incidents follow on the heels of the demolition of dozens of Bedouin homes last spring. There has been a marked increase in such destructions over the past year, suggesting that Sharon is determined to turn the screws ever tighter. A new precedent was set on 5th February with the razing of a mosque in Tel al-Milleh village, the first time a place of worship has been destroyed. The villagers had built the mosque illegally after being refused a permit and having been offered nowhere else to pray by the authorities. When the villagers and other Bedouin and Arab citizens joined together to rebuild the mosque within a few days, the Southern Regional Planning Committee issued another demolition order to the ILA, although the order has been frozen for the time being by the courts.

Adalah, a Israeli NGO which provides legal defence to the country's Arab citizens, has threatened Sharon with court challenges if he proceeds with his five-year plan for the Negev, which they describe as both discriminatory and illegal. Sharon is unlikely to be intimidated, knowing that the courts have sided consistently with the state in its land disputes with the Bedouin. His scheme is a reminder to Israel's Arab minority that its defining fight with the state – over access to and control of land – is far from finished. The crop spraying and the new wave of demolitions indicate that Sharon is likely to show little mercy in his battle to clear the Negev. This time he appears determined to make sure the Bedouin disappear from this prized real estate for good.

Jonathan Cook is a journalist living in Israel.





# WE'RE STILL IN THE SAME STATE

One hundred years ago the British press reported on the 'Jewish Anarchists terrorising Britain', heralding the first immigration controls. **STEVE COHEN** describes how people seeking refuge are still being targeted today

On 14th January 2003, Detective Constable Steven Oake was shot and killed in Crumpsall Lane, Manchester whilst raiding a house under immigration and 'anti-terrorist' legislation. The following Monday the Sun claimed 'Britain is now a Trojan horse for terrorists.' On Tuesday the Daily Mail alleged in an editorial that the UK was 'a haven for Albanian gangsters, Kosovan people and Algerian terrorists.' On Wednesday the Daily Express said: 'The nightmare scenario [of terrorism] of which we warned is here.' The British National Party on its website then posted a front page Express article linking asylum-seekers with terrorism stating: 'British press is helping to spread BNP message.'

In these times of mayhem, militarisation and destruction, it is important to resist powerlessness and fatalism – powerlessness at not being able to understand what is happening and fatalism that we cannot do anything about it. The historically unprecedented huge and international demonstrations against the war with Iraq show that ordinary people can organise together to oppose apparently irresistible forces. Of course the war with Iraq is not about Iraq – but is about power and oil. At the same time, the parallel war against so-called terrorism is also a justification by both the USA and its junior imperialist partner, Britain, to further construct themselves as authoritarian states on a super-nationalistic and racist basis. It is a justification to further legitimise and strengthen immigration controls and its corollary, internal controls. It allows the war to be brought home and to be waged against refugees and everyone else without the appropriate immigration status.

The government-sponsored myth is that this country has always had an open door policy towards asylum seekers. The truth is that there were no controls until there were controls against refugees. And there were no controls against refugees until the 1905 Aliens Act. This was an essentially antisemitic measure aimed to keep out Jews fleeing persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe. Within this context all Jews were indiscriminately and simultaneously stereotyped by agitators as capitalists as well as socialists, communists, revolutionaries – and 'anarchists'. This was anarchism portrayed as 'propaganda by deed', that is, political assassination and the dynamiting of civic property. It is this historic reduction of all Jews to bomb-throwing anarchists which is so redolent of today's political characterisation of all Muslims as high-tech terrorists.

The London Evening News of 22nd May 1891 was typical of the ideological onslaught. Its lead article was headlined 'Jews as Anarchists' and it

declared: 'The advance of socialistic and anarchical opinion in London is commensurate with the increased volume of foreign immigration.'

W H Wilkins, an ardent immigration restrictionist, declared in his 1892 book, *The Alien Invasion*, that he knew of 'secret' Jewish revolutionary societies whose existence 'cannot be doubted' and that 'They are formed of the class of man who marched to Hyde Park the other day with a banner inscribed "Down with the Czar". These societies have papers of their own circulated amongst themselves, written in Yiddish, breathing the vilest political sentiments – Nihilism of the most outrageous description.' Queen Victoria in a letter of 13th July 1894 wrote to the then Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery, at a time when parliament was discussing immigration controls, that she felt strongly about 'allowing those monstrous anarchists and assassins to live here and hatch their horrible plots in our country.' The Eastern Post of 21st September 1901 (reprinting an article from the Standard) claimed there was 'a huge Anarchist colony' in east London and that every anarchist was 'almost invariably a Jewish immigrant', whose main preoccupation was supposedly communism, revolution, free love and assassination.

There was a sequel to the passing of the Aliens Act. On 3rd January 1911 a house in Sydney Street, Stepney, burnt to the ground following a police siege headed, in person, by the then Home Secretary, Winston Churchill. Inside were a group of non-British citizens who had allegedly shot and killed a police officer in the course of a burglary and who were also claimed to be 'anarchists' led by one Peter the Painter of whom no trace was ever discovered and who may never have existed. This episode resulted in a renewal of the equation between 'alien' and 'anarchist'. Sir Robert Anderson, who, before his retirement had had roles as a member of the special branch, as head of the CID and as Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, wrote an article entitled 'The Problem of the Criminal Alien' in the February 1911 edition of the magazine, *Nineteenth Century and After*. In this he called for tougher immigration controls and described anarchists as 'world outlaws, the enemies of mankind'. Similar language of course is used against today's 'terrorists', and this was no more clearly seen than in the press hysteria following the virtual 'Siege of Crumpsall Lane' in which DC Oakes, also a Special Branch member, was shot.

It is true there were occasional anarchist actions which took the form of 'propaganda by deed' but these were usually directed at property not people. In the late 19th century the House of Commons, the Tower of London, various metropolitan railway



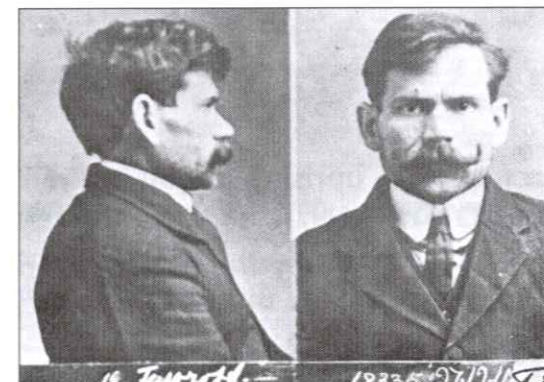
stations, London Bridge and Nelson's Column were all subject to bomb-attacks. Some of these attacks were also undertaken by Fenians – supporters of Irish independence. There was also undoubtedly a significant political presence of Jewish anarchists – so well described by Bill Fishman in his classic *East End Jewish Radicals*.

However the stigmatisation of all aliens, particularly Jews, as anarchists transcended the reality and was simply an excuse for immigration controls and other authoritarian measures. An exactly analogous situation occurred immediately after the Russian Revolution and the end of the First World War with the passing in 1919 of the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act. The agitation for this combined in equal measure antisemitism, anti-Germanism and anti-communism.

Communism simply replaced anarchism as the supposedly defining feature of world Jewry and as an excuse for further immigration controls. For instance P Carter MP argued in Parliament on 15th April 1919 that: 'The unrest that is at present prevailing in this country has a very great deal to do with the alien enemy. You never hear of any disturbance, rioting or anything of that kind without a fair sprinkling of aliens. Bolshevism, of course, is introduced in England almost entirely by aliens.'

In the same debate C Stanton MP (himself a former militant miners leader but now a renegade) proclaimed: 'The other day down in Wales we had a glorious Bolshevik, a man who went around playing a violin and who pretended he could not speak the English language, who got his Independent Labour Party comrades to do the speaking for him and who wrote one of the most treacherous and vindictive speeches with a view to getting the miners to down tools.'

There is no equation in the real world between on the one hand what is now described as 'terrorism' such as the events of 11th September



Left: Did Peter the Painter really exist or was this picture posed?

Right: Police mugshots of 'terrorists' Osip Federoff and Nina Vassilleva

and the destruction of the Twin Towers and, on the other hand, anarchism or communism. The former was some desperate cry inspired by a highly dubious fundamentalism. The latter are variants of the socialist enterprise aiming to liberate humanity through collective action. However the agitation for immigration control has nothing to do with any of these realities. Advocates of control will use any excuse not simply to construct the state on a racist and nationalistic basis but also to strengthen it internally as an instrument of repression. Clear examples of this are contained within the 1999 and 2002 immigration legislation: the forced dispersal of asylum seekers; the transformation of local authority social services into agents of control through linking entitlements and immigration status; and the construction of more removal centres.

Alongside this there has been enacted the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 (which allows for detention without trial of non-British citizens whom the Home Secretary alleges are a security threat). It is important to learn from history and history has shown that even more draconian measures are possible. For instance regulations made under the 1919 Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act imposed almost a state of siege on the Jewish community in particular. All non-British citizens were obliged to carry identity cards, to notify the authorities if they were absent from their home for two weeks, to keep out of designated 'protected areas' and to fill in a special register if they stayed overnight at a hotel. At the same time the police were given power to close clubs and restaurants 'frequented by aliens'. A Jewish Chronicle editorial correctly described this combination of external and internal control as amounting to a 'War on Aliens' (30th May 1919). And this war is now being waged again today against all refugees, migrants and immigrants.



# TO ARM AGAINST THE SEA OF TEARS

Sixty years ago the remarkable uprising began in the Warsaw Ghetto. In this extract from his memoirs, **BERNARD GOLDSTEIN**, a leader of the Jewish Labour Bund's antifascist militia in 1930s Poland recalls the incredible preparations by the ghetto Jews in the weeks before the battle and the heroism of two fellow Bundists

The Bund, being a workers' party, counted on the close comradeship of fellow workers to spread the contagion of the spirit of the most daring and determined and to draw the others into the fight. Our goal was to broaden the resistance and give it a mass character; otherwise it would be only an irresponsible, desperate adventure. Our reliance on the people proved to be justified, for when the final battle was joined our factory groups were able to draw into it all the factory workers. Even ... the illegals without any credentials who lived wherever they could hide, joined the struggle.

Alongside the organised battle groups, individuals made ready for the final hour as well as they could. The entire ghetto seethed with preparation for conflict.

'Death is coming anyhow. Let us take some small revenge on our torturers. Let us not give up our lives so easily.' Such was the feeling, without exception, of the entire ghetto and of our little group on the Aryan side, preparing the weapons for the last battle.

Mikhael Klepfisz, Zalman Friedrych and I sat in one of our conspiratorial apartments on the Aryan side one evening discussing the details of plans for smuggling more weapons and explosives into the ghetto. Mikhael's speciality was now explosive bottles. With the help of the PPS (Polish Socialist Party), he had already smuggled 2,000 litres of benzine into the ghetto. He had also organised a factory for

manufacturing the explosive bottles and had taught a group of comrades how to make and use them.

He was especially absorbed that evening in his own thoughts, weighed down by his responsibilities ... Every once in a while he would rise from his reverie to contribute a fragment to the conversation; then he returned to his thoughts as if to a different and more mysterious world. 'My father and mother have already been burned, my sister is buried in a Christian cemetery, my child is in a foundling home, my wife is a servant in a Gentile home, all I want now is to be consumed in the battle for vengeance.'

His blue eyes burned with excitement, with courage, with despair. His thin lips were pressed together in determined stubbornness. As I looked at him I recalled the year 1920 when ... the Bund had been outlawed and had had to go underground. At the home of Mikhael's parents ... we set up the illegal secretariat. There I would often see Mikhael, a spirited little boy, dashing mischievously though the house. Years later he was a student at the polytechnic ... he was outstanding in the fight against the fascist students in their attempt to institute 'ghetto benches' in the colleges. Now that little blond boy was himself a father and a hero in the most frightful and hopeless struggle the world has ever witnessed.

I looked at Zalman Friedrych. He too had grown up before my eyes, a product of our own schools. He had joined the Bund while still a student and later assumed a leading position in our school system.

He sat before me, a 30-year-old handsome, blond man, his narrow face white, his thick lips drawn hard, his head bowed. He too was reliving his recent personal tragedies: 'Father, mother, sister, all burned, my Zille in Maidanek, my only child in a Catholic convent...' He clenched his fists over his blond head and said hoarsely: 'Revenge! Revenge!'

The ghetto now became a centre of intensive excavation and construction as we concentrated on the building of bunkers. These were hiding places for men and supplies. The builders resorted to the most artful improvisations, revealing extraordinary inventiveness. Groups of inhabitants in a tenement or in neighbouring tenements organised, collected money, and hired engineers and

technicians to supervise the building.

The bunker took various forms, depending upon the physical layout of the building and the ingenuity and skill of the builders. Sometimes it was a double wall, parallel to the old one, with enough room between the two for several people to wait out a raid. Access to the double wall might be through an old wardrobe standing in a corner. It would look like any other wardrobe, but in a way only known to the initiated, its side might be lifted or swung aside to allow one person at a time to crawl into the corridor between the walls. If the double wall were in a kitchen one might enter it by slithering through the oven ... sometimes the bunker was a double cellar, constructed by digging a tunnel under the old cellar and hollowing out a large cavern at the end of it ... in some of the double cellars crude ventilation systems were installed as well as connections for electricity and water...

In addition to the hiding places, tunnels were dug to connect one courtyard to another. Passages were connected through the cellars and the attics – a communications system which proved to be of great strategic value during the ghetto uprising.

Some tunnels led to points on the Aryan side; some connected with the sewage and water-supply systems.... Stocks of fuel and food, especially hard candy and cereals were accumulated.

The entire ghetto worked with singleness of purpose. The preparations went on in the conviction that the final battle of annihilation was inevitable.... There was no deliverance! This certainty embraced everyone in the ghetto. Almost everybody was trying to buy arms. They paid fantastic prices. Everyone was willing to give up whatever possessions he had for a gun. What use were money, jewellery, or clothes, when the last hour was so close, and when they could be exchanged for a weapon to kill the enemy?

All eyes in the ghetto looked to the underground organisations ... they commanded complete confidence. The 'all-powerful' Judenrat was now ignored. The new head, the engineer Marek Lichtenbaum, no longer had any power or influence ... when the Germans asked him to carry out the evacuation of the factories he answered that he had no influence in the ghetto, that power

resided in other hands....

The atmosphere seethed with feverish preparations and eagerness for battle. Every Jew became a soldier. From the sufferings of hell he forged the weapons of resistance and battle....

We on the Aryan side utilised every means of obtaining arms – private channels, professional smugglers, Armia

Kryova (the 'official' arm of the Government-in-Exile), and the military organisations of the Polish government and Polish socialists.... Every channel of communication with the ghetto was guarded by comrades of the fighting organisation, who were on the lookout day and night for our transports.... We were in a state of tense expectation.

We strained every nerve to gather ammunition and arms quickly, and to throw them over the ghetto walls, rushing feverishly to make the most of what might be the few remaining moments.

A few days before the uprising Mikhael Klepfisz and Zalman Friedrych brought the last shipment of arms into the ghetto.

## WLODKA BLIT-ROBERTSON and her twin sister owe their lives to the courageous members of the resistance who smuggled them out of the Warsaw Ghetto

It is 60 years since Szmuel Zygelboim died in London and 60 years since the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. I am fortunate and proud to have so many direct memories of the organised Jewish resistance in Warsaw. It was because of the dedication and bravery of members of the ZOB (Jewish Defence Organisation) that I and my sister survived the Holocaust.

In the ghetto, I remember clandestine bulletins, an underground self-help committee in our apartment block, secret classes for the older children, a hidden library, and secret meetings that my mother went to. Later, when the deportations to the death camps began, I remember how in the middle of the night we were led to a bunker by a ZOB member of Poale Zion, Hersz Berlinski. I remember being amazed that he carried a revolver.

Four weeks before the ghetto uprising, when most of the people in the ghetto had already been taken to the death camps, I and my twin sister were smuggled out by Mikhael Klepfisz, whom we had not met until then. We were 11 years old. He came to collect us from our hiding place in the ghetto where we had survived until then with our family. He was a young Bundist acting as a liaison officer between the ghetto and the 'Aryan' side. He was also responsible for the manufacture of incendiary bombs for the ghetto fighters and for acquiring small arms and getting them into the ghetto.

We were taken to the ghetto wall and climbed over it to the 'Aryan' side. The guards were bribed. Other smuggling by the ZOB went on at the same time. Marek Edelman and other young Bundists were there, helping

to smuggle people and goods in and out of the ghetto. He and other members of the ZOB living outside the ghetto were desperately looking for non-Jewish families who would be prepared, at great risk to themselves, to shelter Jews, mainly young children. Some money coming via the Polish government in exile and through the Polish underground was available for that purpose.

Outside the ghetto, I quickly learned how dangerous it was to be recognised as a Jew. So many Poles were denouncing Jews to the Gestapo or making money by blackmail. Mikhael took us to the tiny flat of a kind Polish Catholic family named Dubiel who welcomed us warmly. Mikhael also slept there on the floor. I have wonderful memories of how warm and friendly he was to us. He talked openly to us about the things he was doing.

During the Passover and Easter holidays of 1943 the Ghetto Uprising began. We watched from the window of our tenement block as the ghetto was set on fire, and heard the shooting within. We saw people running out from burning houses and being shot, people jumping from windows with their clothes on fire. The ghetto fighters fought the Germans for more than four weeks, trying desperately to defend the people in the ghetto. They were defeated by heavy artillery fire, smoke and gas which the Germans pumped into the bunkers and sewers. Mikhael Klepfisz smuggled himself back into the ghetto with the last few Molotov cocktails and old revolvers. He was shot defending a bunker on the third day of the uprising. After the war he was decorated posthumously with the highest Polish military honour.

I had to move from the Dubiel family who became afraid to keep two Jewish children. Other couriers of the ZOB somehow found places for me and then came every month to pay for me. This was a dangerous assignment. I know that they also smuggled themselves into labour camps with money to help people there. I would like to mention the names of the ZOB couriers whom I knew: Wladka Peltel, Inka Swajger, Marysia Warman, Ben Mead, Ala Margolis-Edelman and Celemski. There were many others, including some devoted non-Jewish helpers such as Janek and Stasiek Dubiel.

On 30th April this year, I and my husband went to Warsaw to attend a ceremony commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. I met up with my cousin Paul Felenbok. He had managed to escape through the sewers when he was seven years old. Many hundreds of people gathered in a large square in front of the Warsaw monument to the ghetto fighters, to remember and pay tribute to them. The Polish president, Alexander Kwasmiewski, and the Israeli president, Moshe Katzir, were present, together with Marek Edelman and many survivors and their families and delegations from abroad. Also present were representatives of embassies. Survivors and groups from abroad, including a British contingent, laid wreaths. The very moving and impressive ceremony was organised by the Polish army.

In the evening we were invited to a concert in the opera house at which the President of Poland presented military honours and medals to six of the surviving participants of the ghetto uprising.

**ZOB (Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa)** Jewish Combat Organisation, the main underground fighting force set up in the Warsaw ghetto.  
**Poale Zion Leftwing Zionist party.**  
**Bund, Bundist** The Jewish Socialist Workers' Bund (union), the mass organisation of the Jewish workers, which obtained majority leadership of Polish Jewry before the war.  
**Szmuel Zygelboim** Jewish trade unionist and city councillor, sent abroad by the Bund to represent Jewish workers in the exiled wartime Polish parliament, and to make the world aware of what was happening to the Jews in Poland. Took his own life in London, in solidarity with the ghetto fighters and in protest at Allied inaction.  
**Marek Edelman** Bundist and last surviving member of the ghetto fighters' command, supported Solidarnosc in the fight for workers' rights and democracy in Poland, now a leading antiracist, antifascist campaigner.



Warsaw Ghetto ID card of Zalman Friedrych



# EVOLUTION OF A MENTOR

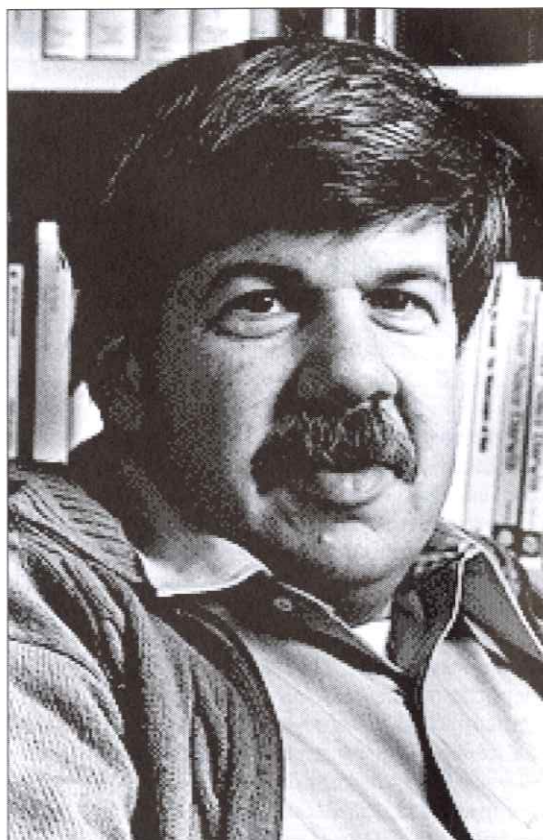
**STEPHEN WEBSTER** commemorates the life, influences and work of Stephen Jay Gould, biological theorist, critic and commentator, who dared to confront the Darwinist elite

When, a year ago, it was announced that the Harvard evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould had died from cancer, my first reaction was incredulity. Gould was too prolific a writer and too ebullient a character to be checked so suddenly. How could that garrulous style, those opinions, those campaigns against creationism, simply stop? For many years Gould had been my intellectual mentor. He fulfilled that role for all biologists with an interest in the relations between science and society. His writing was able to encompass top-flight palaeontology (the study of fossils) with highly effective analyses of science's historic involvement in politics. The uniqueness of Gould lay partly in his writing style, which, at its best, combined the heavyweight argument with the impish; the deadly serious with the lightest of flourishes. Easily the most annotated book on my shelves is Gould's *Mismeasure of Man*, his 1982 review of biological determinism, which, with typical verve, opens his argument with an enjoyable and unforced account of Socrates musing on morality.

Gould did not wear his learning lightly, and it extended far and wide, exuberantly so. His popular essays, published monthly for 25 years, centred on evolutionary theory but were extraordinarily eclectic. Their arguments plunder high art (he was a keen choral singer), the history of science (the discipline is responsible for a quarter of his total publications), popular culture (baseball figures strongly in his writing), and much else besides. In short, Gould was a scientist who could move from his particular specialisation, the evolution of Cerion land snails, out into the widest discussions of Darwinism, and beyond into politics, history and culture.

Stephen Jay Gould's grandparents were New York Jewish immigrants. He describes a lively urban childhood, remote from typical American Protestantism. At the age of six, in New York's Natural History museum, he came across *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, and resolved to become a palaeontologist. He eventually became Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology at Harvard University. Gould was later to return to a theme of his childhood: his parents' rejection of religion. *Rocks of Ages*, written after he moved back to New York in the mid-1990s, reasserted the view that science and religion should be seen as two world views, or 'non-overlapping magisteria'. The differences are real, but need bring no conflict.

When Gould was in his 30s and working at Harvard, evolutionary theory was challenged by the 1975 publication of E O Wilson's *Sociobiology*. The final chapter suggested that huge chunks of intellectual debate in religion, psychology, ethics and fine art could be replaced by a knowledge of Darwinism, or even of neurobiology. Wilson's



thesis, and its successors in the same field, attracted the ire of Gould and others, including Steven Rose and Richard Lewontin.

They diagnosed two related problems. Wilson and his supporters believed all areas of human experience including homosexuality, altruism and rape, could be explained away with reference to the Darwinian notion of natural selection.

But can 'aggression', or for that matter 'homosexuality', be considered the kind of definable characteristic that can be inherited down the generations, like eye or skin colour? Most likely, it cannot. Gould's second objection concerned his doubts that all areas of humanity could be explained by Darwin's theories. He revered Darwin but believed that natural selection was only one of a variety of factors that were relevant in understanding human evolution. Accounts that strained to show how every animal or plant characteristic is caused by natural selection alone he derided as Just So stories.

In taking this stance, he came into conflict with other evolutionists, especially Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett. The conflict was often abrasive: the eminent biologist John Maynard Smith wrote in the *New York Review of Books* '...the evolutionary biologists with whom I have discussed his work tend to see him as a man whose ideas are so confused as to be hardly worth bothering with....'

Chief among the ideas that caused offence was Gould's theory of punctuated equilibrium, which suggested that evolution has a varying pace, taking a jump from time to time. This is a heretical view for mainstream Darwinians who take the steady pace of gradual evolution as axiomatic.

Politically, Gould was on the left. He accepted that his knowledge of Marxism might have played a role in formulating his scientific understanding. More importantly, Gould was generally concerned to prevent evolutionary biology being used to suggest that injustice and other social ills are rooted in genes or in evolution. He was far too fond of Darwin to let such ideas pass unchallenged.

Stephen Jay Gould fought off one bout of cancer, but succumbed to a second. After surgery to remove a brain tumour, he was back at university within the week, teaching up to five hours a day. The next week he collapsed and died at home in a bed placed in his library, surrounded by his collection of rare and magical natural history books. We miss him greatly.

*Stephen Jay Gould, born New York 1941, died New York 2002*

Stephen Webster teaches science communication at Imperial College London. His latest book is *Thinking About Biology* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) £141.95.

## DANNY BOYCHIK

First, to be absolutely clear about this, I'm not Irish. None of my parents, grandparents or remote ancestors are from Ireland. I've only ever been to Ireland once, on a work trip which involved an ecumenical service to dedicate a new halal abattoir, but that's another story.

Four years ago I decided to learn to play music and hit on the tin whistle as my instrument of choice. It was cheap, portable, and hard to break or ruin. One thing led to another and I found myself at traditional Irish music classes run by an organisation called *Meitheal Cheoil* at the Camden Irish Centre – the only place I could find where it was possible to actually have tin whistle lessons.

Within a few weeks I was beginning to pick out some traditional songs on my whistle. We learned by ear, not by reading music. This suited my musical abilities but presented another problem; the rest of the group all knew the songs and I didn't.

I hadn't really thought about this previously. I just wanted to learn an instrument and was really taking a free ride on the Irish part. But for *Meitheal Cheoil*, the passing on and preservation of a part of Irish culture as a live tradition rather than as a museum piece was an essential part of the activity.

So I bought CDs and listened to them as often as I could. There was no point in buying innovative cross-over reworking of the traditional tunes; I needed the raw stuff so that I could get the songs into my head. To get the simplest renditions I had to immerse myself in Hiberno-schlock, a twilight world of albums with names like 'Twenty Irish Songs to Warm Your Heart' and 'Irish Party Singalong Tunes'. You'd probably recognise the Jewish equivalent if you saw it – and you'd probably run a mile.

Of course, I did ironically, so that was ok. And there was something rather liberating about taking a dunk in someone else's culture and not having to worry about whether it was really politically acceptable to enjoy maudlin nationalist sentimentality. Some of the Irish members of the

class worried about it rather more.

In any case, it must have worked because, by Christmas, I was playing in the beginner's band at the Irish Centre Ceilidh. And that's where I had my revelation: anyone could be Irish if they wanted to.

Even in the whistle class, no one had seemed to find it particularly strange that I, as a non-Irish person, was participating in their thing. But then it wasn't terribly clear who was and wasn't Irish. Some of the students were first-generation immigrants – some old people reconnecting with the traditional music they'd grown up with and some Irish yuppies for whom it was a class that they might have taken back home – but most were second or even third generation 'assimilated' Irish, on a roots thing. They didn't sound or look that different from me, a third-generation descendant of Jewish immigrants.

But the Ceilidh, which included people from the other music classes and from the broader Irish community, was a whole new experience. Irishness, at least in its north London manifestation, was clearly a much more inclusive category than I had been prepared for. There were quite a few Black Irish people, and one or two Chinese ones. There were a couple of others with what looked to me like Jewish faces, though they might equally have been Greek.

I don't know how everyone in the room felt about this but I do know that there was no outward sign that anybody had any feelings about it at all. Then and subsequently, I have never come across any handwringing about who the traditional music activities ought to be for, let alone 'who is an Irish person?' The activity was Irish in content, and that was enough. Other, non-Irish people's participation did not detract from its Irishness or threaten its existence or value.

In our community, interest by others in our culture is rarely taken at face value. Although discussions about Jewish culture are often shot through with barely-veiled assumptions about

When **JEREMY GREEN** joined the Camden Irish Centre to learn the tin whistle, not one person said 'that's funny – you don't look Irish!'



# ANTI-RACISM IN ONE COUNTRY

The fight against racism and the fight for internationalism are two sides of the same coin. When we fight against racism we uphold what connects us all together as human against those who would discriminate and persecute on the basis of race or nationality. When we fight for internationalism we are doing the same thing. The difference lies in the focus and arena of this struggle – relations between people locally or globally. But the struggles will always be linked.

More concretely, what happens internationally is often intimately linked to what happens nationally or in our local communities in a way that places obligations on antiracists in Britain. We live in a time when racism and fascism are making gains in many countries. In the last ten years we have seen genocide in Rwanda and Burundi and racist war crimes and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. There have been pogroms in Gujarat in which thousands have been murdered. The Red/Browns are gaining strength in Russia whilst they cheer on Putin in his slaughter of the Chechen people. The greatest power on earth, the United States, whips up Islamophobic war hysteria whilst fundamentalism gains ground at the grassroots throughout the world, often positing 'Jew power' as the enemy. And Israel adds fuel to these flames with its own programme of apartheid, ethnic cleansing and atrocities in the name of the 'war against terrorism'. In the meantime, fascist and other racist populist parties are coming to prominence, and sometimes into government, all over Europe. But how do these terrible instances of racism around the globe relate to antiracists campaigning here?

The horrific burning of Hindus on a train sparked a pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat in which thousands were killed and yet more were injured and made homeless. This was not simply revenge. The pogroms were organised by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). The RSS is strong within India's ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the RSS dominate the administration of Gujarat and Bombay. These were not the first anti-Muslim pogroms in the last decade that have had links to the Indian state.

India is seen as an ally in Bush and Blair's war against terror and gets lots of military aid. Perhaps more importantly for antiracists in this country, there are community organisations in Britain providing support for the RSS The Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) is the international wing of the RSS and has its headquarters in Leicester. The charitable arms of the RSS/HSS such as Sewa International send money to the pogromists. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) – the World Council of Hindus – claims to represent Hindus throughout the world, and is even more influential in the Hindu community here.

Antiracists in Britain cannot ignore these issues in the interests of 'unity'. The international links with racists in India act as an obstacle to unity of the Muslim and Hindu communities in the struggle against the racists here. That unity cannot be built

without confronting the influence of these organisations (the same goes with regard to extreme Islamist organisations too). The progressive antiracist forces in the Hindu community need the support of other antiracists in their struggle against the influence of these organisations in their community, something that would be frustrated if these groupings were welcomed on antiracist platforms.

Skinhead gangs are targeting Roma people in Eastern Europe, especially in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. Roma communities are being pillaged. Roma are beaten up daily and there have been many murders. The police stand by and let it happen. Roma are discriminated against in every country. In Slovakia there is evidence that the policy of sterilisation of Roma women, begun by the Nazis and continued by the Stalinists, continues today.

And yet the British Government has led the move to bring these countries into the European Union, denying that there are any problems of human rights violations. And they are intent on keeping out Roma refugees from Eastern Europe – detaining and deporting them and recently putting these Eastern European countries on a list of places where applications for asylum are considered 'unfounded'.

It is surely the obligation of antiracist organisations in this country to act in solidarity with the Roma people in Eastern Europe and, in particular, to campaign against the disgraceful policies of the British Government on this matter.

Jewish Socialist gives a lot of coverage to the struggle against the occupation, for a just peace in Israel and Palestine and for the human and national rights of the Palestinians. This does not mean that this particular struggle of the oppressed should be 'privileged' above all others but it has a special place in antiracist discourse because of the role of the Holocaust in the history of the Israeli State.

Both supporters and opponents of Zionism invoke the Holocaust. Zionists use the fact of the Holocaust to justify the creation of the State of Israel. They often invoke the Holocaust to assert that any attack on Israel and Zionism is antisemitic. The extreme right of Zionism will use the Holocaust to justify war crimes against the Palestinians, arguing that the Jews must destroy their enemies in order not to be destroyed themselves.

Anti-Zionists often invoke the Holocaust too. They might march with placards equating the Star of David and the Swastika. They have argued that Israelis are behaving to the Palestinians like the Nazis behaved to the Jews. In the 1970s and '80s they turned the position of No Platform for Fascists around to argue against allowing a platform for organisations that support Israel, especially university Jewish Societies, using the formula 'Zionism is racism'. The extreme right of anti-Zionism embraces Holocaust denial, claiming that the Holocaust is a Jewish invention to justify the creation of the State of Israel.

How should antiracists in Britain respond to this? It is tempting to ignore it, to say that this debate

The struggle against racism and fascism is indivisible so communities facing oppression, discrimination and violence against in one country should be supported by antiracists across the world.

**DAVID LANDAU** takes issue with the National Assembly Against Racism's stance

cultural superiority, we are usually suspicious about anyone else wanting to partake. Perhaps it's because we are afraid that it won't stand up to much scrutiny from anyone without a sentimental attachment to it; or maybe we are worried that they are only showing an interest so that they can insinuate themselves into our superior institutions. Why else would non-Jews be trying to sneak into our schools?

Either way, there is an all-pervasive obsession with maintaining and policing a boundary, with determining who is and isn't entitled to come in. Look at the selection processes associated with admission to Jewish schools, or the application forms for joining a synagogue. No one at *Meitheal Cheoil* ever asked me for my parents' marriage certificate.

I don't want to imply that Irish culture is inherently inclusive and anti-racist. I'm sure that someone else could find plenty of counter-examples, together with joyous examples of Jewish inclusiveness and syncretism. But I don't think that the Jewish obsession with boundaries and separation, which make up an enormous proportion of our law and our lore, are merely accidental add-ons to our culture either. In biblical and Talmudic Judaism, the principle of distinction and separation, and the importance of keeping things from mixing, is always imbued with a moral and theological dimension.

We are forbidden to mix meat and milk; fish and meat on the same plate; wool and linen in the same garment; and forbidden to yoke two kinds of animals to the same plough. God does not like it when we mix things, stuff, or ourselves. It's worth remembering this next time you get into one of those discussions about the essential ethical core of Judaism.

I enjoyed the time I spent being Irish. I think it's one of those things that everyone ought to try at least once. It would be nice, too, if it was easier for other people to have a go at being secular Jews too. If that seems an inherently self-contradictory idea to you, have a think about why. Is it because, despite protestations to the contrary, we only have two models of Jewish identity – a religious one that does allow for conversions and a racial one, that doesn't?

## Souvenir Judaica

by Miriam Moss

There were books on the stall  
price tags and pictures  
yellow stars with 'Warsaw Ghetto' imprinted in black  
across the centre

'People like those' the seller said in response to my enquiry  
Commercial translation of a half-remembered dream

Seek solidarity in suffering from the comfort of their home

memory junkies – they crave the perfect high

sleep soundly at night  
wake up breathing from other people's nightmares.



should not be on our agenda, but this is not wise. People should not be able to abuse the principles of antiracism without challenge from the antiracist movement itself. We ought to argue against exceptionalism, and should confront the antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-Arabism that too often surround the debates about Israel and Palestine.

More positively antiracists can bring together Jews, Palestinians, Muslims and Arabs in discussions about the future of the Middle East based on antiracist principles: no-ethnic cleansing; no apartheid and exclusivity; and equal rights for all peoples in all nations.

A resolution on Israel/Palestine brought the question of internationalism to a head in the 2001 conference of the National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR). Whatever the merits or demerits of this resolution, the Conference Standing Orders Committee ruled it out of order. A resolution on the war in Afghanistan was also ruled out of order. Worse was the justification of the ruling which invoked the

following proposition: 'NAAR explicitly only takes up those international and European matters than can be held to both impact directly on racism in the UK and contribute to unity in the antiracist movement.'

The Jewish Socialists' Group opposed this proposition. All the issues discussed above could be ruled out of order on this basis. A resolution on the Soweto massacre or the assassination of Martin Luther King would have been out of order too.

In 2002, the Jewish Socialists' Group submitted a resolution on Internationalism to try and get this question debated properly by the conference. We recognise that NAAR cannot not spend all its time discussing everything that has happened in the world, so our resolution suggested new guidelines on what was appropriate. This was ruled out of order using the very same anti-internationalist proposition! Nevertheless, the Jewish Socialists' Group remains affiliated to the National Assembly Against Racism and we shall continue to fight for internationalist antiracist principles.

## WHEN HELPING IS A CRIME

**The British Government was triumphant over the closure of Sangatte Refugee camp, believing that this would stem attempts by asylum seekers to reach Britain. TOM MACGOWAN of the Kent Campaign to Defend Asylum Seekers reports on the aftermath and the experiences of ordinary people who have dared try to help refugees in northern France**

CSUR is a network of people who have tried to provide food and material support to refugees in northern France since the Sangatte Camp was closed. Without them the refugees in Calais would have nothing. Since the camp closed, these oppressive new measures mean that the only option now available to the refugees in Calais is to claim asylum in France. The British government says they care about genuine refugees yet Blunkett boasts of sealing our borders in an attempt to make it more and more difficult for refugees to get to Britain to claim their right to asylum. The measures will drive more and more into the hands of people-smugglers and organised crime. It will also make the crossing more dangerous than ever and there are likely to be more tragedies like the 58 people who died in the back of a lorry in Dover.

We had collected warm clothes and blankets and yesterday we had the opportunity to deliver them. When I arrived I had to wait for my friends who, at the last minute, had been called away to court. I decided to sit in the station café, which provided me with a large window on the busy street outside. A police van is permanently parked outside the station. When refugees arrive, the police radio their colleagues. Within minutes they arrive, sirens blaring. While I was sitting there for an hour, this was repeated three times. At the table opposite, some English day-trippers were complaining about refugees and I could see they were impressed by the efficiency of the operation outside.

My friends Sylvie and Rene turned up. They had been at a tribunal in Boulogne. The previous night

their friend had been arrested for the 'crime' of giving shelter to two Iraqi refugees in his home. He was accused of people-smuggling but even though this was clearly an absurd accusation, under French law, giving shelter to someone without papers (Sans Papiers) is considered a crime. He could have received a five-year jail sentence. The tribunal had ruled that if he was caught speaking to refugees, that would be his likely fate.

This is just the tip of the iceberg for the people of Calais. Those who are decent enough to want to try to help are being terrorised by the police. Worst of all, when they try to give out food now, the police turn up and arrest refugees, so refugees cannot get food without also risking arrest.

Local people are now afraid that they are leading refugees into a trap. Local helpers are being followed and intimidated by the police, and if they speak to the media they are targeted and sometimes attacked. Supporters of the refugees have also frequently witnessed them being beaten up by the police. My friend Sylvie gave one example: as she was walking through the train station, two police officers were holding a refugee face down on the ground. 'One of them was kicking him,' she told me. 'Everyone, even the person I was with, were walking past, ignoring what was going on. It was as if I was in a mad world where reality was being totally ignored.'

This seems to symbolise the British attitude too. If we make refugees invisible, keep them out, call them 'asylum seekers', 'clandestine', 'bogus' or 'economic migrants', then they will cease to really be the survivors of war in Iraq, Afghanistan or Somalia that they actually are.

# MOVING IMAGES

Exodus is an exhibition of photographs about emigration and refugees, by the highly regarded Brazilian exile photographer Sebastião Salgado. He writes: 'This exhibition tells the story of humanity on the move. It is a disturbing story because few people uproot themselves by choice. Most are compelled to become migrants, refugees or exiles by forces beyond their control, by poverty, repression or war.' Exodus is ambitious in size, covering both floors of the Barbican Gallery and in scope, with images from four continents and over 40 countries.

Salgado grew up in rural, small town Brazil, eventually studying economics in Sao Paulo. After the 1968 military coup and subsequent political repression he and his wife Lelia Deluiz Wanick, who curates his exhibitions, effectively became political exiles in Europe, where they still live today.

In 1971 work as an economist took Salgado to Rwanda where photographing what he saw proved 'a much better way to get inside reality'. His images of poverty and of the powerless, taken all over the world, have since become iconic. Salgado's photography is renowned and often criticised for the juxtaposition of strikingly beautiful visual

images with painful subject matter. Epic, lyrical, almost biblical images of Rwandan refugee camps in 'Exodus' are a case in point. However many would argue that this contrast is intrinsic to the widely acknowledged power of his work. In his exhibition notes Salgado himself expresses the hope that: 'you will be quite a different person when you leave this exhibition'.

Walking into the gallery I think of my late father, Zygmunt Frankel, a refugee, from Poland to Lithuania in 1939, from Siberia to Uzbekistan in 1942, back to Poland in 1946 and finally to New Zealand in 1949. 'Ziggy', became a naturalised New Zealand citizen and often said 'I am proud to call myself a Kiwi'. Nevertheless, he spoke these words in a wholly uncompromised Polish accent and, domiciled in the South Pacific, he remained a man eternally in search of a really good pickled herring. He spoke seven languages but none seemed to be his native language, because the place that he had been a native of, effectively no longer existed. The world of Polish Jewry was obliterated. Notwithstanding the existence of Israel, Ziggy remained in permanent, quiet exile.

I wander through the galleries trying to take in every image and read every caption but the sheer numbers of photographs and the extreme nature of

Sebastião Salgado's exquisite yet searing photographs document the hardship, beauty and dignity of humanity across the world. **ANN FRANKEL** reviews his latest exhibition, Exodus, which was at the Barbican Gallery in London from 13 February to 1 June, 2003



The detention center for refugees from South Vietnam on the island of tai A Chau, Hong Kong



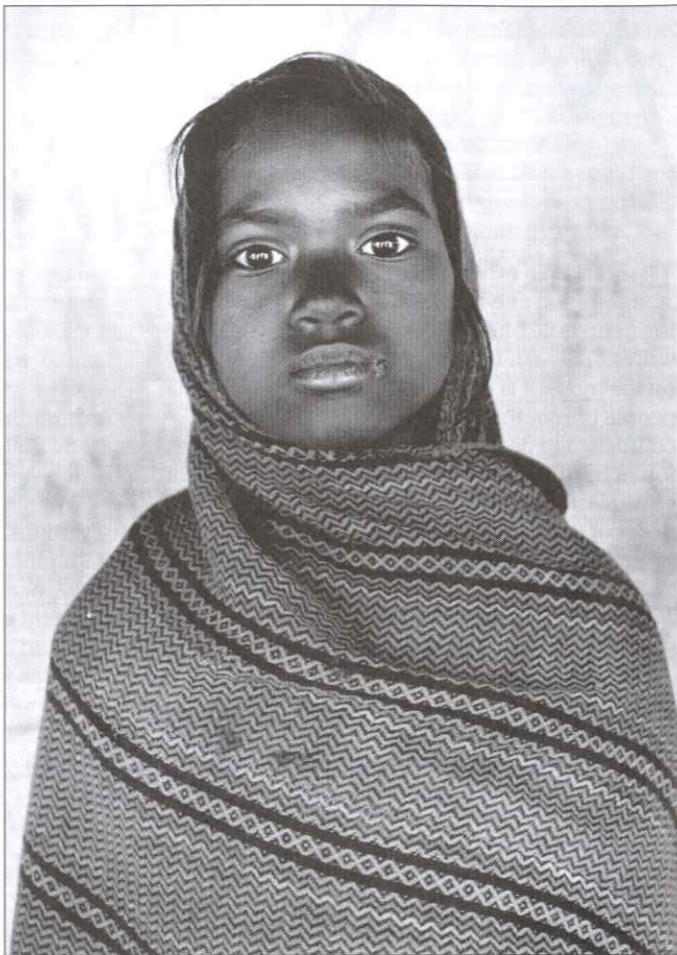
much of their content, soon overwhelm me. I decide to allow myself to be drawn in at random and focus simply on what catches my eye.

Photograph No. 37: Food distribution run by French humanitarian organisation 'Action Contre le Faim', Kabul, Afghanistan, 1996. Two women are standing. I imagine they are waiting in line. A child's leg sticks out from beneath a veil - it looks strangely naked next to the women who are each entirely covered by their clothing and head dress. I am drawn towards the folds of cloth that envelop each woman. Close up I can see there is a kind of netting over their faces. I wonder how it feels to constantly view the world through the weave. I circle the gallery, coming back to this photo several times. Perhaps if I met these women they would not care to tell me their story, having more pressing matters to attend to. Is the photograph here to tell their story for them? Or maybe its purpose is to remind us that everyone, without exception, has a story that needs to be told and remembered.

Photograph No. 73: War, droughts and famine provoke severe suffering in the displaced populations, Niwule, Southern Sudan, 1993. The man looks into the distance, the camera incidental, perhaps irrelevant. His skin is deeply lined, his eyes excessively bright. His face seems to shine in sharp relief against the blur of what I imagine to be a drought stricken desert. In his expression I see rage, grief and bitterness. Beyond these I see despair. Of course, I cannot know what he actually felt. I am certain only of what I feel, when I look at the image of his face. The notion of a man's rage and grief in the desert reawakens a memory of another photograph, small, battered and unframed, but with a sharp image. Scattered across the desert landscape, as far as the eye can see, are regular mounds in the earth. I am six years old and I know this photo is significant although no one tells me why. Later I realise that somewhere in the desert, underneath one of the mounds is my father's father, Alexander Frankel. He died of typhus, in Uzbekistan in 1942, one of many Jewish refugees thousands of miles from what had once been home.

Photograph No 106: Corpses of hundreds of Tutsis murdered in the school of the village of Nyarubuye, one year ago, are still there, Rwanda, 1995. This image is simultaneously chaotic and agonisingly still. Piles of long dead, decayed bodies suggest unspeakable and unspoken carnage. No matter how much I rationally know it surely is true, it seems incomprehensible that so many bodies can be left unclaimed, for so long. Can there have been nobody left to claim the dead? How is it possible for me, or anyone, to pay adequate respect to the dead, when even their bodies have been abandoned?

I remember that I am already the guardian of a story belonging to the dead, the dead of another Holocaust. I am named Ann Debora for my father's aunt Hanya and her daughter Danka. The German army were looking for smugglers but instead found



Centre for orphans from the tribes of southern Bihar, India

runaway Jews, pretending to be Catholics, with telltale photo albums in their suitcases. Hanya, Danka and a friend were shot and died on a railway station, somewhere in Poland. As a child I know, without being told, that I am to carry the names of the dead, out into the world of the living, each and every day. The past is always with us, because we are Jews. One of the tasks of a Jew, I am given to understand, is to be a guardian of history, because who else will do it for us?

I feel drained by the intensity of viewing an exhibition described as 'misery made beautiful'. As I leave the exhibition I ask myself if I am a different person, the hope expressed by Salgado in his notes. I give myself plenty of time to answer the question, as I am unable to find my car in the impossibly incoherent Barbican complex. Finally locating it I decide that in visiting 'Exodus', I have made connections. I am connected, as so many times before, to my family history and the migration in my blood. I am also connected to the lives of the people in the photographs - people about whom I know nothing, whose lives are distant from my own. People with whom I apparently have no link at all. I don't know where the connection will ultimately take me, but I have been moved.

The experience of emotional connection is one of the keys to change within the individual. In turn, one of the essentials necessary to envision and create wider political change is that we understand, we know ourselves to be connected to all of humanity. Having made my connections I am, in some small way, different to the person I was when I first entered the exhibition, as Salgado had hoped.

# HOME FRONT

I distinctly remember Stormin' Norman (Schwarzkopf), of the last Gulf war, telling Sue Lawley on Desert Island Discs that there could be only one thing worse for Iraq than Saddam Hussein and that was the rule of the ayatollahs. That was his brazen justification for the Americans not coming to the assistance of the 1991 Shia rebellion they had themselves fomented, when the Republican Guard was massacring the fedayeen.

Should we all then be wryly grimacing at what the Americans have let themselves in for? A bit of the old *schadenfreude* wouldn't hurt in the circumstances, would it? After all we, that is those of us who were vociferous opponents of the war, didn't stop it, did we? It's surely only human to want to see the Yanks digging themselves deep into this mire of their own making.

The irony is that, at least for the moment, they've probably got things pretty much as they want them. Even if suicide bombs and mines start demolishing American marines in their cots as they did in their ill-fated expedition into Lebanon 20 years ago, they're not likely to leave in a hurry this time. Iraq is too much of a prize. And anyway, they've got the British there to help them out on how to be good imperialists.

A bit of history offers a sobering aspect on the whole saga. The British came to Mosul in 1918, having scuppered the terms of their (admittedly botched) secret agreement with the French (and Russians) two years earlier in order to get their hands on the oilfields they claimed were theirs, and stayed on in practice for the next 40. How did they do it? By manipulating the League of Nations, buying off tribal support, bringing in a client leadership, dividing the various ethnic and religious elements (Shia, Sunni, Kurds, Nestorians, Turkmens) against each other, handing just enough of the revenues over to their elites to keep them happy, and wheeling out the armoured cars and bombers whenever any of the 'natives' grew restive. Sounds familiar? It all ended in tears, of course, in a great explosion of anti-imperialist hatred in 1958. Are we to wait another 40 years for the same again?

I think not. The Islamic world is in such ferment, and the politics of oil so intermeshed now with the single most dangerous threat to human sustainability on the planet - namely the knock-on effects of global warming - that we can expect serious Middle Eastern trouble to brew way before that. True, the clique in the Pentagon who started this whole thing have the hubris to imagine that the Project for the New American Century will be seen through it to its bitter end. But the nature of the ongoing crisis - with the issue of Islamic (sic) terrorism just one tiny part of it - is likely to push their agenda off the rails sooner rather than later.

So, the question for those of us in Britain - the dissenting and the disaffected who opposed the war is, what now? Is it time to look backwards and assess what happened? Or to look into the near future to see how we can pick up the pieces and move forward?

The answer must be primarily the latter. But it must surely also involve scrutinising what we did or didn't do and being willing to learn by our mistakes. The movement (if movement it was; sometimes it seems just too inchoate to really be that) staked a hell of a lot on preventing the war. One could argue it came within a whisker of achievement. There were the extraordinary mass demonstrations as well as all the grassroots activity. There was the wonderful occasion when Tony Blair and Jack Straw had to leave Downing Street by the back door for fear of being lynched. And of course there was the role of young people - the one really hopeful star in the firmament of opposition. Yes, for a very brief moment the possibility that the Blair regime would tumble, that the Labour party would revolt en masse, that what the kids were doing in and outside their schools would snowball into a quasi-revolutionary experience the likes of which we have not witnessed in this country perhaps since Chartism, or even the English revolution of the 1640s, seemed real enough. Add to that the worldwide demonstrations and the possibilities seemed almost limitless.

Yet, it didn't happen like that. In retrospect, we can see that we imagined ourselves to be much stronger than we actually were. Those repeat Stop The War Coalition (STWC) demos, even the mass city disruption called for by ARROW proved insufficient to the task. To my mind, there was always in fact a certain conceit in the mantra that if enough people came out into the streets we could actually take on the apparatus of state. Maybe it seemed plausible in a city like London. As for the little bit of Middle England I live in, the prospect seemed hardly more than a blip on the horizon. And my own proposition - the idea of a sustained series of symbolic national strikes or counterstrikes (see the ideas of the late Danilo Dolci for anybody who is interested) - in practice were really a bridge too far without STWC or broader endorsement and actually the sort of thing most people shied away from once they realised they might be putting their jobs on the line.

As for directly taking on the state qua state, my one serious outing, this time to Fairford, was enough to dispel any hopes on that front. We faced rank upon serried rank of body armoured police officers from four forces, including the Met. There were barriers on country roads everywhere, all the panoply of potential violence and people-control reminiscent of the miners' strike, entirely designed to convince us that the government had every

What do people who campaigned to stop the war do now?

**MARK LEVENE** argues that we should target Britain's weapons of mass destruction and create a rainbow coalition to start the peace



intention to neutralise, and if necessary pulverise, the opposition.

So again the question, how do we continue to take the struggle to the government effectively and purposefully? Should we even bother? They believe the worst is over.

And the fact is that unless we can show them to the contrary, they are right. The moment has passed. The efficacy of further demos – except for their own sake – really serves little purpose. Should we not, even secretly, be a little pleased by what has happened? After all, the war might have been in defiance of international law but at least it did get rid of a truly awful regime. The one group of people I could never really berate were the war supporters of the ilk of Gwyneth Dunwoody and Emma Nicholson, who at least remained consistent in their humanitarian support of the Kurds and the Marsh Arabs so utterly immiserated and mass murdered by Saddam.

For the rest, however, there can be no such mercy. The shysters who lied and stitched up and bamboozled their way towards war can simply not be allowed to get away with it. They have blood on their hands. Their aims were never honourable; they deserve to be put on trial, and a group of international lawyers is currently attempting to have Blair, Hoon and Straw arraigned before the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

But we need to think beyond mere punishment, even if that were possible. We need, now more than ever, imagination, determination and that dread word, leadership. The leadership of the likes of the late E P Thompson, the visionary thinker and activist we had back in the early 1980s but so keenly lack now. I think if Edward were alive today, he would be trying to focus the movement on what it can now practically achieve. The paradox of the war, and the lies that went with it, is that it has brought to public attention two critical flaws in the government argument, two openings indeed for us to exploit. The first is weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Put aside all the questions of chemical and biological weapons that are really a side issue here. The real WMDs are actually our own nuclear weapons plus the US bases still on our soil and thus, the unfinished CND business of the last 50 years. The government has actually provided us with a gift to campaign on here: we should grasp it with both hands. Just as they have also pointed us to what should be our other intrinsic demand: that we want an administration which is genuinely, actively going to work for social justice, human rights and environmental sustainability in the wider world (Israel-Palestine included).

So, even though this particular individual is a convinced non-party political animal, what I feel



urgently now is that the next general election provides us with a window of opportunity to move from Stop the War to Start the Peace – that is, beyond negations and indulgent self-righteousness towards genuinely winning over ordinary people for something positive, worthwhile and long-lasting. How can we do it? By mounting a grassroots, broad-church campaign with slogans along the lines of 'No weapons of mass destruction: let's work together for genuine peace in the world', and with a basic method of organising a series of local political pacts to endorse, preferably, a single candidate in each constituency who would be committed to these simple goals.

Yes, I'm talking about a one-off popular front, rainbow coalition, call it what you will. And I'm also talking about the genuine elements of Labour alongside, the Lib Dems, Greens, Socialist Alliance, Nationalist parties of Wales, Scotland and Cornwall getting it together, with the help from Muslims, Christians and Jews, plus all the non-aligned secularists and humanists for this single purpose. Yes, it would require some maturity and a lot of self-discipline. But is putting such a government into power under our electoral system plausible? Of course it is. It simply requires energy, commitment, inspiration and vision.

For those who'd like to know about the Start the Peace campaign, which is already in its protean stage, go to <http://groups.yahoo/group/startpeace>

Or contact me at [m.levene@soton.ac.uk](mailto:m.levene@soton.ac.uk)

THE QUESTION FOR THOSE OF US IN BRITAIN – THE DISSENTING  
AND THE DISAFFECTED WHO OPPOSED THE WAR, IS, WHAT NOW?  
IS IT TIME TO LOOK BACKWARDS AND ASSESS WHAT HAPPENED?  
OR TO LOOK INTO THE NEAR FUTURE TO SEE HOW WE  
CAN PICK UP THE PIECES AND MOVE FORWARD?

# BEING THERE

Leila Sansour invited comedian Jeremy Hardy to be in her film and join International Solidarity Movement (ISM) non-violent activists in support of the Palestinians over Easter 2002. Jeremy Hardy was not convinced by the proposal but chose it over spending Easter in Florida with his in-laws. Promising his daughter that he would keep himself safe, he took leave from the political activity of swearing at the TV and set off for occupied Palestine.

We see him arriving at the Star Hotel in Bethlehem, sceptical at first about whether the international activists he meets are bringing any great protection to the Palestinian people. He asks a resident of Daheisha refugee camp: 'Do you feel safer with internationals here?', and is told 'It makes no difference, no one has prestige.' Jeremy takes this back to the ISM group at the hotel. Though doubtful of what they're doing, he argues that at least they should go out in a large group. They do. The camera takes us on the slow tense walk towards an Israeli military vehicle, then, without warning, bullets snap and ricochet around.

Jeremy's disquiet and scepticism turn to anger, as he experiences this sudden injustice with the ISM activists. One has been shot in the hand, another in the stomach, another is slightly wounded in the face. From seeing them as vainglorious individuals out there for their own needs, Jeremy's attitude changes to admiration and respect for people trying to do something useful and determined in solidarity with Palestinian people. The humour that had been mixed with scepticism is now mixed with anger and a growing commitment to be with them. That night, 2nd April 2002, they watch from the Star Hotel as the Israeli army reinvades Bethlehem. And so it goes in this fine and amazing film. With a mix of scathing political comment and self-deprecating humour, Jeremy Hardy brings us close to the everyday experience of living under occupation and to the non-violent international activists who are trying to do something about it.

His rapport with Leila, the film-maker, grows and we sense his growing friendship and care for one of the activists, Chris, who is the director of an environmental business in London. I liked the love and earnestness with which Jeremy upholds his promise to his daughter to try and stay safe, though this is not entirely in his hands. He shows you can still contribute without always being in the front line of each action. During the Israeli invasion of Bethlehem he volunteered to work in the kitchen of the Star Hotel rather than be out on the streets.

Evacuated by the British consulate, Jeremy returns to England but is now restless and involved with Palestine. We see him doing interviews and gigs and then returning. Adam and Huwaida, experienced activists brief his group, Adam says: 'The ISM give hope to people because we still believe in the power of the people,' though he adds:

'Truthfully, we've still to see a victory from non-violent resistance.' Jeremy joins 400 people (internationals and Israeli peace campaigners) successfully breaking through an Israeli army siege of Salfit that had lasted for 18 months and presumably continued after they had brought in supplies and left again. The determination of these non-violent ISM workers does seem to be having an impact. They now face being banned by the state and deliberately targeted by the Israeli army who have killed Rachel Corrie and critically injured Tom Hurndall. The film inspired me, making me feel that the ISM's growth is the most positive development in international solidarity with the Palestinian people in these harshest of times.

Answering questions alongside Leila Sansour after the screening, Jeremy Hardy said that the ISM is part of the 'new politics'. I think he means that, as well as having the necessary understanding, principles and discipline, those involved believe in human relationships, and act with openness, determination, and bravery in their solidarity with the Palestinian people. Or as Jeremy Hardy says they are 'bonkers', but he joined them and so could we. Go and see this inspiring film, look out for it on general release, and support the work of the ISM.

Simon Lynn

Jeremy Hardy v The Israeli Army opens at the Prince Charles cinema in London on 18th July. Look out for it in other cinemas in London and around the country.

International Solidarity Movement (ISM)  
Website: [www.ism-london.org](http://www.ism-london.org)  
Email: [contact@ism-london.org](mailto:contact@ism-london.org) or [info@ism-london.org](mailto:info@ism-london.org)





## I'M STANDING

DAVID ROSENBERG discovers a case of foot in mouth disease

It's no good having heroes. They let you down. The current crop of New Labour MPs is hardly bursting with heroes; a few brave souls, perhaps, who temporarily put their head above the parapet or their career on the line. But only a handful sustain a radical challenge in the face of media assassination, disapproval by the party hierarchy and targeting by hate campaigners. However, I had thought Tam Dalyell, the deeply principled, intellectually robust MP for Linlithgow, who has been determined to root out and expose lies and deceit by government, was one of them.

To be an anti-war MP in early 2003, when millions in the UK and across Europe were taking to the streets to protest was perhaps unremarkable but it took guts for Dalyell to voice his rejection more than 20 years ago while a rampant Thatcher, the Sun and the BNP mobilised the most base kith and kin popular nationalist fervour for a military adventure in the Falklands.

Dalyell knows the crucial decisions over Iraq were taken in Washington but in pursuing the source he wandered down a wrong and dangerous path, ignored the hazard signs and kept walking. Powerful economic, political and military interests were sidelined in his determination to forensically examine the ethnic origins of individual advisers and lobbyists and posit this as the explanation of American foreign policy in and around Iraq. It was 'Jewish influence' and 'Jewish pressure' of Wolfowitz, Perle, Fleischer...

And in Britain? Lord Levy, unmistakably Jewish; Mandelson (well, a Jewish father) and, er... Jack Straw, a high ranking politician with a Jewish grandparent. This is all we apparently need to know in order to explain their malign pro-Zionist attitudes and their enormous influence.

The only occasion I recall Jack Straw invoking his Jewish origins was at a rally in Hyde Park against the Asylum Bill while Labour was in opposition. A few days earlier he had made his dreadful comments about 'squeegee merchants' and the crowd greeted him with boos. With a classic display of insincerity and opportunism he attempted to win the crowd back onside by revealing that he was a grandchild of Jewish refugees. After completing his speech he was being ushered out of the park by his minders when he was approached by a magazine seller offering Jewish Socialist. It might have been the devil himself, such was Straw's shocked and nervous rejection. 'But you were Jewish a minute ago' the seller retorted. A further embarrassed rebuff. I was that seller, and either his Jewishness had quickly worn off or it was the word 'socialist' that really scared him!

Dalyell's analysis is clearly insulting to the many Jews active against the war here and in America (and on the streets of Tel-Aviv) but it is also dangerous nonsense. Of course there are pro-Zionist lobbyists. What gets mistakenly called the 'Jewish lobby' includes many evangelical Christians. But to dream that any lobby in America or Britain can succeed unless its demands coincide with powerful economic and military interests is just a fantasy,

which may be fuelled by some sections of the media, but is usually indulged in with seriousness only by far right conspiracy theorists and antisemitic Islamic fundamentalists. And to assume that a president, who chose a *Judenfrei* Cabinet in a country where Jewish individuals have become prominent politicians, would take overriding notice of second-rank advisers of Jewish origin is absurd.

I don't shed heroes very quickly, so I waited for Dalyell's retraction. It didn't come; he just dug himself in deeper, inflicting damage along the way on the causes he is most identified with. He said of his infamous Vanity Fair interview about an alleged 'Jewish cabal', 'I wouldn't say I've been misquoted. I'm fully aware that one is treading on cut glass on this issue.' I have lost any respect I had for him.

Surely, though, his friends would put him right, and given how public the issue had become, they were duty bound to do so publicly, both out of principle and to defend his and their causes – our causes. Within 24 hours Mike Marqusee, a UK-based American Jewish leftist and outstanding spokesperson for the Stop the War Coalition, wrote an excellent piece in The Guardian, analytical and angry in equal measure, demolishing Dalyell's false claims. And then he was followed by... well, nobody really. Silence. Was there nothing else to be said? Not a word about it in the Left press. Was it not newsworthy? I didn't realise how significant the silence was until another prominent and highly regarded Leftist commentator, Paul Foot addressed the issue, also in The Guardian.

I've never been a great fan of Foot's. While I've admired his persistence in championing unpopular causes, his personal determination in recovering from a life-threatening illness to continue his campaigning journalism, and have enjoyed his quick-wittedness in debates, I've also found him shallow, one dimensional and unconvincing when deeper analysis has been required.

With his longstanding anti-racist pedigree, though, he should have been able to chastise his good friend Dalyell for his crass and harmful misconceptions, put him back on track and remind the wider world of the fact that however many Jewish individuals were among Bush's second-rank advisers, many more Jews and Arabs committed to peace with justice were united within the anti-war movement; and furthermore even if there had been very few Jews in the anti-war movement and very many in Bush's entourage, it would require some extremely dubious assumptions to conclude that the Jews were responsible for Bush's war drive and that all political individuals born of Jewish parents think and act as a 'cabal'.

Only it didn't pan out like that. Foot chose to make excuses for Dalyell. Firstly, he dismissed the comments as a simple semantic mistake; Dalyell meant 'Zionist pressure' not 'Jewish pressure'. But if that is so, why did he just identify Jews and non-identifying descendants of Jews rather than non-Jewish Zionists? Then Foot effectively absolved Dalyell of any misjudgements by accusing the

Board of Deputies of conflating 'Jew' and 'Zionist' whilst attacking anyone who did the same. Foot evidently thinks it quite reasonable for a figure of Dalyell's intellectual stature to take his analytical framework from unreconstructed 'Israel right or wrong' propagandists like the Board of Deputies.

What is really painful to acknowledge is that, had Dalyell made a comment that could rightly be construed as being anti-Black, anti-Gay or anti-Palestinian, I doubt if Foot or any other friends would bother to make any excuses for him at all.

So what is happening here? Is it a friendship so deeply rooted in the old school tie of their shared class origins that cannot be put in jeopardy by intellectual honesty, or is Foot genuinely unable to tell the difference between principled anti-Zionism and conspiratorial antisemitism?

It revived a memory: some 20 years ago Foot's party paper, Socialist Worker, printed a letter from one Anthony Jones which superficially presented itself as an anti-Zionist complaint about anti-Arab racism in the TV media, but it specifically identified Grade and Bernstein as the 'Zionists' who were to blame. I had the less than pleasant duty of pointing out to Socialist Worker in a letter that Anthony Jones was a member of the National Front. To their credit they printed it. To their shame they omitted the paragraph which asked: what are the weaknesses that

pervade the Left's attitude to Israel/Jews that makes them unable to recognise such vital distinctions? It is not too late for Paul Foot to ask himself that question.

This time round I wrote to The Guardian too. They printed my letter attacking Dalyell's analysis and Foot's lame excuses, and asking what either of them imagined would be Bush's policy towards the Palestinians, Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Cuba, France etc in the absence of any advisers of Jewish origins. I was very heartened by the responses to this letter – from Jewish and non-Jewish socialists and anti-war campaigners – that filled the inbox on my email. There was only one discordant note, from a Jewish member of the SWP who reminded me of Paul Foot's anti-racist credentials, and thought it was 'appalling' that I had attacked Foot and Dalyell in The Guardian when I should have reserved my 'venom' for Bush and Blair. It would seem that washing dirty Lenin is even worse than washing dirty linen. But if socialists, anti-Zionists and anti-imperialists do not step in when a person on the Left says or writes something that crosses the line from anti-Zionism to antisemitism, then we allow the poison to spread and we leave it open to those who wish to perpetuate the occupation of Palestinian land and the continued oppression of the Palestinian people to put themselves on the side of the angels.

David Rosenberg

## Left behind

American Jewry has long been divided between universalists, who see Jews as having a wider social reform responsibility, and particularists, who believe they should concentrate on defending specific Jewish interests. Michael Staub's fascinating book explores this divide with regard to the key ideological conflicts within Jewish communities since the Second World War. He draws particular attention to the means by which conflicting interpretations of the lessons of the Holocaust influenced these debates.

Staub takes aim at a number of conventional interpretations of American Jewish political and ideological agendas. Firstly, he rejects the assumed association between Jews and political liberalism. Whilst he acknowledges that Jews were consistently more politically liberal than most white American ethnic groups and that many Jews were, and still are, liberal and even radical, he argues that the specific association between Jews and liberalism was dead as early as 1960. Secondly, he argues that the demise of the Jewish-Black alliance can be attributed as much to the early manifestations of Jewish neoconservatism as to later Black antisemitism.

Thirdly, he rejects the assumption that the Jewish radicals of the 1960s were all self-hating Jews, and their critics were seeking to protect traditional Jewish values. Rather, he notes that many New Left Jews were seeking to articulate a more ethnic Jewish identity, whilst the older Jewish establishment preferred to assimilate to dominant American values. And finally, he rejects the notion that

progressive Jewish activists were motivated by secular rather than religious factors. On the contrary, he notes that many Jewish liberals were specifically inspired by religious values and traditions.

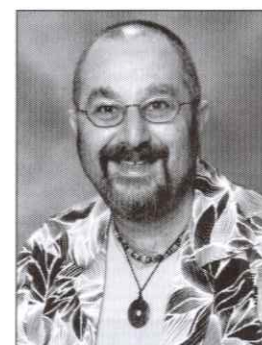
Staub begins his study with an examination of Jewish anti-communism during the Cold War. Using case studies from both the Rosenberg spy trial and the black press, he notes that analogies between the Holocaust and the prevalence of white racism and antisemitism in the USA became politically problematic. To be sure, many reform Rabbis and Zionists (influenced by prophetic Judaism) employed the Holocaust as a rationale for their involvement in the civil rights movement. And mainstream Jewish organisations remained prominent supporters of the civil rights movement. But equally, many other Jews rejected this association and challenged the Jewishness of civil rights activists. Overall, there was considerable evidence of a Jewish backlash against liberal social programmes and desegregation policies.

Intra-Jewish ideological conflict also came to a head over the Vietnam War. On the one hand, many Jewish opponents of the war used the Holocaust analogy to justify their positions, and Jewish participation in the Moratorium movement was significant. But at the same time much popular Jewish opinion – particularly that of orthodox Jews – was supportive of the war. Later, the Six Day War crystallised this debate as many Jews began to question whether they could oppose the US presence in Vietnam whilst simultaneously seeking

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IN POSTWAR  
AMERICA

Michael Staub

Columbia University Press  
US\$29.50/£17.69



American military support for Israel. Another source of tension concerned the alleged threat to the Jewish family from the emerging sexual revolution as reflected in movements for gay and lesbian liberation, birth control and abortion, and the rise of feminism.

Within the Jewish community, new radical groups influenced by the broader New Left emerged. One such group was Jews for Urban Justice which actively challenged, through public protests and forums including the famous Passover Freedom Seders, what it defined as the indifference of many Jews to racial injustice. Others formed radical Zionist groups designed to challenge both the anti-Zionism of the New Left, and the assimilationist mentality of many Jews. Most of these groups were modelled on the Black Power movement and emphasised the need to integrate Jewish ethnic consciousness and political identity. Despite obvious political tensions, there was also some overlap and mutual respect between the radical Zionists and Rabbi Kahane's Jewish Defence League.

Perhaps the most controversial group was Breira, an organisation formed by a diverse alliance

of Rabbis, students and intellectuals following the Yom Kippur War to promote a two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Breira imploded in 1977 but was later succeeded by similar dovish groups such as New Jewish Agenda, Tikkun magazine and Americans for Peace Now.

The radical Jewish groups provoked a significant backlash. Contributors to the neoconservative Commentary magazine attacked radical Jews as dysfunctional self-haters whose actions were likely to increase antisemitism. Explicit attempts were made to limit expressions of public Jewish dissent. Much of this discourse resembles our own contemporary debates around the role of dissenting groups such as the Australian Jewish Democratic Society, and the UK Jewish Socialists' Group.

Overall, this is an outstanding study of the limits and complexities of American Jewish liberalism and the intricacies of modern Jewish political and ethnic identity.

Philip Mendes

Dr Philip Mendes is a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy and Community Development at Monash University, and co-editor of a forthcoming new text on Jews and Australian Politics – Philip.Mendes@med.monash.edu.au

## Critical notes

### EXILE

Gilad Atzmon and the Orient House Ensemble featuring Reem Kelani and Dhafer Youssef

Gilad Atzmon is an excellent musician who has surrounded himself with others who are equally impressive. His newest album, *Exile*, features musicians who, according to the sleeve notes, 'live in exile', some 'out of choice', others, 'because they are unwelcome in their homeland'. The album transports the listener on a dramatic journey that undulates between thrilling and haunting episodes, punctuated by the extraordinary voice of Palestinian vocalist Reem Kelani bearing the poet Mahmoud Darwish's words of yearning. It succeeds in conveying a background of tragedy and an uncomfortable sense of present uncertainty.

The album openly proclaims its politics – a call for attention to Palestinian suffering and a prayer for the world to acknowledge the Palestinian right of return. Atzmon describes *Exile's* melodies as being 'built over the ruins of Jewish traditional songs and Israeli nationalistic melodies'. On the track entitled *Orient House*, the strains of a Yiddish urban ghetto song transmute seamlessly into idyllic rural fantasy. The track that follows, *Land of Canaan*, further squeezes and contorts these melodies to powerful effect, musically, but the politics is questionable. It is as if to

purify the land for the Palestinian return that Atzmon sees it as a mission to tear down vestiges of a Zionist culture rather than recognise and intensify the contradictions within that culture: a culture that has raided the creativity of the Jewish Diaspora upon whose ashes it established itself and of the Palestinians whose physical presence it sought to erase but at the same time reflected a multi-layered people that

has grown for a number of generations now on the land of Palestinian exile and tragedy. They and their compound culture cannot be wished away.

The depth, subtlety and excitement of the fusion his band achieves is not matched by the politics on which it is claimed to be based, which seems to rest on the narrowest frame of reference, treating Zionists and Palestinians as the only contenders slugging out an unequal battle in a boxing ring with the rest of the world as distant and uninterested onlookers.

The title track, Atzmon's version of a traditional Ladino song, maintains a funereal ambience but the album has its upbeat episodes too, especially on the track called *Ouz* and the penultimate track, *La Côte Méditerranée*. The latter implies a coming liberation but is disappointingly followed by a rather whimsical epilogue which lacks all the intensity and power of the opening track.

With Yaron Stavi's double bass a constant and powerful presence alongside Atzmon's exquisite and exhilarating clarinet, and a more occasional accordion and violin to give the music its positive meandering quality, the result is impossibly smooth considering its complexity, and it seems hard to imagine that it could be reproduced in a live performance. His performance at Pizza Express Jazz Club met this challenge triumphantly.

The music more than speaks for itself and the themes he explores but, playing live, Atzmon feels the need to punctuate it with fairly puerile one-liners about Zionists – presumably to entertain his audience.

His music is attracting an audience on its artistic merits and his persona may be interesting to those moving away from a previous allegiance to a critical Zionism. If his music succeeds and wins them over, his words might nevertheless send them hurrying back. His tongue is undoubtedly so much more effective on his clarinet.

David Rosenberg

# The personal is poetical

Carrying the Elephant, Michael Rosen's 'memoir of love and loss', takes us through scenes in his life in a series of 71 prose poems – fragments pieced together from his childhood, his days at university, his work for the BBC and, most movingly, his experience as a parent mourning the loss of a deeply loved child.

Michael shows us a series of little scenes, concentrating our attention on those odd or puzzling details that give depth and complexity to the whole picture. Abstract ideas – communism, post-war reconstruction, grief and love – find expression in the small and fascinating gestures of the people Mike sees around him. Right at the beginning we get a picture of his Communist Party upbringing that includes not just the slogans and debates (though these are rarely far from the surface) but also the everyday minutiae. Mike's father, explaining how he was billeted at the end of the war in an empty house in Berlin, tells of the impression he got of the absent Nazi house owner from the pictures and high-culture books on the shelves. And we are taken directly into the child's sensibility, as Mike notices the tiny movements of his father's thumb and forefinger miming the German's neat handwriting.

Later Mike's mother leans on a formica table and wonders why Stalin foolishly got rid of his generals. Then she tells of the terrible siege of Stalingrad, and while Mike takes in her anger and pity, he also notices her hand sweeping breadcrumbs off that 1950s formica table.

A visit to East Berlin prompts questions about whether the Stalinallee looks like a public toilet, and if this means that Communism has failed. The tanks roll into Budapest and Mike notices his mother rubbing something invisible between her thumb and finger. We begin to see the

world a little bit sideways, just like Mike's mother. The family decide that she sees things upside down, but looking back, Mike notices that when she makes her apparently off-beam comments, she's looking sideways, consciously upsetting the usual view.

There is no narrative, but the scenes are arranged chronologically, and each gives us another glimpse of human affection, quirkiness, frailty or malice. The oh-so-Englishness of the Oxford University Exam Board, with its snooty, patronising chairwoman. The apparently benign amateurishness of the BBC, which turns out not to be so benign after all when Mike discovers that he is asked to go freelance – not because he can't get up in the morning but on the orders of Brigadier Ronnie Stonham, the BBC's in-house MI5 spook. Absurd encounters with officialdom, whether it's the customs officer asking Mike to pour away some of his brandy or the magistrate demanding that Mike prove he isn't selling Chanel No 5 in Oxford Street.

Mike ducks and dives through jobs and love affairs, and then, halfway through the book, that terrible blow. The sudden death of Mike's 18-year-old son from septicaemia. Mike's own grief is there in the details. The little ways you measure your child's rapid growth – the lengthening arms and fingers, the height of the eyes face-to-face – are now joined by a new measure as the undertakers are unable to grasp hold of the body bag as they slide it down the stairs. And as Mike walks through his own grief, he sees others around him not knowing how to respond. The neighbour who just says 'rather you than me', then quickly switches to a discussion of Saturday's football match. The old friend who asks how it's possible to carry on, as Mike wonders if he looks like someone who looks



like it's possible to carry on.

The pain is evoked with startling honesty, and though there are no answers to how anyone can cope with such a loss, Mike brings some hope to the proceedings. A beautiful passage talks of the road on which we travel through life, meeting and parting from friends and family along the way, and each new companion is described with tenderness and love. And in the piece which gives the book its name, Mike contemplates a picture on a card picked up in Paris. A man carries an elephant up a mountain. The burden seems impossible but the man is determined to carry on, and will continue to do so in the engraving.

And so we learn of Mike's more recent life. Another relationship and a new child. No mitigation of the loss of Eddie, but some hope for the future. And right to the end, the personal details are woven in with the political protests. Defying those who say that history has ended, Mike continues to express his sickness at the age-old massacres.

Carrying the Elephant is a fine achievement. Its odd, irregular passages put us in touch with a deep understanding of people and their strangeness. It has a wonderful vividness and power to move. And beyond the loss and grief, we find plenty of hope and joy, which amounts to a real affirmation of life.

Ian Saville

### CARRYING THE ELEPHANT

Michael Rosen

Penguin, £7.99

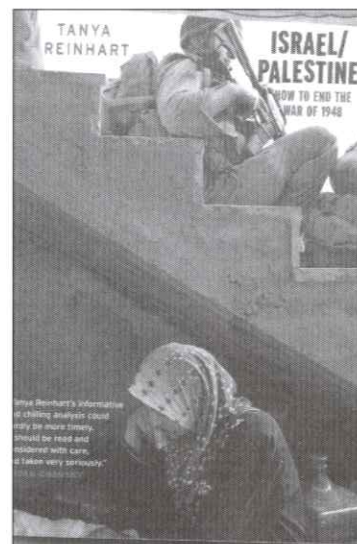


## ON THE SHELF

**RAF SALKIE**  
reviews books  
that challenge  
received  
wisdoms

If you read one book about the Israel-Palestinian conflict, make it Tanya Reinhart's *Israel/Palestine: how to end the war of 1948* (Seven Stories Press, £7.99). Reinhart is a distinguished professor of linguistics, a brave and intelligent peace activist and a clear and concise writer (exactly like me, in fact, if you leave out the words 'distinguished', 'brave', 'intelligent', 'clear' and 'concise'). She argues that the Israeli elite has two scenarios to offer: 'apartheid', in which the Palestinians are allowed to run the sewage system and destroy their militant elements in limited areas of the West Bank, Gaza and Abu Dis; and 'ethnic cleansing', in which they are expelled from these areas. Yossi Beilin and the Labour Party offer the first plan, Ariel Sharon and Likud the second. Reinhart points out that the majority of the Israeli public favour a third solution, which involves withdrawal from all or nearly all of the West Bank and Gaza in return for peace. Unfortunately this simple proposal has never been offered by the succession of former army chiefs (Rabin, Barak, Sharon) who have managed the political system in Israel. The book gives a compelling analysis of the current crisis, a clear account of the historical background and a workable vision of the way forward. This is political writing at its best.

I remember feeling bereft when I heard that Auschwitz prisoner 174517, Primo Levi, had committed suicide in 1987. Reading Ian Thomson's superb

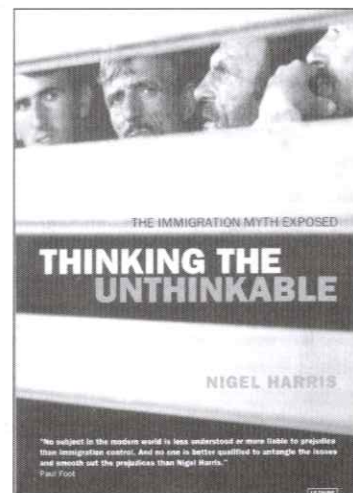


biography, Primo Levi (Vintage, £8.99), I felt even angrier at the untimely death of this remarkable man. Thomson paints an affectionate but honest picture of Levi's life, showing us the rare mixture of scientific detachment and literary genius that gave his writing its distinctive quality. The naïve, almost playful way in which Levi reacted, first to fascism and then war, is all the more poignant in the light of his imprisonment by the Nazis and the intense moral seriousness with which he wrote about it. When I picked up this 600-page book I planned to skim through the interesting parts: three hours later I was still fascinated by every page.

An even more naïve account of the rise of fascism is presented by Sebastian Haffner, in his autobiographical *Defying Hitler* (Phoenix, £7.99). The author, born in Berlin in 1907, was stunned and depressed when Germany lost the war in 1918, and fully shared the sport-crazed, hill-walking, German patriotism that the Nazis adapted to their own ends. Haffner studied law and qualified as a *Referendar* (magistrate) in 1933. Apolitical and not Jewish, he nonetheless found the Nazis repulsive and left Germany in 1938 for England. To his credit, the author criticises many features of his younger self in a way that is reminiscent of the late Donald Woods showing how ignorant he was until he met Steve Biko. Unfortunately no one ever showed Haffner the limits of liberalism in the way Biko would have done, and his sneers at socialists are crass and facile. Granted that the German Left failed to stop Hitler, but this was in large part because people like Haffner refused to recognise that only the Left could hope to create an alternative to Nazism. Where Haffner saw posturing politicians, a clear-headed observer would have seen brave socialists struggling desperately to resist tyranny, and would have joined them.

Finally another essential book, Nigel Harris's *Thinking the Unthinkable: the immigration myth exposed* (I B Tauris, £12.99). Harris has long been a powerful advocate for free migration: in particular, he

illustrates in detail how Britain has benefited economically from immigration and shows that remittances from migrant workers to their relatives back home in places like Bangladesh probably do more to alleviate poverty than all the official aid given by governments. He notes that Britain and other rich countries increasingly rely on immigrants to do the low-paid service jobs (childcare, cleaning, nursing and so forth) that their own citizens are reluctant to do. These jobs have to be done here: you can move a call centre to Delhi but you can only look after London hospital patients in London.



Harris's central proposal for a rational and humane immigration policy is to separate the right to work anywhere from the right to acquire citizenship of another country. I'm not convinced, though, that the distinction is coherent: a migrant worker may need healthcare, education and training, and other social services just as much as a citizen of the host country. And if migrant workers pay taxes in the host country, they should be able to determine how their taxes are spent – that is, they should have the right to vote, which means citizenship. More fundamentally, Harris's distinction supports the divide between 'us', the fully-fledged citizens, and 'them', the outsiders who can work here if we let them but mustn't impose their 'strange foreign ways' on us. This division is at the heart of racism and the current hysteria about asylum seekers. We must challenge it completely and without compromise.



## OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR!

This war in Iraq has really proved wrong the cynics who told us patriotism was dead and the 'me' generation would not make sacrifices. We didn't see crowds shouting 'Hurrah!' as war was declared, but then war declarations are so old-fashioned. No point in sending stealth bombers if you warn people they're coming.

A friend emailed me a copied memo from Rupert Murdoch asking News International accountants how his companies could pay more tax in Britain to make sure Our Boys were not left wanting for anything. It was dated 1st April, start of the tax year, I suppose. My friend reminded me it was confidential, and the Sun might not like being scooped on their story. Since then I've worn their yellow ribbon in my hair, though I've not seen anyone else wearing one, and I've had some funny looks.

We media folk have shown conspicuous gallantry throughout. Clive Lawton, whom I used to call a pony-tailed peacenik, explained in London Jewish News why 'we must take out Saddam Hussein'. He was not suggesting we take the Iraqi dictator out to tea at the Savoy – might run into old acquaintances from the arms trade. 'Taking out' sounds a bit loutish from an ex-school head, but perhaps he meant a neat surgical operation: 'It will have to come out, I'm afraid. Pass the daisy-cutter, nurse, and plenty of high-explosive.'

Julie Burchill stood out valiantly against sandal-wearing veggie Guardian colleagues. 'Once we were finally out there and even the most anti-war papers suggested it might be

best to put our differences aside and support our fighting men [don't forget the women, Julie], a bunch of self-righteous tossers said we should bring the troops home.' That 'once we were finally out there' made me sit up and take notice. I hadn't realised intrepid Julie was out there. Did the lily-livered Guardian suppress her war dispatches? No wonder she attacks 'soft, self-centred, sedentary civilians. ...columnists(!), crooners and clapped-out It Girls who want to Bring the Boys Home.'

Brave Burchill warns the 'chattering classes' that without a standing professional army we'd have to bring back conscription, and then they would moan. Yeah, Sergeant Burchill could bawl them out on the barrack square, instead of her weekend columns. Meanwhile if 'we' are in Syria or Iran by Christmas, Julie can call up friends at the Groucho Club to knit khaki socks for soldiers. Sniff any white powder to check it is talc, not chemical war material.

## DON'T MENTION THE WAR!

Spent Easter weekend in Normandy. Stones at Ouistreham mark where French commandos fell storming (and taking out) the German battery commanding the nearby landing beach. 'Sure we can liberate Iraq without the French, we liberated France without them,' declares some smart-ass Yank comedian. No buddy, you'd never have got off the beaches without them. But how would you know, if your history is made in Hollywood?

Some French collaborated with the Nazis. So did some Americans, and without the

excuse of being occupied. On 20th October 1942, US federal authorities seized the Union Banking Corporation in New York, charging it was a front for Nazi Germany's trading operations. Eight days later they moved against the Holland-American Trading Corporation and the Seamless Steel Equipment Corporation. On 8th November they seized assets of Silesian-American Corporation. Director of all four companies doing business with Hitler was Prescott Bush. Having big oil connections, Grandpa Bush had good lawyers, the same firm that acted for Standard Oil (known for its IG Farben links). Nowadays it's Exxon. Two became famous – John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State, his brother Allan as CIA chief. Bush's son George went via the CIA to the White House, and grandson George Dubya we know...

A week after the Bush companies were seized, the Allies landed in Algeria, assisted by Free French (mainly Jewish) rebels in Algiers, who captured the Vichyite Admiral Darlan, and the pro-Nazi industrialist, Charles Bedaux, friend of the Duke of Windsor, and a US citizen. The Americans promptly freed Darlan and put him in charge of Algeria. Taking Bedaux back to the States, where he died in jail, they made local police captain Guy Calvet-Cohen hand over all the businessman's papers. They could not let Germany's plans for obtaining oil supplies fall into the wrong hands. Bit like the way they're trying to bury the truth about who supplied Saddam Hussein's weaponry. But I mustn't keep dragging up the past. It's no longer even polite to mention Bush's business ties with the family Bin Laden.