

## JEWISH CURRENTS REPRINTS

1. *Shylock and Anti-Semitism*, by Morris U. Schappes 10 cents
2. *The Image of the Jew in the Negro Community*,  
by Rabbi Paul H. Levenson out of print
3. *Nazi War Criminals Among Us*,  
by Charles R. Allen, Jr. out of print
4. *Erstaz Judaism*, by Rabbi Robert E. Goldberg 5 cents
5. *The Strange World of Hannah Arendt*,  
by Morris U. Schappes 40 cents
6. *Jewish Identity: Dialogue with Jewish Youth*,  
by Agronoff, Kerman and Schappes out of print
7. *The Jewish Question and the Left—Old and New*  
*A Challenge to the New Left*, by Morris U. Schappes 40 cents
8. *Jewish Student Activism*, by Jack Nusan Porter 15 cents
9. *The Black Panthers, Jews and Israel*, by Rabbis Albert S.  
Axelrad and Robert E. Goldberg, Huey New-  
ton, Morris U. Schappes and Dr. George Wald 40 cents
10. *The Hitler Boom and Fascism*, by Charles R. Allen, Jr. \$1.25

**WINNING FRIENDS  
AND INFLUENCING PEOPLE  
IS EASY. JUST . . .**

**Subscribe now—and give your friends  
gift Subs to**

**JEWISH CURRENTS**

*The magazine that gives you a significant  
message with a literary punch*

**JEWISH CURRENTS, 22 E. 17th St., Room 601, New York, N.Y. 10003**

**Subscriptions:**

for one year \$ 7.50  
for two years \$14.00  
for three years \$20.00  
for students \$ 6.00  
for Senior Cits. \$ 6.00  
Add \$1 per year for  
Canada and Mexico, \$2  
per year elsewhere.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY.....STATE.....ZIP.....

*(Add more Subs on Separate Sheet)*

# THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT REVISITED

by  
Louis Harap

A Jewish Currents Reprint  
Sixty Cents

**Published by JEWISH CURRENTS**

Morris U. Schappes, Editor



DR. LOUIS HARAP has been a member of the Editorial Board of JEWISH CURRENTS since 1948 and has written voluminously on many aspects of Jewish life and Jewish problems. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy at Harvard University in 1932; from 1934 to 1938, he was librarian of the Library of Philosophy and Psychology at Harvard. In 1941-1942 he was editor of *Jewish Survey*, and then served overseas in the U. S. Army from 1942 to 1945. In addition to many articles in both popular periodicals and learned journals, his books include *Social Roots of the Arts* (1949) and *The Image of the Jew in American Literature*, issued in 1975 by the Jewish Publication Society. His two-page feature, "It Happened in Israel," appears each month in JEWISH CURRENTS.

**JEWISH CURRENTS REPRINT NO. 11**

(see list on back cover)

60 cents per copy	6 copies for \$ 3
(This reprint appeared	15 copies for \$ 6
originally in our issues	25 copies for \$10
of May, June, July-August, 1975	100 copies for \$35
and Jan., 1976.)	

Payment must accompany order.

**JEWISH CURRENTS**  
**22 E. 17 St., Suite 601**  
**New York, N.Y. 10003**  
**(212) 924-5740**

© Copyright, 1976

**CONTENTS**

1. Origins and Conflicting Interpretations	4
2. Were Zionist Means Valid?—Tenets of Zionism— Palestine Reality	14
3. Relation to Socialism—Palestine as Refuge— Israel as State	23
4. Comment on a Letter	31

Author's Note: Responsibility for the views expressed in the following essay is exclusively my own. One will not find here final or ready answers to the extremely complex and puzzling problems arising out of the creation of Zionism as a political ideology. I wish to express my thanks to the Editorial Board and to the Editorial Advisory Council for the sharper definition of issues which emerged from extended discussion of several previous drafts of this essay. The present version is intended as a point of departure for discussion and does not necessarily represent a settled position.

OVER three-quarters of a century have passed since Zionism became an organized world movement with the First World Congress in 1897, and much can be learned about it from the perspective of hindsight. Reaffirmation or revision of past judgments about Zionism is needed. An appropriate point of departure for such a fresh look devoid of the burdens of past polemical passions is Walter Laqueur's *A History of Zionism* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y., 1972, 639 pages, \$10.00).

This book, the only comprehensive history of Zionism in English, covers the entire period from the origins of the movement to the establishment of Israel.

Laqueur has impressive qualifications for the task. He is informed at first hand about the Middle East, since he lived in Palestine as a young refugee from Nazism for 10 years, and is conversant with the Hebrew sources as well as those in European languages. He has a sophisticated mind and is skilled in dealing with ideas. His style is highly readable, and he does not disguise his own opinions, which can be clearly distinguished, however, from his account of events and ideas.

# The Zionist Movement Revisited: 1

The project of writing an account of the Zionist movement must daunt all but the most venturesome historians. Laqueur tells us that the Zionist Archives in Jerusalem measure over two miles of books, pamphlets and other matter. Numerous books have been written not only on individual figures in the movement and its course in many countries, but on single incidents or single aspects of the story, and on the varied ideologies of the different sectors of the movement. The available detail and documentation are vast. Laqueur's solution of the formidable problem confronting the historian was an intelligible organization of the material into its main features.

We shall here briefly indicate how Laqueur has solved this question of the organization of material, then discuss some of our differences with his interpretations of salient aspects of that history. Finally, we shall broach some problems in relation to the response of the Left to Zionism.

Laqueur begins with the conditions of life of 19th century Jewry of eastern and western Europe—emancipation and anti-Semitism in the West, ghettos and pogroms in the East. He expounds the views of forerunners of Zionism, from Mordecai M. Noah in the United States in the eighteen

## Origins and

## Conflicting Interpretations

By LOUIS HARAP

twenties, the growth of Haskalah and its revival of Hebrew in Europe, the anticipations of Zionism in men like Moses Hess under the inspiration of the Italian movement of national unification, settlement of Palestine by the Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion), Leo Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation* (1882), and the settlements in Palestine from the 1870's onward financed by Baron Edmond de Rothschild.

Laqueur traces in some detail Theodor Herzl's turn to Zionism as a response to anti-Semitism in the Dreyfus Case, the failure of Herzl's initial attempts to interest the wealthiest Jews like the Rothschilds in his ideas for Palestine, and his decision to build a mass movement with the publication of *The Jewish State* in 1896.

"Modern political Zionism," writes Laqueur, "begins with the publication of *Der Judenstaat*," and the world movement was launched in 1897 at the First World Congress. Until Herzl's death in 1904, as is well known, the movement was dominated by his quest for a "charter" for a Jewish administration of Palestine under the aegis of one imperialist power or another—Turkey, Germany, England or Tsarist Russia. All his efforts ended in failure, and his desperate attempt to interest the Zionist Congress

in Uganda as the Jewish territory under British auspices was finally rejected in 1905 after his death.

*The period from 1904 to the Balfour Declaration* in 1917 Laqueur calls "The Interregnum." Emphasis then shifted from Herzl's "political" to a "practical" Zionism, with concentration on settlement of Palestine. This was the period also of the "Second Aliya," from 1905 to 1914, when some of the young Russian Jewish revolutionary generation emigrated to Palestine, those who were to dominate the movement and Palestine from the 30's down to the Sabra ascendancy in 1974. In England, Weizmann's impressive skills and personality led the successful attempt to gain a British "charter" for a Jewish Palestine with the Balfour Declaration. The "cultural Zionism" of Ahad Ha-Am, which projected Palestine as the "spiritual center" for the world's Jews, also exerted its influence on the movement.

Before resuming his account of Zionism in the ensuing years, Laqueur devotes one section to an overview of Jewish relations with the Arabs, which he designates "The Unseen Question." He brings out the deficiencies and misjudgments of Zionist leaders on this question, failures at attempts at rapprochement, the ensuing Arab riots in the 20's and rebellion in the 30's down to the Arab rejection of the United Nations partition plan for Palestine in 1947.

The account is resumed with a section on the origins and development of the Socialist-Zionist movement from Nachman Syrkin (1867-1924) and Ber Borokhov (1881-1917) to Ben-Gurion, with its several divisions and varieties of doctrine. Another section is given over to Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880-1940) and the Revisionist movement founded by him.

The history goes on to what Laqueur calls "The Weizmann Era," from 1920, when Weizmann was first elected president of the World Zionist Congress, to the establishment of Israel, although Weizmann was actually voted out of leadership from 1931 to 1935.

The checkered history of this period is set forth from the effort to achieve a British Mandate for Palestine, the broadening of the movement in 1929 by acceptance of non-Zionists into the Jewish Agency for fund-raising purposes, the creation of important Zionist youth movements of the left and right, shifts in party alignments, down to the virtual abandonment by the British of the Balfour Declaration in the White Paper of 1939 drastically restricting Jewish immigration into Palestine. The historical account ends with Hitlerism and the consequent immigration of refugees from Nazism to Palestine (about 134,000 Jews entered legally from 1933 to 1935, and about 125,000 from 1935 to 1939), the Holocaust and the UN Resolution of 1947 and the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948.

**Two chapters summarize standard** problems relating to Zionism. One discusses the three main types of critics of Zionism: bourgeois assimilationists, who believe Jews are distinct only in religion and otherwise indistinguishable from their fellow-countrymen; Left critics, who believe that history has decreed assimilation as the lot of the Jews, who hold that assimilation is desirable, progressive, and inevitable in advanced societies, and that Zionism is therefore a nationalistic doctrine; and the Orthodox religious critics, who believe Zionism a blasphemous intrusion on the prerogative of God to usher in the Messianic Age in Palestine.

(With regard to criticism from the Left, Laqueur does not fully take into

account an important modification beginning in the late 30's. While opposing Zionism as a bourgeois nationalist doctrine, the international Left nevertheless supported immigration of refugees from Nazism into Palestine. This position culminated in decisive Soviet action in the UN for the creation of Israel in 1947-48 with the support of the world Left, and for several years thereafter; and since the creation of Israel, a significant sector of the Jewish Left, while maintaining its ideological opposition to Zionism, adhered to the principle that Israel has a right to exist. In addition, significant sectors of the Jewish Left in these years tended increasingly to abandon the traditional Left acceptance of both the inevitability and desirability of assimilation. Laqueur ignores such developments on the Left.)

Finally Laqueur sets forth "13 Theses on Zionism," in which he draws up basic propositions which characterize the movement. Although he nowhere explicitly asserts his belief in Zionism as such, he does indicate opposition on given issues. My reading of the book is that Laqueur is a critical, non-party, pro-Zionist and obviously a supporter of the existence of Israel.

### **Conflicting Interpretations**

Limitations of space preclude anything like a discussion of the wealth of detail in Laqueur's work. However, what impresses one in reading this book is not only the difficulty of getting at the central facts at any specific moment of this intricate movement free from selection and interpretation, but also the range of interpretation to which the available facts are susceptible. Several examples will illustrate this.

If any thesis pervades the chapter

on Arab-Jewish relations, it is that all attempts at rapprochement were foredoomed to failure. Laqueur agrees with the German Zionist historian Richard Lichtheim (father of the late George Lichtheim and editor of *Die Welt*, oldest Zionist publication) that "before 1914 . . . the national aspirations of the Zionists and the Palestinian Arabs were irreconcilable." Efforts at agreement in the 1920s, says Laqueur, inevitably failed because "The extremist element would have prevailed in the Arab leadership." However, if we turn to the 550-page book devoted exclusively to this subject, *Israel and the Arab World* (1970), by Aharon Cohen, left-wing Zionist who has for decades been at the center of efforts in Palestine at rapprochement, we get an opinion opposite to Laqueur's fatalistic attitude. Cohen is under no illusions as to the difficulties, but he nevertheless warns in conclusion, as if in anticipatory answer to Laqueur, that "the problem cannot be solved by taking a fatalistic approach." (See my review, Oct., 1971 issue.)

It must be acknowledged that one cannot dismiss out of hand the view that Zionist and Arab attitudes were so narrowly nationalistic that rapprochement was not possible. While this can be argued, such a posing of the question leaves out of account an essential element in the Palestinian predicament, namely, British imperialism. What might have been possible if the British were not an essential and disturbing factor in the situation, no one can guess. What is sure, however, is that British imperialism working in such a way as absolutely to negate any possibility of rapprochement by strengthening both Zionist and Arab intransigence.

But Laqueur tends to put full weight of responsibility for the failure of some promising beginnings on Arab

intransigence. He briefly sets forth the negotiations of Weizmann and Emir Faisal in 1918-1919, during which they signed an agreement whereby Palestine was to become a Jewish territory, while Faisal would become king of the Arab state to the north of Palestine—that is, Syria. But Faisal added a reservation that he would not feel bound by the agreement if the British did not permit him to rule over the new Arab state, which he had indeed been promised by T.E. Lawrence as an incentive to help drive out the Turks. As is well-known, this promise conflicted with the obligations of British imperialism to France for Syria, and Faisal was finally appeased by the British in 1921 with the kingship of Iraq.

Now contrast the treatment of this promising effort at agreement by Laqueur and by Cohen. Laqueur's account says not one word about the British share of responsibility for the failure to fulfill Faisal's expressed condition. Instead, the burden of blame is laid upon Faisal and the Arabs. Cohen gives a far more detailed account of the matter because of its direct relevance to his central theme, but even in so brief a treatment as Laqueur's it is clear that the omission of the role of the British is crucial.

Here are some of Cohen's explanations for the failure: because Faisal's "demands had not been met, and as he had made his agreement conditional on their fulfillment, he considered himself released from the agreement. . . . The stand of British and civil authorities in Palestine during the period undoubtedly played no small role in the deterioration of Jewish-Arab relations. . . . Britain had left Faisal more or less in the lurch. . . . Britain had abandoned its former interest in an understanding between Faisal and the Zionist leadership."

Chaim Weizmann himself, in his autobiography, absolves Faisal of responsibility for failure by adding to his citation of Faisal's condition for agreement: "Great changes indeed were made, and the results were visited upon the heads of the Zionists." Weizmann is too tactful to mention the British as among the authors of the "changes" that voided the agreement, but the meaning is clear. Granted that both Jewish and Arab attitudes contributed toward the failure, the greatest distortion is to omit the maneuvering of British imperialism as a primary factor. It is symptomatic of Laqueur's studious avoidance of any suggestion of imperialist maneuvering that he does not regard "imperialism" as a sufficiently significant category in the situation to warrant separate listing in his Index.

*Related to this "underplaying" of imperialism is Laqueur's attribution of a personal "idealistic" motivation to Arthur Balfour in 1917 in issuing his Declaration assigning Palestine as the Jewish "homeland."* Balfour's motive, says Laqueur, was primarily to compensate for Christian crimes against the Jews. Balfour, he writes, felt "that he was instrumental in righting a wrong of world-historical dimensions, quite irrespective of the world situation." Indeed, Laqueur writes that Weizmann persuaded Lloyd George and Balfour "to issue the Declaration, in the last resort, not because it was advantageous or expedient from the British point of view, but because they accepted it as the right thing to do." In other words, the Declaration was issued not because of, but without reference to the imperialist interests of Britain.

While not denying the plausibility of the presence of these "idealistic" elements in the motivation of these men, it is hard to accept Laqueur's

view that the decision was made "irrespective" of British imperialist interests. Here again, we may contrast Laqueur's interpretation with Cohen's: "When the full story of the behind-the-scenes negotiations emerged in the course of time," writes Cohen, "it was shown conclusively that the Declaration sprang not so much from the pangs of conscience about the Jewish people's bitter fate but from very specific interests of the British Empire."

One may also challenge Laqueur's account of Zionist-Revisionism as "a movement identified with one man"—Jabotinsky. To be sure, Jabotinsky was the predominant leader of the movement, and no other leader before his death approached him in influence in that movement. But what is lacking in Laqueur's account is the class aspect of the *movement* (though he does characterize Jabotinsky himself occasionally in class terms). For any development among a whole people over a period of years inevitably brings out the variety of political views based on class interests, so that the gamut of political positions from right to left emerges. And this certainly was the case with the Zionist movement.

Jabotinsky was a brilliant, powerful, flamboyant personality who would have made a deep impression on any movement of which he was a part. But his role in the Zionist movement was in the end to evoke and confirm the right-wing tendencies within it. So we find not only right-wingers but even proto-fascists among his followers in the 30's and 40's. Today's successor to Revisionism is Herut, extreme right-wing, anti-labor party in Israel and representative of the industrialists and landowners. By succumbing to the lure of personality, following Jabotinsky's biographers, Laqueur seems to me to have missed the prime significance of Jabotinsky's

career as that of the man who articulated and gave direction to the Right in Zionist and Israeli life and politics.

### *What Is Zionism?*

But what indeed *is* Zionism? It means many different things to many people. Laqueur's definition, offered at the end of his book, is so patently general as to apply to the views of many who, like any secular survivalist or even the Bund, would vehemently protest that they are not Zionists. His definition: "Zionism is the belief in the existence of a common past and a common future for the Jewish people." What this definition lacks is the essential element of Zion—a common future in Palestine or Israel.

A detailed study of the many variants of Zionism shows that the element common to all of them is *belief in the necessity of a return of all or part of the world's Jews to Palestine or Israel as a "homeland," a state, or a "spiritual center," in order to escape from the inevitable strains and dangers of anti-Semitism and assimilation in the "Galut" (Diaspora, Dispersion, Exile), and thereby to establish for all time a permanent national Jewish identity.* This definition differs from Laqueur's in that it specifies return to Zion as a solution to the problem of Jewish identity, and even, in the view of some, of the Jewish Question altogether.

The non-Zionist or even the anti-Zionist (e.g., the Bundist) who may believe in "a common past and a common future for the Jewish people" does not believe in the necessity for a return to Zion. (Even these phrases are not without their ambiguities. What is a "common Jewish past or future"? Do the Cochin, Indian, Yemeni, etc. Jews have a "common past" with Russian or American Jews other

than in antiquity?) And some non-Zionists supported the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state not as the fulfilment of Zionism but as a necessity following the consequences of the Holocaust. Others, like the Bundists and secular non-Zionists, believe in fighting for a secure Jewish future in the countries where they live, and that such a future is not only possible, but desirable in co-existence with the Jewish state of Israel.

The Zionist movement itself is so complex in its varieties of ideologies, and the overlay of prejudices and passions in which its history is implicated, that we may better grasp the issues involved by taking a fresh look at its origins and course.

The historic roots of Zionism may go back several thousand years, but why did Zionism as a political ideology and program arise in the latter half of the 19th century? The answer can be found in the views advanced by the forerunners.

Three conditions account for the emergence of the movement; first, outbreaks of overt and violent anti-Semitism; second, lack of any Jewish political entity or state since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.; and third, and most important, the high tide of nationalist ideology in Europe.

The second half of the 19th century was the heyday of awakening nationalism among oppressed and disunited nationalities in Europe and it did not leave the Jews untouched. As early as 1862, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer of Posen in Prussia was quite explicit as to the reason why he was calling for the "redemption of Israel" by return to the Holy Land and establishment of settlements there. "Let us take to heart," he wrote, "the examples of the Italians, Poles and Hungarians, who laid down their lives and possessions in the struggle for

national independence, while we, the children of Israel, who have the most glorious and holiest of lands as our inheritance, are spineless and silent."

*In the same year Moses Hess* published his prophetic *Rome and Jerusalem*. He had in the 1840s exerted significant influence toward socialism upon Marx and Engels and was himself influenced by them, but by the 60's he had passed out of their orbit. In his book he viewed himself as "the champion of the national renaissance of our people," and saw his call for a Jewish state in Palestine as one for "a national movement of the present day," as "only another step in the road to progress which began with the French Revolution." This event, he went on, initiated the "springtime in the life of nations." He was specifically inspired by the *Risorgimento*, the struggle for a united Italian nation, and he looked to "France, beloved friend," to help restore the Jewish nation to Palestine, just as Weizmann and many others were later to look to Britain. "France," wrote Hess, "will extend its work of redemption also to the Jewish nation."

Like Weizmann and others, Hess also saw the advantage to France, as they saw it to Britain later, in a Jewish Palestine as an aid to the protection of the Suez Canal, which was being built at that time by the French. "It is to the interest of France," wrote Hess, "to see that the road leading to India and China should be settled by a people which will be loyal to the cause of France to the end."

Like Leo Pinsker in *Auto-Emancipation* (1882) and Herzl in *The Jewish State* (1896), Hess believed that the Jewish people could not be assimilated. He therefore projected as the only solution for the inevitable and insoluble alienation of the Jewish peo-

ple the creation of a state of their own. "We shall always remain strangers among the nations," Hess wrote. "They may tolerate and even grant us emancipation, but they will never respect us as long as we place the principle *ubi bene ibi patria* [wherever conditions are good for us, there is our country] above our great national memories." However, he clearly stated his belief that, even after the creation of the state, a majority of the Jews would still remain outside it.

#### *A Jewish State: Ends and Means*

Thus, even before Herzl came on the scene, the gauntlet had been thrown before the Jews and the world. Really, not one but two questions emerged. Not only—are the Jews entitled to a state of their own? but but also, if the answer is yes, do valid means exist for its realization? These questions must be examined separately, for one cannot take for granted that a yes to the end leads necessarily to a yes to the means. The aim is a question of abstract principle, the means, a question of principled political action.

Is it valid from the political, social, ethical points of view that the Jews have a right to a state of their own, a right that is taken for granted in connection with *any* people who occupy their ancestral territory? This right for Jewry is rejected by some, who deny that the Jews form a nationality in any case, but see them as a religious group only that in all other respects belongs to the nationality of the country in which they reside.

If this is true, then the Jews have no claim to a state of their own for the simple reason that they do not in fact constitute a distinct people or nationality. This is the sort of view held by both middle-class assimilationists

(e.g., Reform Judaism from the beginning of the Zionist movement down to the rise of Hitler) and some assimilationists on the Left who deny the world peoplehood of the Jews.

To hold that the Jews are a world people is not the same as asserting that the Jews are a world nation, for the Jews of the world obviously lack some essential objective features of the nation such as a common territory or common language or common economic life. A "people" is a less specific social category than a "nation." A people is defined mainly in terms of a common historical past and a present subjective sense of ethnic and cultural identification, as well as, in the case of the Jews, common defense interests against anti-Semitism, which, regrettably, is an international phenomenon and, to one degree or another, affects Jews in all countries.

In order, then, to recognize for the Jews the abstract right to a state of their own, one must view them as a people whose sense of community provides a basis for development into a nation. The sense of a common historical past, the sense of need for a refuge from anti-Semitism in the present or potentially in the future, and the subjective desire to knit themselves more closely together as a people culturally—these form a basis from which Jews from all over the world claim their right to a state of their own, without necessarily implying that *all* the world's Jews should assemble in such a state.

The right to national independence and freedom from foreign oppression is universally recognized, and there have been two periods in the past century or so when these rights were actively being claimed. First, there was the "springtime" of nationalism in the second half of the 19th century; and the second was the achievement of national independence—more or

less—by the numerous nations of the Third World which threw off the yoke of Western imperialisms after World War II. These developments are universally regarded as progressive.

National movements of the 19th century were mostly liberal bourgeois, progressive movements for which realization of independence was the highest priority. For the Marxists and socialists of that time, however, primary concern was advancement of the proletariat, and national movements were subordinated to this ultimate concern. Thus, as Horace B. Davis has shown in his *Nationalism and Socialism* (1967), we find in retrospect that we can not always agree with the views expressed by Marx and Engels toward some of the national struggles taking place. (See my review in the Feb., 1969 issue.)

While we may agree with the basic principle that a nationalism which is not *nationalistic* (i.e., chauvinist, oppressive of the nations) is one in which the national struggle is compatible with the long-range interests of the working class, there may be disagreement with the application of this principle in some cases. When we disagree with the views of Marx and Engels on some of the national struggles of their time, it is not because we dissent from their basic principle, but rather from their application of it in specific cases.

*It seems to us now that the theory* was advanced and clarified by Lenin, and that the early days of the Russian Revolution applied the principle with a high degree of success to the construction of a multi-national Soviet Republic. Indeed, in 1913, in his *Critical Remarks on the National Question*, Lenin quite categorically enunciated the principle which may form the basis for the right of the Jews to an autonomous territorial

political entity, whatever he may have thought about the Jewish question earlier. "It is beyond doubt," he wrote, "that in order to abolish all national oppression, it is extremely important to create autonomous areas even of the smallest dimensions, each with an integral, uniform composition of population, towards which the members of the given nationality scattered in different parts of the country, or even in the world, could 'gravitate,' and with which they could enter free associations of every kind. All this is indisputable, all this can be disputed only from a hidebound bureaucratic point of view." Beginnings in this direction for the Jews were in fact made in the Soviet Union in the early years of the Revolution, but were curtailed, among other reasons, by Stalin's policy of administratively accelerated, and hence forced assimilation.

**Establishment of Biro-Bijan as a Jewish Autonomous Region in 1934** after six years of Jewish colonization had several motives, no doubt, some not connected with nationality. But Soviet Pres. Mikhail Kalinin, who opposed Zionism, was applying Lenin's principle above when he declared on that occasion that the reason for the formation of Biro-Bijan was that the three million Soviet Jews were "the only nationality" in the Soviet Union without a state of their own, and that Biro-Bijan would form such "a Jewish national state." In the end, Biro-Bijan failed as a Jewish state not because the national principle underlying its creation was invalid or non- or anti-socialist, but rather because other factors into which we cannot here enter, prevented its implementation.

Similarly, it seemed that Palestine would not attract enough Jews to justify creation as a Jewish state until

anti-Semitism in Poland and genocide in Germany rendered Palestine a haven, literally, from death itself, for hundreds of thousands of Jews. In the case of Biro-Bijan or of Palestine the abstract principle of the justification for the Jewish right to a state of their own was accepted and only the feasibility or social justifiability for the implementation of the principle was at issue.

The closing of the gap between principle and realization is, then, the problematic issue. In the absence of any compulsion of Jews to emigrate to Palestine, only a handful of Jews in the world and even in the Zionist movement itself had any interest in personally participating in building a Jewish state. The abstract right was then confronted, for several decades after the inception of the Zionist movement, with the actuality that a small minority of Jews in Palestine were interested in asserting national rights in a land inhabited in the large majority by Arabs.

After 1917 the situation was exacerbated by the presence of British imperialism, which used the Jews against the Arabs at first, and then the other way around. After 1917 the predominant Zionist leadership sought alliance with British imperialism to maintain its national rights, and the Jews were pitted willy-nilly against the Arabs in Palestine. Under these conditions, was Zionist doctrine of asserting national rights valid? Could it be reconciled with socialist principles?

What were the "rights" of Jews to their ancestral territory? While a small number of Jews had continuously lived in Palestine since the fall of the Second Temple, Jews all over the world had not forgotten their tie to their Holy Land, a tie which was imbedded in their religion and culture. At the same time, only a minute number even considered going

## ISLAMISM AND THE ARAB STATES

**F**OLLOWING up the symposium in our Feb. issue on whether Israel is a racist state, we supply the following data to indicate that Israel is not the only Mideast state that has an official religion;

*Algeria:* "Islam is the religion of the state." (Constitution, Art. 4, adopted Sept. 8, 1963.)

*Egypt:* "Islam is the State religion . . . Islamic jurisprudence is a chief source for legislation." (Constitution, Art. 2, adopted Sept. 11, 1971.)

*Iraq:* "Islam is the religion of the State." (Provisional Constitution, Art. 4, adopted July 15, 1970.)

*Jordan:* "Islam is the religion of the State." (Constitution of the Kingdom, Art. 2, adopted Jan. 8, 1952.)

*Kuwait:* "The religion of the State is Islam, and Islamic jurisprudence shall be a chief source for legislation." (Constitution, Art. 2, Nov. 11, 1962.)

*Libya:* "Islam is the religion of the State." (Provisional Constitution, Art. 2, adopted Dec. 11, 1969.)

*Sudan:* "In the Democratic Republic of Sudan there is the Islamic religion. Society is rightly guided by Islam, the religion of the majority. The State tries to express its values." (Constitution, Art. 16, adopted April 14, 1973.)

In Israel the 1952 Citizenship Law provides that a non-Jew has the right to automatic citizenship if he was there in 1949, or was born there to parents who were citizens in 1952.

to Palestine to live and reclaim their ancestral land. It was not, in fact, until the draconic persecution of East European Jews in the 1920's and under Nazism in the 1930's that a large enough number of Jews were driven to emigrate to Palestine as virtually the only haven where the historic "right" of Jews in Palestine to binational status with the Arabs could be asserted with any degree of political realism. However, it was not until the mid-1930s that the International Left began to recognize that national right. This was a change from the previous decade, when the Left lent its support to the Arab anti-Jewish riots of the 20's and early 30's.

Only in the Biltmore Program in 1942 did the call for a Jewish state become official Zionist movement policy.

There was a range of approaches to statehood by Zionism from the earliest years, from Right to Left, from Jabotinsky to Syrkin and Borokhov. From the outset, the obstacle to realization was, on the one hand, a succession of imperialisms, from Turkish to British, and, on the other hand, the presence of an Arab majority. Could a person of the Left have become a Zionist and, at the same time, consistently cling to socialist principle, even if he granted the right in the abstract to the Jews to have their own state?

This, then, is the challenge of Zionism to the Left. It was no less a challenge in 1897 than it is in 1975, if it is granted, as the creation of Biro-Bijan would confirm, that the Jews have a right to a state of their own.

*(To be continued)*

# Zionist Movement Revisited: 2

## Were Zionist Means Valid?—Tenets of Zionism—Palestine Reality

By LOUIS HARAP

AT this point it is necessary to remind the reader that the present foray into the problem of Zionism is an attempt at a fresh look from the vantage point of the Left of the 1970s and with hindsight on the previous century of experience. When we assert in terms of abstract socialist principle that the Jews have a right to a state, we are enunciating a position which the international Left did not recognize with respect to Palestine until the 1940s. USSR Pres. Mikhail Kalinin asserted this right for the Jews of the Soviet Union in 1934 when Biro-Bijan was declared a Jewish Autonomous Region but at the same time he condemned Zionism as reactionary. He did not distinguish between the abstract right of the Jews to form a state or participate in a binational state, as might have been the case in Palestine, and the means of attaining it. He condemned the entire Zionist project as reactionary.

In any case, the Left analysis of the Jewish Question has never been adequate. It has always been hobbled by its erroneous assimilationist premises and its refusal to recognize the peoplehood of the Jews, with certain exceptions: national rights accorded the Soviet Jews in the 1920s, experiment with Biro-Bijan beginning in the 1930s, and postwar support for the

creation of Israel. Only in 1934 and 1947 did the Left recognize the right of Jews to a state of their own (and the Soviet Union stands by its 1947 commitment to Israel's right to exist). In this essay, we have generalized this principle, and we now proceed to a re-examination of the Zionist movement.

Shorn of Left preconceptions about the Jews which the last half-century of international experience has shown to be erroneous, must we not now agree that the Left denial of the claim of Jews to a state of their own not only within the Soviet Union but also outside the socialist world was mistaken? But even if this is so, the question of means is a separate problem.

Could and should the Left have participated in the struggle for an independent Jewish territorial entity (or a binational state with their Arab fellow-nationality) together with or separate from the international Zionist movement? Was it possible for the Zionist movement in any of its various wings to adopt means which a socialist could consider valid? It should be kept in mind that our analysis at this point applies to the pre-Hitler movement. Hitlerism altered the entire framework of the problems, as we shall see later.

The prime question is whether the

struggle for a Jewish territorial entity was compatible with the primacy of class over national interests. Some may demur at this mode of posing the problem on the ground that the class-national relationship should be one of "co-ordination" rather than subordination. But we know that there are instances of conflict of class and national interests, as well as harmony, and in such cases one must be subordinated to the other. Thus, Left socialist parties during World War I clearly subordinated national to class interests by refusing to support their governments' war programs; or the same happened when socialists refused to serve in an imperialist war like the Vietnam War. One might assert that the "true" national interest is that of its working class. But there is also the national interest of the ruling class, so that it is in this sense that one affirms the subordination of class to the national interests. In Israel, for example, the working class has repeatedly subordinated its class interest to the national interest of survival.

*Interestingly enough, Moses Hess* confronted the problem, and his example is instructive. In his *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862) he recalls how, in 1840, during the ritual murder case in Damascus, he stifled his "cry of anguish" as a Jew because of the "greater pain which the suffering of the European proletariat evoked in me." Hess was here reflecting the false dichotomy prevalent in the socialist movement—even now, as then—between the oppression of Jews and other nationalities and exploitation of the working class itself. (A similar example is the reply of Rosa Luxemburg in 1917 to a Jewish friend's complaint about anti-Semitism: "Why do you care about special Jewish pains? To me, the poor victims of the rubber plantations in Putamayo,

the Negroes in Africa . . . are so much closer . . .") Why should feeling against oppression of Jews be "stifled" at all? Were they not just as much part of humanity as any other people and as the working class? Oppression should be fought wherever it occurs, "even" when Jews are its objects. Why should anti-Semitism have less validity as an issue than any other form of national persecution? Hess's pain at the agony of the European proletariat (or Luxemburg's for the "Negroes of Africa") need not, were it not for the mistaken theory, have required suppression of any feeling about persecution of the Jews.

Later, however, adds Hess, "the Italian War of Liberation" prompted his return to Jewish national identity (only he calls it in 19th century terminology, "race brotherhood"), and the agony he had suppressed at the time of the Damascus affair "became now the dominating trait of my character and a lasting mood of my soul." Just as he earlier proclaimed the transcendence of the proletariat over the national, so now he excludes the proletariat for the national. Hess now calls on the Jews "to reclaim . . . your ancient fatherland from Turkey," and then adds a nationalistic injunction. "You have contributed enough to the cause of civilization and helped Europe on the path to progress, to make revolutions and carry them out successfully," he wrote. "You must henceforth think of yourselves, of the valleys of Lebanon and the plains of Genesereth."

What had happened was that a constricted proletarianism, with which Hess finally became disillusioned, drove him to the opposite extreme, from national nihilism to a nationalism which, at least if his words are taken literally—was indifferent to the proletariat.

Hess was saying here that he must



think of Lebanon because his comrades refuse to do so. As has happened so often since, sectarian attitudes tend to engender their opposites. Wherever responsibility may lie for Hess's shift from one extreme to the other, his later expressed attitude is no more valid than the earlier. Was not the balance struck by Hillel in his famous saying, "If I am not for myself, who will be? If I am only for myself, what am I?"

As it happened, Hess's statement was largely rhetorical so far as he was personally concerned. While many Zionists did and do in fact conduct themselves in accord with Hess's view, in his practice Hess did not at all abandon the working class struggle as he recommended in words. In the 1860s, Hess was active in Lassalle's organization of German trade unions and was even a German delegate to the congresses of the First International.

The two basic interests involved in the false dilemma posed verbally at least by Hess, the national and the class, operate in a distinct though closely related matter. Thus, the bourgeois democratic revolution had both national and class aspects: it established the nation and gave the bourgeois dominance. But the revolution was also in the long-term interest of the working class because it created the conditions for the growth of working class influence. Thus the movements of the past century were for the most part supported by socialists, as well as the national bourgeoisie. But in all these instances the nation involved was already located in its ancestral territory, and the struggle was necessary for the expulsion of local and foreign oppressors.

If this had been the case with the Jews, Zionism would have been an infinitely simpler matter. But the Jews have been a dispersed people for two thousand years, and only a tiny mi-

nority of their number at the end of the 19th century lived in their historic land side by side with the Arabs. Because of the varied social and economic life of the Jews in the many lands of their dispersion, the Left believed tenaciously that the Jews as a whole, let alone the small Jewish community in Palestine, had no future as a distinct group.

Left theorists maintained that assimilation would cause all Jews to be absorbed into the dominant nationality in whose midst they lived, and this would happen quite rapidly under democratic conditions. As we now know, this theory has been strikingly invalidated by the social realities of this century. The Left underestimated both the internal cohesiveness of Jewish peoplehood and the persistence and strength of external anti-Semitic pressures. The marked discrepancy between the projections of the theory of the Jews held by Marxists and the actual history of the Jews in this century is an indication of the utter inadequacy of their theoretical analyses.

### *Tenets of Zionism*

Yet there were in the pre-Hitler days—and they persist today—substantial Left objections to the tenets of the Zionist movement. These tenets are: the "ineradicability" of anti-Semitism makes necessary the "ingathering" of the Jewish people in Palestine (and now Israel); suppression of the memory of Jewish history between the fall of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. and the rise of the Zionist movement, and of the Yiddish language and culture generated by that history; refusal to recognize and co-operate with the Arabs for implementation of Arab national rights in Palestine; and finally, devotion of all or most of the energies of Jews outside Palestine for the

achievement of a national territorial entity in Palestine. Not all Zionists subscribe to all of these views. But Left criticism was then, and now as well, directed against recognition of the Zionist movement as compatible with socialist principle.

The national impulse of the Zionists also stemmed from the conviction, widely held as a basic tenet from left to right of the movement—Moses Hess, Leo Pinsker, Ahad Ha-Am, Theodor Herzl and the Socialist-Zionists all shared it—that anti-Semitism is ineradicable. The solution of the Jewish problem and escape from the ravages of anti-Semitism, they all believed, lay only in gaining for the Jews a normal national life in a territorial entity of their own, which they saw in Palestine.

Many parts of the Zionist movement, though not all, adopted the type of nationalistic view expressed by Hess by proclaiming that they must occupy themselves solely with the movement to redeem Palestine for the Jews, and ignore local politics in their country of residence. The result was a doctrinal principle to eschew participation in the politics and class struggle in their local places, just as Hess called upon the Jews to end their social-political activity and devote themselves to their own national interests.

*It was understandable that the most intense influence on the Zionist movement should come from Eastern Europe, where anti-Semitism was most persistent, open and brutal before Hitlerism exceeded it in inhumanity. One can sympathize with the animus behind Leo Pinsker's conclusion in 1882: "For the living, the Jew is a dead man; for the natives, an alien and a vagrant; for property holders a beggar; for the poor an exploiter and a millionaire; for patriots a*

man without a country; for all classes, a hated rival." Some of the early Zionists prophesied that the Jew must quickly gain Palestine to ward off destruction, a sentiment that most people at the time probably thought hysterical. And yet it did happen with Hitler's plan for a "Final Solution."

For socialists who projected the elimination of anti-Semitism with the coming of socialism, disillusionment was to come to those who finally had to confront the brutal fact that anti-Semites persisted in the Soviet Union, that the Leninist national theory in relation to the Jews was flouted by Stalin, and that anti-Semitism was far from past history in the Eastern European and socialist countries, especially in Poland after 1967. Under these latter day travails for the Jews, it has turned out that Palestine and later Israel provided the most assured refuge for Jews fleeing persecution.

What would have been the fate of hundreds of thousands of survivors if Palestine had not been ready to receive them? In retrospect, must we not grant that the Zionists were right after all? Did they not read the situation of Europe's Jews, at least, more accurately than anyone else, and provide a haven for survival? Has the history of the past 40 years vindicated the Zionists to socialists who opposed their movement?

In several essays the late Isaac Deutscher tried to face up to this question as a socialist who had abandoned anti-Zionism under the impact of the Holocaust. "Zionists may say—and who can deny it?—that European Jewry would have survived if it had followed the call of Zionism," wrote Deutscher. The Zionist "distrust of the outside world . . . has proved itself all too well justified. . . . If, instead of arguing against Zionism in the 1920s and 1930s I had urged

European Jews to go to Palestine, I might have helped save some of the lives that were later extinguished in Hitler's gas chambers."

Deutscher does not say that he should have embraced Zionism, nor did he ever become a Zionist. Not only did he profoundly disagree with Israel's policy in relation to the Arabs, but basically he rejected Zionism because he believed the "nation-state" to be an obsolete type of institution. Only a "supra-national organization" like a Middle Eastern Federation is the viable form under modern conditions, he held. Though Deutscher asks some of the right questions in a backward look at his attitude toward Zionism, this answer, that the "nation-state" is obsolete, hardly seems the right one for remaining a non-Zionist. For history over the past 30 years since World War II, with its rapid creation of numerous nation-states of former oppressed lands and exploited colonies, seems to me an eminently progressive development. But Deutscher does not answer the hard question: did the events of the 30's and 40's constitute a vindication of Zionism?

**This writer cannot accept the proposition that anti-Semitism is ineradicable.** Such a view seems to me metaphysical rather than sociological. There are no such absolutes in social life, and it still seems to me highly probable that anti-Semitism will become negligible in society—unless the atomic bomb or environmental disaster overtakes all humanity first.

The Zionist will reply that German Jews, for instance, who held this view in 1933 were doomed; if they had been convinced of the truth of the Zionist case, they might have emigrated to Palestine and survived. This does not follow, however. Without having believed anti-Semitism ineradicable, such a German Jew might have

seen the fatal possibilities in that particular situation—as many non-Zionist German Jews in fact did—and emigrated wherever he could, whether to Palestine or elsewhere. Survival for victims of Nazism did not depend on embracing Zionism, but only on a realistic appraisal of their predicament and action on it.

But the Zionist movement has a more substantial position with respect to the Holocaust. Palestine did in fact provide a haven for several hundred thousand Jewish refugees from the Nazis in the 30's. This was the time, it will be recalled, when the Evian Conference in 1938, to which some 32 governments had been invited by Pres. F.D. Roosevelt to consider aid to emigrating German Jews, ended in utter failure. Immigration to the U.S. was by then drastically limited by a discriminatory quota system.

Palestine seemed to be the only place where Jews in the thousands could find refuge by legal or illegal immigration. Absorption of so many thousand fleeing Jews was made possible by the complex of institutions which the Zionists had created in Palestine for the reception of immigrants. Had this haven not been available and the capacity for receiving them not already set up, would not the toll of Nazi victims have been higher? On the other hand, was it possible that the countries attending the Evian Conference could not so easily have ignored the desperate predicament of Europe's Jews if Palestine had not been available? If Palestine had not already been cultivated by the Zionists, would some other solution have emerged? We do not know. We do know that the economic structure created by the Zionists in Palestine did in fact save hundreds of thousands of Jews from destruction.

However, salvation of these many thousands was not owing solely to the

existence of Palestine. If Hitler had not been stopped at Stalingrad and Rommel had not been defeated at Al Alamein, what would have prevented the Nazis from sweeping into Palestine and annihilating the Jews there? The anti-Zionist socialist countries and the bourgeois democracies therefore played an essential role in saving those Jews who were able to escape from the Nazis to Palestine. In other words, had it not been for the anti-fascist world coalition of nations, the Jews would not have survived in spite of Zionism and its work in Palestine. Contrary to the view of some Zionist politicians, in our tightly related modern world Jews willy-nilly depend on external forces in addition to their own self-defensive actions to survive.

### *The Palestine Reality*

Was the plight of millions of Jews under the Nazis by the 1940s a portentous sign of the profound error of all Jews who rejected Zionism? Although many, both socialists and non-socialists, foresaw the grisly possibilities of a conquering Nazism, few, if any, anticipated the full extent of its genocidal proclivities. Many fought with more or less astuteness against the Nazis in the pre-war decade. The failure of the anti-Nazi effort to turn back Hitler before 1939 is a complicated matter of history into which we cannot enter here, but the fact remains that socialists fought, despite all their mistakes, in the best way they knew.

But when the plight of German Jews became more and more apparent, non-Zionists or even anti-Zionists, including socialists, lent their support to immigration to Palestine or wherever it was possible. This writer well remembers the fight of the Left in this country against the British White Paper of 1939, which drastically lim-

ited immigration. The fact that the Zionists had rendered Palestine available was a phenomenon to be utilized to the utmost in this life-and-death situation.

What would have happened if Palestine had not been in a sense prepared for the mass influx of Jews by the Zionists? What *might* have happened, *if* other things had been different, is a matter of fruitless speculation. In all probability, however, events would not have turned out the same if such an important factor as the availability of Palestine had not been present. In view of the speculative nature of an alternative Left policy on Palestine and Zionism, can it be said that Left opposition to Zionism before Hitlerism was a mistaken policy? I'm not so sure of the answer any more.

Another feature of all sectors of the Zionist movement was the contemptuous rejection of Yiddish in favor of revival of Hebrew as the national language. Cultivation of Hebrew was an exaggerated and elitist reaction against ghetto isolation and obscurantism, and it was to the Zionists more than a linguistic issue. For most Zionists it was one expression of the rejection of any participation in social effort in the "Diaspora," in all lands outside Palestine, other than work for Palestine. It was also an expression of Zionist arrogance in the face of the dispersed Jewish life since the loss of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., with all the heroism and travail of that history, as well as its accommodation and compromise.

All of Jewish life in these intervening years until the rise of the Zionist movement was to be ignored as a blot on Jewish history. All the more was the language of the despised ghetto, Yiddish, scorned as a "jargon," to be shamefacedly buried by disuse. The fact that Yiddish was the language

of a majority of European Jews did not move the Zionists. The language must be suppressed: Even today, Yiddish is only tolerated in Israel, and is hardly taught, let alone encouraged, in Israel's educational system.

Today the battle for Hebrew in Israel has been irreversibly won, and it is a mark of the rigidity of the Bund, for example, that it still insists that Yiddish must be *the* national language of the Jewish people. It is still necessary, however, to carry on the fight for the recognition of Yiddish in Israel—Yiddish is still the language of large numbers of immigrants there—as elsewhere, as an alternative national language. At the early time of which we write, Yiddish-speaking workers in Europe and the USA were writing a heroic chapter in Jewish labor history and in socialist struggles in countries where they lived, and were sparking a Yiddish renaissance in literature and the theater. The haughty Zionist rejection of both Jewish history of the past 2,000 years and of Yiddish was hardly an aspect of the Zionist movement likely to attract Jewish—Yiddish-speaking—socialists.

*Whatever else may be said about* Zionism, it would be rash to deny that it scanted the interests of that other nationality in Palestine, the Arabs. There is little dispute that the sad history of Jewish-Arab relations reveals that the Zionist movement as a whole, with a few honorable exceptions, showed a virtually total lack of awareness of the existence or importance of the Arab presence in Palestine. Even after anti-Jewish riots broke out in the 20's and the Arab rebellion of the 30's inadequate attention was given to the problem.

It is ironic that one of the earliest recognitions of the problem came from a political conservative, Ahad

Ha-Am, after a visit to Palestine in 1891. After his return he prophetically warned the Zionist movement against ignoring the Arabs, and against treating them as inferiors. He passionately cried that, instead of treating the Arabs "with love and respect . . . and with justice and respect for the law," the early settlers were "doing the exact opposite," behaving with "hostility and cruelty" toward Arabs. He went on to warn that, "should the time come when the life of our Jewish brethren in Palestine develops so far that they push out the inhabitants of the country on a small or large scale, then the latter will not lightly yield their places." As we can see now, left criticism of the tactics of the movement was in this respect justified, for the international aspect of the Zionist movement, its relation to the Arabs, was defective and nationalistic from the start, and a violation of socialist principles.

*But what of the socialist Zionists,* who sought to fuse their dual allegiance to socialism and Jewish nationalism into one radical outlook? Did they look upon the exploited Arabs as their potential allies in the achievement of socialism in Palestine, and did they act on such a conviction? The extent to which they utterly failed, as a movement, to grasp the true relationship to the Arabs is apparent in "Our Platform," the basic programmatic document (1906) of the organizing convention of the Poale Zion, written by Ber Borokhov, which does not even name the Arabs, but only refers to them as "the native population" of that "undeveloped" land, Palestine.

"Unlike its situation in developed lands," wrote Borokhov, "Jewish labor will encounter national competition neither on the part of the native population nor on the part of the

new immigrants." He says nothing whatever about the primary task of uniting with the Arabs for national independence. The "native population" existed for him only as a group which would not interfere with national Jewish plans for Palestine.

Yet, at that time the Arabs, in the great majority, had a national right to Palestine by right of possession, and the small number of Jews had minority rights there. Until Jewish immigration to the U.S.A. was drastically restricted in 1924, Jews fleeing from Tsarist pogroms and East European persecution could and did emigrate to this country, but relatively few went to Palestine or were even interested in Zionism.

One who is genuinely concerned with the integrity of socialist principles cannot overestimate the importance of the relations of the socialist-Zionists with the Arabs—the acid test for socialist internationalism in the region. With only a few exceptions, the leaders of the movement largely ignored the problem until it struck them full in the face in the Arab riots, and even then their response was hardly adequate. Laqueur remarks on "the almost constant misjudgment of the Arab national movement by most Zionist leaders."

The labor Zionists failed to make a proper effort, let alone to achieve a *modus vivendi* with the Arab workers and national movement. Although the left wing of the socialist Zionists, the Hashomer Hatzair, projected a binational state, antagonisms had become too deep by 1947 to permit this solution. All the efforts of the groups for Jewish-Arab rapprochement, especially the Ihud movement, headed by Dr. Judah L. Magnes, led nowhere, because they were on the outer fringe of the Zionist movement.

It was not until recently that Arab workers have been accorded anything

like equality in the Histadrut since its founding in 1920. Whatever efforts were made to unite organized Jewish and Arab workers (or even to organize Arab workers) were never brought to fruition until very late, despite the work of Hashomer Hatzair, which advocated a binational labor federation as well as a binational Jewish-Arab state. Granting the great difficulty in organizing Arab workers, and the even greater difficulty of establishing joint unions, the failure of the socialist-Zionists lay in their inability even to perceive the centrality of this kind of unity to any solution of Palestine problems. All efforts were allowed to remain abortive.

*One of the greatest obstacles to* such Jewish-Arab working class unity was the labor Zionist policy of "Conquest of Labor" advanced by the Second Aliya of 1905 to 1914, which was mainly socialist-Zionist. Inspired by the altogether admirable effort to establish Jews in productive labor on the land in order to help to correct the lop-sided distribution of occupations in trade and the professions, Jewish socialist-Zionists tried to force the change by prohibiting employment of Arabs on Jewish enterprises.

This policy was carried out in such a way as to violate elementary principles of class solidarity with Arab workers. Motivation of this policy passed over from nationalist to nationalistic. Thus Arab workers were dismissed from Jewish enterprises and many Jewish establishments hired exclusively Jewish labor.

The Poale Zion was well aware of the problem and from time to time attempted to organize Arab workers and to strive for unity of the two worker groups. But these efforts were ineffectual, and in the meantime Arab antagonism was exacerbated by the "Jewish labor" policy.

Arthur Ruppin, labor man, eminent sociologist, Zionist and for several decades after 1908 the Jewish Agency's director of settlement in Palestine, cautioned the movement that this policy was a source of Arab-Jewish tension and even advised against the slogan, so serious did he consider its effect. The socialist-Zionist Aharon Cohen summarizes this failure of the Jewish labor movement to achieve rapprochement with the Arabs thus: "However eloquent the explanation of the moral, nationalist and socialist motives that impelled the Jewish labor movement to take this stand [for "Jewish Labor"] it could not remove the sting from the fact that the Jewish Labor Federation made no effort to organize the Arab workers, even those who worked in the Jewish sector. Jewish labor developed no sort of trade union association or solidarity with the Arab workers in order to improve their working conditions."

The socialist-Zionists thus operated in fact in ways incompatible with socialist principles, mainly in relation to the Arabs. But even a succession of Communist parties founded on the principle of unity with the Arabs broke down repeatedly. One could, if one wished, set up a model of what Jewish-Arab political unity would require in terms of strategy and tactics of joint struggle for independence from imperialism and progress toward a binational socialist state. To construct such an ideal model would, however, be an academic exercise. The actual political behavior of the Zionists before the ascendancy of Hitler was clearly such as to preclude alliance from a principled international socialist viewpoint.

With respect to the Left charge that Zionists deflected the energies of the working class away from class struggle at home, it was certainly true of the effort of the overwhelming ma-

### SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

In Jerusalem May 5, this internationally renowned feminist leader and French intellectual challenged anti-Israel attitudes on the left. Reuters reported that on accepting the Jerusalem Prize (breaking her rule not to accept awards), Ms de Beauvoir declared, "one of my reasons for coming here is to demonstrate the fact that some leftists have a positive attitude towards Israel and support its right to exist like any other nation." She particularly registered her protest at Israel's exclusion from UNESCO. Addressing Israeli intellectuals, she added, "I was a witness to the Holocaust and its horrors and felt the lack of a Jewish homeland. I saw this as not merely a Jewish problem but as something very personal." She also criticized the stand of the French government on Israel and the one-sided pro-Palestinianism of the French left.

majority of bourgeois Zionists (there were a few honorable exceptions like Rabbis Judah L. Magnes and Stephen S. Wise), and even of the socialist-Zionists before the pogroms of the early 1900s. It is well-known that Herzl held out the inducement to imperialist governments of the retraction of Jews from revolutionary movements in exchange for grant of a "charter" for Palestine. But the socialist-Zionists realized that, if they abandoned the working class struggle on their home grounds, they would lose all influence on class-conscious workers who were anti-Zionists. The socialist-Zionists therefore in East Europe turned to self-defense and labor activity at home.

(To be concluded.)

ONE labor Zionist of the period, Moishe Zilberfarb, recalls that "those of us who held that labor Zionism must not take up the revolutionary struggle against the Autocracy so as not to dissipate the national energy . . . received a lesson from the Kishinev pogrom, namely, that national energy is not 'saved and conserved' by a people's acceptance, with bent back, of the bloody blows of the pogrom regime."

Thenceforth the labor and socialist Zionists saw their aim as dual, to engage in class struggle at home and to work toward a territorial entity in Palestine, or some other territory. The primary aim, however, was settlement and a territorial entity in Palestine, as is apparent from the Poale Zion "Platform" of 1906: "Objective processes lead the Jewish proletariat to Palestine, and in Palestine it must struggle bitterly. It would be easier to attain freedom in Palestine if life in the Galut were more bearable; and the stronger our political power in Palestine, the more respected will our rights be in Galut. This is an integration of Galut and Zion." If, therefore, the socialist-Zionists participated effectively in labor struggles at home, they could not be charged by the Left with diverting the workers from class struggle in their land of residence.

However, since the national Jewish movement entailed the occupation of another land than the lands in which they lived, socialist-Zionist activity was divided and to some extent diverted from the basic participation in the class struggle at home in unity with the non-Jewish working class and progressives. If Socialist principle was infringed by the priority assigned to Zionist objectives, namely subordination of the class struggle at home to national issues, Left criticism was justified. It was on this issue that the Zionists were at sword's point with the

## The Zionist Movement Revisited: 3

Bund. While the Bund had nationalist problems of its own, which I have suggested in earlier articles (see issues of Feb.-June, 1974), they were at one with the Social Democrats in charging the Zionists with diversion of Jewish workers from class struggle in unity with non-Jewish workers. If this was true of left Zionists, how much more drastically was it true of the general Zionist movement, which did not even make any pretense to champion the Jewish workers' cause at home?

Further, how could socialist-Zionists participate in a movement which was grounded in the effort to make an alliance with imperialism? Herzl's direct effort to enlist imperialist support for a "charter" for a Jewish Palestine from Turkish, German, British, Tsarist or other powers in exchange for a Jewish *quid pro quo* of support for counter-revolution and for cooperation with imperialism is too well-known to require discussion. Herzl, himself an intense opponent of the revolutionary movement, offered his prospective imperialist patrons to call off Jewish revolutionaries, or at least to provide emigration to Palestine as a diversion from revolutionary activity.

*It might be argued that in the early decades of the Zionist movement no other alternative was open to it than*

## Relation to Socialism— Palestine as Refuge— Israel as State

By LOUIS HARAP

appeal to imperialist powers. Alliance with the general socialist movement was out of the question, since the entire movement at that time was bitterly opposed to Zionism. Only imperialist governments, reasoned Herzl and his followers, had the power to assign Palestine to the Jews as a territorial entity. The Zionist bargaining offer to imperialist governments was to rid East Europe of Jews and of Jewish revolutionaries, and also to provide a friendly outpost in the strategic location of Palestine.

But an alternative did in fact exist, and was pursued by the anti-Herzl forces in the Zionist Congress after Herzl passed off the scene, namely, settlement of Palestine until a large number of Jews lived there to achieve a *de facto* territorial entity, if not a juridically recognized one. Not only the socialist-Zionists but Weizmann's faction as well opposed Herzl's negotiations, and proposed the "practical" mode of gaining a homeland by settlement.

Yet in the end all sections of the Zionist movement accepted alliance with British imperialism following the Balfour Declaration, until British anti-Jewish policy itself cancelled out this alliance. At any rate, the alliance with British imperialism was incompatible with international socialism,

first, because it was enforced against the will of the Arabs, and second, because the Zionists, and the socialist Zionists among them, allowed themselves to be used as instruments for British imperialism.

But was there any approach at all possible for the achievement of a Jewish territorial entity that *was* compatible with socialism? Such a program would have to work for a united effort with the Arab people of Palestine for independence of their land by expulsion of the British. Easier said than done. This was in fact the strategic line of the succession of Communist parties in Palestine, and the extreme difficulty of such a program is illustrated by the history of these efforts. Jewish-Arab Communist parties, one after another, foundered either because of extreme sectarianism or Arab chauvinism. Was such Arab-Jewish unity possible? There are many who will say that it was not, and that socialist-Zionists were therefore obliged to pursue their national objectives as best they could, including alliance with British imperialism. But the history of socialist-Zionism in Palestine traces the decline of the socialist aspect of the doctrine and the final dominance of the Zionist, nationalistic aspect.

Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952) who opposed the autocratic and conservative policies of Herzl, was himself a disingenuous partner of British imperialism. I think he honestly believed, as he wrote in his autobiography, when he chided the British for trying to back down on the Balfour Declaration, that the "British Empire is built on moral principles"—a morality whose actuality was merciless exploitation of hundreds of millions of Asians and Africans. He saw nothing wrong, in negotiating for the Declaration, in emphasizing the argument that a Jewish Palestine, as he said, "would

be a safeguard to England, particularly in respect to the Suez Canal." Jabotinsky for his part, led, by the thirties, a full-fledged right wing—even in some manifestations, a proto-fascist—movement which carried the "historic" rights of the Jews to Palestine to their logical end by claiming both the East and West Banks of the Jordan and by projecting and acting upon an anti-labor program. While this Revisionist movement was rejected by the rest of the Zionist movement, as its present-day successor, Likud, is rejected by a majority of Israelis today, it represents the extreme right of what is basically a nationalist movement.

*It will be said that several socialist wings of the Zionist movement from the early 1900s on recognized that the official movement was "bourgeois" (at that time Nachman Syrkin—1867-1924—regarded the traditional Zionist view as reactionary and one that made of Zionism "a 'Utopia' of slavery"), and refused to participate in the Zionist Congress movement.*

Syrkin left the movement with the territorialists in 1905 but later rejoined the Zionists. Ber Borokhov (1881-1917) attempted a "Marxist" analysis of the Jewish Question leading to the necessity for a Jewish Palestine and was in 1907 the leading ideologist in the organization of the World Poale Zion movement, for which he wrote the platform. His Marxism, as we now see, was mechanical; how much so, we may judge from his convenient view (later abandoned, as was virtually the entire platform) that the Palestine Arabs would ultimately become "economically and culturally assimilated with the Jews." Under his leadership, the Poale Zion in 1909 decided to leave the Zionist Congress because it was regarded as class collaborationist.

There were a number of splits and reunifications in the left socialist-Zion-

ist movement in the ensuing years. All wings of the socialist Zionist movement returned to the Zionist Congress in the period between the two world wars. This period saw no improvement of the condition of East European Jews, in spite of the "guarantees" of minority rights which Jewish representatives worked so hard to get incorporated into the Versailles Treaty. On the contrary, anti-Semitism became more intense in most of them, especially in Poland. Immigration to the U.S. was severely limited by the restrictive immigration laws of 1920 and 1924. The Third Aliya of the 1920s came mainly from Poland and was on the whole laborite, thus substantially increasing labor influence in the Zionist movement. But ideological differences kept the socialist-Zionists from forming one united party, and they have since existed in factions with more or less Left positions and in varying intensity of class views.

*By the early thirties, however, the labor and socialist-Zionists gained control of the Zionist movement as a whole (though not in the U.S.), and with hegemony came increasing compromise with Left positions. For most of the socialist movement, the revolutionary aspects of the movement weakened—except for the far left—and the nationalistic aspects predominated without hindrance. Maxime Rodinson, French-Jewish Marxist who supports the Arab position, though not uncritically, was right, I think, when he wrote that for Ben-Gurion and the group around him who brought Israel to birth, "socialism was . . . a means, not an end. Their dream was not to create a more just and freer society for all men, but to regenerate the Jewish people within its own state."*

What Rodinson means here—I think correctly—is that socialist objectives

were *subordinated* to the national regeneration of the Jews. The socialist-Zionist pioneers were, I think, genuinely socialist in their earliest days within the framework of their time and place. But as time went on and their political strength in Palestine and in the Zionist movement grew, the socialist motive weakened, as their relations with the Arabs over the decades indicate. Perhaps the climax of the extent to which this movement away from socialist principles and toward what they considered the interests of Jewish territorial entity was Ben-Gurion's callous agreement to cooperate with the imperialist plans of the French and British in the Suez war of 1956.

*Thus far I have tried to adduce* reasons why Jewish socialists battling in intense labor and socialist struggles throughout Europe and the United States could not be drawn into the Zionist movement, which would to some extent, at least, withdraw them from those struggles. While the Italian bourgeois nationalism of a Mazzini or Garibaldi or Cavour, which was the inspiration for the early Zionists, was progressive because it accorded freedom from oppression and national unity to a people resident in its territory, the problem was different for Jewish nationalism. The Jews were a small minority in a land in which they had lived as a resident people 2,000 years earlier, and which was celebrated in their religion and tradition as their homeland. Now only a few thousand Jews lived in Palestine, and another people, the Arabs, also inhabited the land, surrounded by millions of other Arabs.

Jewish national existence therefore related to an area which was for a century a "cockpit" of imperialist competition. Furthermore, up to World War I very few Jews responded with

actual immigration to Palestine, let alone Jewish socialists, who held that the Zionist movement was "utopian" at best and led the workers away from revolutionary activity in lands where they lived. Thus, although one might agree in the abstract that the Jewish people are entitled to a land of their own, in practical terms the realization of such an entity entailed matters which confronted Jewish socialists with many problems rooted in their socialist principles. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish socialists rejected Zionism.

Could an alternative program for the achievement of a Jewish territorial entity in Palestine have been put forward which was compatible with socialism? Could current socialist misconceptions about the Jewish Question have been overcome and the powerful inhibitions to an objective analysis of the problem have been surmounted? In my view, after much soul-searching, the answer is hard to arrive at. In all honesty I must confess that more light is needed than we now have in order to see our way out of the maze of complications involved in arriving at a convincing answer. Much can be gained by reader participation in grappling with this question.

#### *Palestine as Refuge, Israel as State*

The coming to power of Hitler introduced profoundly new elements into the relation of Jews to Palestine. This new situation was simply and directly stated by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko at the United Nations on May 14, 1947. "The fact that not a single Western state has been in a position to guarantee the defense of the elementary rights of the Jewish people or compensate them for the violence they suffered at the hands of the Fascist hangmen," he said, "explains the aspiration of the

Jews for the creation of a state of their own. It would be unjust not to take this into account and to deny the right of the Jewish people to the realization of such an aspiration." Whether or not he was aware of it, Gromyko was here implicitly raising the question of the validity of the long-time opposition to Zionism. If, indeed, Jews were defenseless under European conditions, did they not have a right to a state of their own for the purposes of refuge, at the very least?

The Arabs in 1947 were not less but even more opposed to a Jewish state than after World War I. It is true, as Arabs have said, that European injustices to the Jews were in part being righted by Europeans at the expense of the Arab people of Palestine. But there are several considerations which weaken this assertion as a final judgment. The Jews did have historic roots in Palestine which, however, by themselves did not afford sufficient justification for Jewish territorial rights there. But at least the historical consideration removes the Jewish claim from being arbitrary. All other considerations aside, the *sufficient* justification lies in the fact that European Jews were a people rescued from genocide and required a territory as a refuge. The Jews could not be blamed for the creation of this desperate situation. The fact that two national movements, Jewish and Arab, both laid claim to the same territory, and that literally hundreds of thousands of Jews had no other choice but to come to Palestine for physical survival, required that neither side should surrender to the other, but rather that a compromise should be struck. While binationalism was the preferred solution, the only feasible and equitable solution was partition. The Arab leaders, who were at that time reactionaries backed by British imperialism, rejected this solution with all

the terrible consequences of this rejection for both peoples. This is one of those occasions when full and simple justice cannot be done, because two incompatible rights cannot both be fully satisfied; a compromise is the only just outcome in a case like this, and the UN decision for partition was that outcome. Only a dogmatic, and indeed inhuman interpretation of socialist principles can deny the validity of this mode of cutting the Gordian knot.

The plight of the Jews under Hitler caused a change of position, not necessarily toward Zionism as such but rather toward immigration into Palestine as a desperate resort for saving thousands of Jewish lives from genocide. Later, when partition was proposed by the United Nations, creation of a Jewish and an Arab state was supported by the world Left—indeed made possible by Soviet intransigence on the issue in the UN—not as a fulfillment of Zionism, but as the solution to a complicated international problem so that as much equity as possible was forthcoming to the parties concerned in a situation with intense conflict of national interests.

*In 1947, rebellion of colonial* peoples which issued in the break-up of the British Empire now presented the world community with the necessity of determining the status of Palestine. With the enormous increase in the number of Jews in Palestine, the issue of a Jewish state was no longer academic or a Zionist projection for the future. While a binational Palestine was the most desirable outcome, antagonisms between the Arab and Jewish communities, so carefully nurtured by the British, had by now become so deep, that the only feasible solution was the creation of two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The support of the United Nations resolution of

Nov. 29, 1947 creating these two states was not given in pursuance of Zionist policy, but of an international agreement assigning juridical status to the territories newly freed from British domination.

The Arab national movements did have a case for disapproving of this UN solution, but they refused to compromise with the conflicting interests of both Jewish and Arab national facts of life in Palestine. From the viewpoint of the UN, its decision was the settlement of an imminent territorial problem whose solution held implications for the entire world. In the last analysis, the UN decision was a response to an imminent situation of over a half million homeless people, refugees from genocidal persecution, and more hundreds of thousands of Jews waiting in Europe to escape from lands of humanly intolerable persecution. One did not have to be a Zionist to support the creation of Israel any more than to support immigration to Palestine as a haven from the Nazis. In both cases, support was a response to an urgent human concern.

In light of the hard facts concerning creation of Israel, one can only view with dismay the uncritical support by the largest part of the world Left and of the Third World for the nationalistic position of Arab countries with regard to Israel. On occasion this intense anti-Israelism of some sectors of the world Left verges on—and sometimes passes over to—anti-Semitism. Some Left dogmatists ignore or even parrot blatant anti-Semitic attitudes among some Arabs. From these observations on the world Left it by no means follows that the Israel regime is innocent of serious errors in relation to the Arabs at home and abroad. Aside from other considerations, it has seriously misjudged the situation by refusing to acknowledge the validity of the idea of an Arab Palestinian en-

tity, or by having failed to seize the initiative for peace after the 1967 war. Neither has the policy of the Arab states been free from chauvinistic policies and an obstinate refusal to grant the elementary right of the Israelis to a national existence. It should be noted that the organized Jewish Left, almost completely in the United States and a large proportion of the Jewish Left of other countries, has been opposed to the unbalanced and extremely biased view of the general Left and has condemned the manifestations of anti-Semitism whenever they emerged in the ranks of the world Left.

**Finally, there is the controverted question, in the words of Laqueur, "whether there is a history of Zionism beyond 1948." Did realization of the State of Israel close the history of that ideology? One affirmative answer holds that ideologies about Jews in relation to Israel are no longer "Zionist," but rather political positions pertaining to the State of Israel. Such positions are exemplified today in the programs of the various political parties within Israel. Zionism, such a view maintains, is an ideology which organized forces toward realization of a Jewish state. Once this objective was obtained, it is argued, Zionism is no longer relevant, for what remain are only Israeli policies.**

With this view I do not agree. The lowest common denominator of all Zionists was the achievement of a Jewish national entity in Palestine. Although this has been gained, it is still challenged by many on the Left who sympathize with extreme Arab positions. In other words, the existence of Israel is still controversial on the world stage and the issue continues to have a history. Even if non-Zionists support the existence of Israel for what they consider non-Zionist reasons, along the lines set out above,

as a consequence of the Holocaust, Israel is still the basic aim of Zionism. If that aim is challenged, it constitutes part of the history of both Israel and of Zionism.

**In Israel today, just as in the Zionist movement before the state was created, class divisions are reflected in the varying ideologies of the various Israeli parties. The pre-state Zionist ideologies have been projected into the political parties from right to left from Herut to left Mapam. (Since Communist parties in Palestine and Israel are non- or anti-Zionist, we omit them from this line-up of Zionist parties.) The "ingathering of the exiles" is a basic Zionist tenet held by most Zionists, and many in Israel today still support this view. Has this idea lost its "Zionist" character because Israel is now a state? I think not: it is both a Zionist and Israeli idea at the same time. The Zionist-Revisionist assertion that the Jewish state must include the entire area on both banks of the Jordan is now propagated by the Herut, Orthodox parties, and others. Is it less a Zionist viewpoint for being held in an existent state of Israel? I do not think so.**

The Secretary General of the World Zionist Movement, Itzhak Korn, has insisted that there is a basic distinction between a pro-Israel and a Zionist position in a recent article, "Sympathy for Israel No Substitute for Zionism" (*Jewish Frontier*, July-Aug., 1974). Korn deplors the notion that "99% of American Jews are now Zionists" because they "support Israel and are concerned for its welfare." If this idea is accepted, he adds, "it will distort the essence of Zionism." This essence, he notes, requires not only "recognition of the centrality of Israel and Zionist-Jewish education," but also "a readiness for self-fulfilment—aliya." Persistence of Zionism as an ideology

could not be more clearly demonstrated.

On the other hand, so varied is the mode of adherence to the Zionist movement, now as before, that the World Union for Progressive Judaism (Reform), in joining the World Zionist Organization in July, 1974, expressly informed the WZO Executive Committee that it reserved the right of its membership to determine its own interpretation of Zionist ideology. So that, now as at all times in the history of the movement, the meaning of Zionism varies with its interpreters—but its existence as a distinct ideology with a variety of interpretations persists.

Zionism held not only that Hebrew is the only Jewish national language, but also that Yiddish should be suppressed or discouraged because it was the language of a supposedly passive ghetto Jewry. This view is still held by many Israelis. Is it then no longer a Zionist, but only an Israeli idea?

Allied to this notion is the Zionist insistence that the Jewish state should constitute the cultural center of Jewish life all over the world, the lodestar of all extra-Israel Jewish cultural life. Non-Zionists, however, believe that Israel is one important center of Jewish culture, but that the center of Jewish culture should be local, not Israeli. Both before and after the emergence of the Jewish state, the centrality of Israel was and is a Zionist idea, even if it now pertains to an actual cultural center in Israel.

The situation may perhaps be further clarified by an analogical example. Before the American Revolution, many believed in monarchy and loyalty to the British king and others believed in independence and the republic. They were monarchists and republicans. After the Revolution was over, and the United States was a state, many of these retained their views on this subject. Were they any the less

● IN MEMORIAM: KIVIE KAPLAN ●

**F**ELLED by a heart attack May 5 while on his way to a meeting of the Israel Commission of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), of which he was a Vice-President, Kivie Kaplan died, widely mourned both in the Black and Jewish communities. For 41 of his 71 years, Kivie Kaplan had been active in the NAACP, of which he had been president since 1966. He had concentrated on recruiting Life Memberships of the NAACP at \$500 each. There were 221 such when he began his nationwide touring campaign; there were 12,000 when he died, and 35,000 were paying for them in installments. Replying to a Jew who complained that Kaplan "worked only for the Blacks and did nothing for the Jews," he declared, "I continue to work with the NAACP to practice true Judaism in my everyday life." A high-school drop-out in his native Boston, Kaplan became a very successful business-man, owning seven tanning factories that were the largest patent leather tanners in the world. Retiring, he devoted his time and fortune to Jewish and Black philanthropy. He built the Kaplan Religious Action Center for the UAHC in Washington, D.C. and endowed many other educational and health institutions. In his weekly column in the *N.Y. Post* May 31, Roy Wilkins, NAACP leader, noted that Kaplan's religious background "brought to the NAACP a moral conviction of the wrongness of discrimination . . ." In the *Harlem Amsterdam News* May 14, executive editor James L. Hicks had a noble tribute to "one of the most incredible men I've ever met." Rabbi David Polish, Chicago *Sentinel* May 22, called him a "*Lamed Vovnik*."

monarchist or republican, even though they held their views in relation to an actual state? True, in some respects the ideological issue is simpler in this instance than with Zionism, because the latter dealt with a dispersed people and the effort to re-assemble them in a land also occupied by a second nationality, the Arabs. In the case of the United States some of the pre-state divisions became obsolete, ended as real issues, and passed permanently into history. But the more complex national situation of the Israeli Jews, with a majority of the Jewish nationality outside of Israel, and the very existence of the country being unstable, give even greater durability to Zionist ideas as live issues. An endemic world-wide anti-Semitism adds to the continuing relevance in many minds of Zionist ideas.

The history of Zionism did not end

in 1948: only its ambience changed. As long as Israelis urge Jews all over the world to emigrate to Israel, as long as relations with the Arabs remain unstable, ideologies and policies rooted in Zionist theory will continue to be propagated. Only when Israel becomes in the full sense a legitimate state accepted by the entire world community, and until the Arab world shares in that acceptance, and as long as anti-Semitism continues to plague the Jews outside Israel, Zionism will persist as a nationalist ideology. Zionism does indeed have a post-state history, as non-Zionists must know from their never-ending divergence from Zionist ideas emanating from Israel and from home-grown Zionists. But on one issue Left non-Zionists unreservedly agree with Zionists: Israel now has an inalienable right to exist.

COMMENT

*Harap on Letters by Kahn*

Some correction and clarification on several points in connection with my articles on Zionism (May-July-Aug., 1975) are called forth by correspondence I have had with a regular reader, Arthur H. Kahn, who wrote me on June 15 and on July 18.

Mr. Kahn quite correctly points out to me that my comments on Zionist rejection of Yiddish were too sweeping. He is right in calling my attention to the fact that there were sections in Poale Zion, for instance, especially outside of Palestine and Israel, which not only did not and do not share this rejection of Yiddish, but even promote Jewish education in Yiddish.

The fact is that a great part of the constituency to which the Labor Zionists were appealing were the Yiddish-speaking working masses; hence communication with them could be in Yiddish or not at all. In Poland, a pro-Zionist publication, *Der Yud* (The Jew) began publication in the late 1890s. Poale Zion held its meetings and published in Yiddish, while the Palestinian section of the Labor Zionists changed over to Hebrew after 1905. Even in the late 1920s, many Poale Zionists who emigrated to Pal-

estine from Soviet Russia advocated Yiddish.

In the United States the Zionist movement before the 1930s found its readiest audience among the Yiddish-speaking. Until 1930 the Federation of American Zionists and then its successor the American Zionist Organization published *Dos Yiddishe Folk* for this working class audience. The Poale Zion in this country published the periodical, the *Yiddisher Kemfer*, from 1906 to this very day (with some lapses) and actively encouraged the Yiddish language and pioneered in Jewish education in Yiddish—and still does.

While all this is true, it yet remains the fact that the labor and socialist Zionists for the most part in *Palestine and later in Israel*, and some outside, rejected Yiddish. For instance, Nachman Syrkin in the early 1900s regarded Yiddish as a degrading language, and Ben-Gurion was one of the most vehement opponents of Yiddish. Today Israel has Yiddish publications, since many of the post-World War II immigrants were Yiddish-speaking. But there is plenty of evidence that Israel officially frowns upon Yiddish and permits its use only on sufferance. The government assigns no preferred position to Yiddish over any European language.