

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

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

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END THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION
JUSTICE FOR THE PALESTINIANS

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& Rally in London

Say Enough! to 40 years of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories

Say Enough! to 40 years of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories

9 June 2007 Meet at Lincoln's Inn Fields at 1.30pm for the march to Trafalgar Square

www.enoughoccupation.org

[illegible]

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

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

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NEWS

- 3 Enough! Occupation, Iraq past and present, Rescue History
- 4 Independent Jewish Voices, Foul play, Jewish Currents
- 5 Palestine news

FEATURES

- 6 **Freedom without flags**
David Rosenberg challenges the narrow definition of Jewish self-determination promoted by Zionism
- 8 **Misguided members**
Brian Klug looks at the political meaning of the All-Party Parliamentary Report on Antisemitism
- 9 **Surface tension**
Mike Marqusee separates myth and reality in assessing antisemitism in the Muslim world
- 10 **Web of deceit**
Julia Bard interviews Michael Rosen about antisemitic arguments surfacing in the pro-Palestine movement
- 14 **Turn of the century traffickers**
Steve Cohen sees historical parallels in attitudes to trafficking of sex slaves
- 16 **When the spring was over**
Eva Turner and Karel Schling recall painful memories of the Soviet tanks rolling into Prague
- 18 **Jews in the Czech lands**
Irene Bruegel explores what happened to Czechoslovakia's Jewish community during and after the Second World War
- 20 **Thoroughly modern genocide**
Gary Fraser looks at the relationship between modernity and the Holocaust
- 24 **Feigenbaum's follies**
Charlie Pottins uncovers strange activities within the world of stamps

REVIEWS

- 28 **A partial view**
Anat Pick traces the trajectory of the UK Jewish Film Festival
- 29 **Traveller's tale**
- 30 **Life and soul of the Party**
- 31 **Tilting at Windmills**

REGULARS

- 5 Change the world: Bustan,
- 34 On the shelf
- 35 Dybbuk's diary

EDITORIAL

Spring came early this year for Jewish people in Britain. On 5th February a group of leading Jewish figures declared that established institutions do not speak for us, particularly in upholding Israeli occupation against Palestinian human rights. They said that individuals in all communities must feel free to express their views without incurring accusations of 'disloyalty'.

Nothing in this declaration by Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) justified the hysterical reaction of commentators like Melanie Philips, who condemned them as 'Jews for Genocide'. Nor could the signatories be dismissed as 'outsiders', who were beyond the pale. Not only were many well known in the Jewish community but, as they were able to point out, views such as 'Palestinians and Israelis alike have the right to peaceful and secure lives', were pretty much what a majority of Jews have said when polled.

The moderate, reasonable points made in the declaration in no way lessen its importance. Attempts to deride the idea that the Establishment tries to silence dissent echoed hollowly, as calls were made for the Voices to be ostracised, and a signatory requested his name be removed, for fear his job might suffer. Besides, it came as prominent donors to the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) were withdrawing support because of remarks about Israel and antisemitism which director Tony Lerman had made in a personal capacity. We might hear of such pressures more often if people had not learned to keep quiet so as not to arouse hostility. Messages received by IJV made it clear that those who had signed their declaration were only a few of the many people who agreed with them.

The IJV declaration was also significant because it came after Zionist organisations had been congratulating themselves on having persuaded the European Union, British MPs and the National Union of Students to accept a definition of antisemitism which equates Jewish and Zionist, and would render not only Palestinians but also many Jewish critics of Israel liable to be categorised as 'antisemites'. (Ironically many real antisemites would escape the definition.)

Independent Jewish Voices, who oppose antisemitism, anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia or 'any other form of racism', add: 'The battle against antisemitism is vital and is undermined whenever opposition to Israeli government policies is automatically branded as antisemitic'. If Jews are thinking for themselves like this there is no excuse for non-Jewish politicians not to do so. That is something neither the Israeli government nor its allies want.

Independent Jewish Voices are not 'anti-Israel'. Nor are we. But an Israel which oppresses others and depends on the most aggressive imperial forces can be neither truly secure nor free. Nor can a Jewish leadership which tries to regiment us behind such policies be trusted to protect our rights or educate the young, let alone accommodate hopes for a better world for all. From its very first issue in 1985, Jewish Socialist has supported the 'Other Israel', those striving for peace with justice for Israelis and Palestinians. We have argued for the independence of the diaspora. We have tried to offer a platform for Jewish voices that would not otherwise be heard. Now we are glad to find ourselves but one voice among many in a growing community of dissent.

NEWS

Enough! All ready

A broad-based coalition dedicated to campaigning for an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land attracted more than 500 people to its launch rally at Friends Meeting House in London on 30th January.

The Enough! initiative is unprecedented in bringing together major trade unions, charities, Moslem, Christian, Jewish and other campaign groups to work for a just and equitable peace in the Middle East.

Jeremy Corbyn MP, chairing the launch, said: 'You don't get peace from F-16 jets and walls and watchtowers and listening devices and security services. You gain peace through respect and justice.'

The rally got a hint of the treatment Palestinians have

come to expect when it emerged that two scheduled speakers from Gaza, Dr Mona al Farra and Zakaria Abu Harbid were unable to attend because of border closures imposed by the Israeli army.

Sharif Omar, a farmer from Jayyous in the West Bank, spoke of how land is being expropriated by the Israeli apartheid wall, and how restrictions at all levels, from farming to harvesting and selling the produce, were destroying the agricultural economy in Palestine. He urged the meeting 'to support the resistance on both sides, in Israel and Palestine, against occupation'.

Yonatan Shapira, an Israeli ex-pilot and member of Combatants for Peace, called for action from the international

community. 'Without pressure, without sanctions, without isolating my government in my country, we have no chance for peace. We have no chance to end occupation, we have no chance to end the apartheid, end the mutual suffering of all the people there,' said Shapira. He said it had taken him many years to gather the strength to say 'No'. It was now time for British, European and other world leaders to do the same.

Enough! brings together an impressive array of affiliate organisations, including the Transport & General Workers Union, Friends of the Earth, Pax Christi, NUS Black Students Campaign, the Muslim Association of Britain, Jews for Justice for Palestinians and the Jewish Socialists' Group.

Together these organisations, representing three million or more people, could have a huge impact on public thinking about the Palestine issue as the occupation enters its fifth decade. However, this will not happen if affiliation means no more than an executive decision to put a name on the bottom of a leaflet. Activists need to get to work breathing life into the Enough! initiative at grassroots level if this opportunity is not to be squandered.

Enough! is organising a national demonstration on 9th June and is planning a lobby of Parliament in November.

Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi

Enough! www.enoughoccupation.org

See back cover for details of the demonstration on 9th June.

Iraq past and present

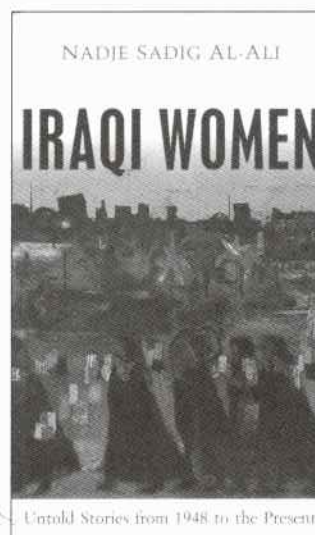
Despite dreadful weather, the Jewish Socialists' Group held a well-attended day school on Iraq in March.

Abbas Shibliak described how Iraq's once well-established Jewish community had largely exited to Israel in 1950-51, as a result of tensions created by the 1948 Israeli war and exploited by both Zionist agents and the reactionary Iraqi regime. Abbas believed that the consequences had been bad both for the Jews, who found themselves treated as inferior in Israel, and for Iraq, which was deprived of a well-educated and progressive minority that had enriched its society.

Sami Ramadani dealt with the political and social changes in Iraq from the 1958 revolution, through to the 1963 coup promoted by Western interests, which brought the Ba'ath party to power. He looked at the way Saddam Hussein's regime had

managed both to fall out with the US and repress the Iraqi working class and the Left. Sami also charged the present occupation with responsibility for installing sectarian leaders and fuelling conflict, and for unleashing most of the violence now in Iraq. Besides the occupation troops a plethora of private mercenaries, death squads and militias had been let loose.

Nadje al Ali, differing from Sami on the extent of local blame, looked at the changes in Iraq over the years of Saddam's regime, of wars and sanctions, from the viewpoint of women, who had made progress only to be thrust back. Now they were suffering worst from both the destruction of Iraq's infrastructure and from the violence and terror. At the same time, women were in the forefront of trying to restore education and health provisions, a hopeful sign



perhaps of how, despite everything the resilience of ordinary people could rebuild their lives.

Nadje Al Ali is the author of *Iraqi Women: Untold stories from 1948 to the present* published in April by Zed Books, price £14.99. www.zedbooks.co.uk

Sign up for rescue

In issue 51 of JEWISH SOCIALIST we published 'The Heat Is On' by Mark Levene, an article based on a draft 'manifesto for the humanities in the age of climate change'. After a range of discussions the manifesto has now been published in a final form. The Rescue!History project is seeking signatories for this excellent manifesto and further support for its work. You can read the manifesto and add your name by visiting its website: www.rescue-history-from-climate-change.org

Money matters

Having held the cover price of JEWISH SOCIALIST at the same rate for 15 years we are reluctantly raising the price to £2 to meet increased costs. Thank you for your support. We will continue to make sure that you get value for money!

Breaking the silence

The cosy arrangement by which Israeli leaders claim support for their actions from Jews around the world while unelected Jewish 'leaders' confirm this support on behalf of their communities, has been challenged by the creation of Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) in Britain and several similar initiatives in other diaspora communities (see Editorial p2).

IJV announced itself in January through statements in The Times and The Jewish Chronicle signed by 100 signatories, and by creating a website. It launched itself at a public meeting in north London in February, which attracted more than 300 people, with dozens turned away for lack of space.

IJV's founding statement says: 'those who claim to speak on behalf of Jews in Britain and other countries consistently put support for the policies of an occupying power above the human rights of an occupied people.'

Reclaiming 'the tradition of Jewish support for universal freedoms, human rights and social justice,' it upholds the right of individuals and groups within all communities to 'feel free to express their views on any issue of public concern without incurring accusations of disloyalty.'

Despite the predictable frenzied attacks from Board of Deputies, the Israeli embassy and supporters, and from the ironically named 'Engage' website, IJV has clearly struck a chord. It now has more than 400 signatures and has received thousands of supportive emails.

The need to maintain free debate has been highlighted in several other countries. In the USA, Alvin Rosenfeld of the American Jewish Committee wrote a stinging attack, condemning those who speak out against Israel as aiding antisemitism. His essay criticised, in particular, a number of Jewish objectors to unthinking support for Israel. Melanie Kaye Kantrowitz has written an excellent response, published in Jewish Currents and available on the Jewish Socialists' group website: www.jewishsocialist.org.uk

In Canada an 'Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians' (ACJC) has been formed seeking to represent 'Jewish anti-occupation forces' in Canada. The ACJC has sought to affiliate to the Canadian Jewish Congress – Canada's equivalent of the Board of Deputies, but so far has been refused by those who claim to represent the entire Jewish community!

Meanwhile, Independent Australian Jewish Voices has

gathered more than 100 signatories, including that of Hashomer Hatzair, the socialist Zionist youth movement. Its statement talks of its commitment to 'a just peace that recognises the legitimate national aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians with a solution that protects the human rights of all'. It adds: 'Our concern for justice and peace in the Middle East is a legitimate opinion and should be met by reasoned argument rather than vilification and intimidation.'

Back in Europe, support is growing for the Shalom 5767 (Berlin Declaration) launched by a group of German Jews. It acknowledges that 'shame and grief' about Nazi crimes 'lead many people to remain silent about the politics of the Jewish State of Israel.' But this silence 'makes new injustices possible.'

Shalom 5767 is calling on the German government and the European Union to no longer tolerate the Israeli policy of occupation; end the boycott of the 'Palestinian Authority'; and strive for the realisation of a viable Palestinian state in the Gaza strip and the entire West Bank that was occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, a state with full sovereignty and freedom of movement'. www.ijv.org.uk

Current affairs

Mazeltov to the American magazine Jewish Currents and The Workmen's Circle/Arbeiter Ring on the first anniversary of their wedding. Many of the relatives must have thought this an unlikely shiddukh. The magazine has been going for 60-odd years, The Workmen's Circle is in its 70s and for many of those years the two never really got on. In short, Jewish Currents was closer to the communist tradition, The Workmen's Circle, social democrat. But one year on from the marriage circulation of this progressive, secular bi-monthly is rising.

The most recent issue of the magazine happily includes material on the centennial of its long-time editor Morris Schappes, who died in 2004, together with a Yiddishist graphic story double page spread, and a lot about celebrating a secular Pesach. The editorial points out that some two thirds of American Jews polled were against the invasion of Iraq, while most mainstream Jewish leaders and organisations 'seem uncomprehending of the folly of linking their interests, in particular the security of Israel, to Bush's policies.' The current Workmen's Circle social action campaign concerns extending Medicare to all Americans, with funding through the federal tax system. It looks like the marriage has brought a great new lease of life! www.jewishcurrents.org

Making the desert bloom together

From assisting Negev Bedouin whose lands are threatened by developers, foreign capital and oil shale mining, to promoting green energy technology, Bustan, a partnership of Jewish and Arab eco-builders, architects, academics and farmers, has an ambitious range of activities.

Bustan – an Arabic word for a garden or orchard – says that sustainability depends on diversity: 'One plant is a natural insecticide for another, another acts as a trellis for a vine, another preserves water in its roots and sustains neighbouring plants. Conversely, in a "monoculture", plants are weak and must be doused with harmful chemicals to protect themselves from parasite and weed

invasion. Bustan believes that the peoples of this land are intertwined and survive most productively in fellowship with one another.'

Bustan combines analysis and political advocacy with constructive projects, helping people and showing that another way is possible. It champions the 'Unrecognised Villages', Palestinian villages within Israel that are not officially recognised, so they are denied resources like water and electricity, as well as security to remain on their land.

One of its projects, a clinic at Wadi el Na'am constructed with natural and accessible materials, has won an honorary mention in the 'Ot HaYezuv' design competition, and was exhibited on

29th March at Bar Ilan University. Mariam Abu Regayek, a Bedouin woman working with Bustan to market desert herb cosmetics, has appeared on Israeli television.

Meanwhile, Bustan's Negev Unplugged campaign works to raise awareness with lecture tours and visits, taking people to remote communities in the Negev/Naqab which are unconnected to the national grid, and then on to lobbying political decisionmakers. Maybe Bustan won't make a Gan Eden, but it will help people achieve a land where they can live together.

Tax-deductible donations earmarked to help Bustan can be sent to British Shalom Salaam Trust, PO Box 39378, London SE13 5WH

Website: <http://bustan.org/vision/>



Palestine news

As the 40th anniversary of Israel's seizure of the Palestinian Territories approaches, the daily toll of human rights abuses increases. Polemicists in the diaspora often draw analogies between Israeli occupation practice and the actions of extremely oppressive regimes such as South Africa under apartheid or Nazi Germany's victimisation of the Jews. Other polemicists, including opponents of the occupation, dispute these analogies. The facts of the occupation do not need analogies. The actions speak for themselves and should merit a response from anyone genuinely committed to human rights. Here is a selection of recent events.

In early March, Dawud, a high school English teacher from Kufr 'Ain, was worried about his 6-month-old son who was having trouble breathing. The baby's parents called a taxi to take him to the nearest hospital in Ramallah, where they hoped to secure an oxygen tent, which had helped him recover from past respiratory episodes. They were stopped at Atara checkpoint, where an Israeli soldier asked for the father's, mother's, and driver's IDs. Dawud explained to the soldier that his son needed urgent medical care, but the soldier insisted on checking the three IDs first, a process that usually takes a few minutes. Dawud's was the only car at the checkpoint at that time yet the soldier held the three IDs for more than 20 minutes. Dawud and his wife began to cry, and begged to be allowed through. After 15 minutes, the baby's mouth began to overflow with liquid and Dawud wailed at the soldier that his baby was dying. Instead, the soldier demanded to search the car, even after the IDs had been cleared. At 1:05am, 6-month-old Khalid Dawud Fakaah died at Atara checkpoint. As the soldier checked the car, he shone his torch on the dead child's face and, realising what had happened, finally returned the three ID cards and allowed the grieving family to pass.

After Friday prayers on 16th March, dozens of Palestinian civilians and

international and Israeli solidarity activists demonstrated in Bal'ein village, west of Ramallah in protest at the construction of the Separation Wall. When the demonstrators moved towards the gate established by Israeli forces at the Wall and attempted to open it, soldiers fired rubber-coated metal bullets, sound bombs and teargas canisters at the demonstrators, and violently beat them. As a result, eight demonstrators, including five children, were injured. Four others were detained, including two Israeli activists.

Abdel Qadir Mohammad Abu Rahma (13) was injured in the hand by a rubber-coated metal bullet; Hamza Suliman Yassin Bornat (14), injured in the abdomen by a teargas grenade; Mohammad Nabil Ahmed Abu Rahma (14), injured in the leg by a rubber-coated metal bullet; and Mustafa Jamil Abu Rahma (15), injured in the back by a rubber-coated metal bullet.

On Wednesday 21st March Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian child by excessive use of force. A group of children were gathered at the north-east entrance of the village of Abboud, west of Ramallah. They threw rocks at an army jeep that passed in the area. Soldiers fired directly at the children. Mohammad Ibrahim Ismail Jaber (17) was hit and fell to the ground. Troops prevented a Palestinian ambulance from gaining access to the area.

In March, Israeli forces continued to close all border crossings of the Gaza Strip for the ninth consecutive month. The total siege imposed by Israeli forces on the Gaza Strip has had a disastrous impact on the humanitarian situation and has violated the economic and social rights of the Palestinian civilian population, particularly the rights to appropriate living conditions, health and education. It has also paralysed most economic sectors. Furthermore, severe restrictions have been imposed on the movement of the Palestinian civilian population. As a consequence of the siege, at least 73% of families in the Gaza Strip live below the poverty line, and unemployment has been estimated at 55%. In addition, living conditions have further deteriorated with the non-payment of salaries for the public sector for seven months, as international donors have frozen aid provided to Palestinians, and Israeli authorities have suspended the transfer of tax revenues to the Palestinian National Authority since March 2006.

Information on these cases has come from Electronic Intifada – a highly respected not-for-profit, independent online publication committed to comprehensive public education on the question of Palestine, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the economic, political, legal, and human dimensions of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. <http://electronicintifada.net/new.shtml>

Foul play



Indymedia reports that on 24th March, when England played Israel in a Euro 2008 qualifying match, a group of activists picketed the Football Association in Soho Square calling for a sporting boycott of Israel. They add that 'Palestinian children have been on the receiving end of shots of a far more lethal variety. Children as young as 11 have been variously machine gunned, shot dead by snipers and killed by Israeli artillery shells as they played harmlessly on makeshift pitches.' Activists are gearing up for political activity when the return match takes place in September.

Jewish Socialist obtained exclusive coverage of the commentary on this match.

So 15 minutes in Mark, how do we rate this England side?

It's not the best start is it John. Fugger, Moren and Grunt haven't taken control of the midfield. Topgear and Mindmehair are isolated on the wing.

This young Israeli side are fired up though, Mark. Their first time in a major European Championship.

The most easterly of the East European sides, John.

Grunt to Grit – powering into the Israeli half – but nicely cut out by Moyel. Now Naar to Nu. Oh! – and pushed through to Shtup! Can he get it in? But kept out by Roasting and England are being tested for the first time Mark.

They aren't intimidated. Israel is a plucky little side.

Roasting puts the ball out to Shewasaskingforit. He's past Shlub and

Shoyn. Idegiverone to his left giving him support. But Khazzer the meaty Israeli fullback has bought him down. And it's a free kick to England on the edge of the Israeli penalty area. Oyukunt, making his England debut, steps up. The Israeli defence wall is now lined up. And what a wall! Is it legal Mark?

I've never seen a wall encircle the player before. Surely that's not 10 yards back!

The England bench are protesting but there seem to be two officials in black on the pitch. One of them has a beard and some scrolls and is pointing to the sky.

So the wall is sanctioned then, Mark. Well it's not being challenged.

Oyukunt takes the kick but its straight at the wall. Ben D'ver, now playing for Wigan, picks up the ball and puts a long one through to Dreydel who turns well.

And still another 70 minutes to go...

FREEDOM WITHOUT FLAGS

A narrow definition of self-determination, which ignores the reality of Jewish life in the diaspora, is skewing the debate on antisemitism, says DAVID ROSENBERG

In the late 1970s, there were clumsy attempts to ban Jewish student societies (JSocs) at British universities on the basis that Jewish societies were Zionist, Zionism was racism (the UN said so), and racists shouldn't have a platform. These actions, and the assumptions they relied on, reflected gross oversimplifications. Many Jewish students joined JSocs for religious rather than Zionist reasons; Zionism in practice was racist but many Zionists were not, and many countries voting to condemn Zionism as racism in the UN had questionable records with regard to their minorities. No-platforming fascists who were declared enemies of democracy had a clear basis, but attempting to no-platform racists was more complicated. The designation of 'racist' was often subjectively applied and, as racism is a matter of degree ranging from mild to even unconscious, to extreme, some racists could be won to anti-racist positions in open argument.

Those who attempted to ban JSocs ultimately discredited the left and probably strengthened both Zionism and antisemitism.

Today, though, the boot is on the other foot. The Zionist-dominated Jewish student body, the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), wants to stop political opponents of Zionism, and they have dragged the National Union of Students (NUS) executive behind them. They have found a powerful weapon – a document drawn up by the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) – which promotes a contemporary definition of antisemitism as 'a certain perception of Jews which maybe expressed as hatred towards Jews'. It adds: 'Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.' The definition comes with a page of interpretation. As a whole this has been incorporated in the recent report of the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry on Antisemitism. After an emergency motion at the NUS executive, it has won approval from the student movement's nationally elected representatives.

But this definition, which is gaining such significance, contains at its heart a lie. A big and pernicious lie. But quite a clever lie, built on many layers of distortion and disinformation relating especially to the Jewish people, Israel and the political ideology of Zionism.

It says: 'Examples of the ways in which antisemitism manifests itself with regard to the State of Israel ... could include: Denying the Jewish people their right to self determination eg by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.'

This lie should be exposed – but it requires a lot of dissection. The nub is 'self-determination', which it locates exclusively as being in the form of the Israeli state. It takes the Zionist version of Jewish self-determination to be the sole legitimate and true form of Jewish self-determination.

And yet, the Zionist version of Jewish self-determination belittles the Jewish life of the majority of Jews in the world. Zionism holds that you have to live in Israel to be complete as a Jew and that Jews outside are incomplete Jews: homeless, threatened and in exile.

Last year, nearly six decades after Israel came into being, it was estimated that there were 14.5 million Jews in the world of whom 6.2 million lived in Israel. If anything, this underestimates the global total – since self-identifying Jews who do not belong to a synagogue or any official Jewish institution don't get counted except as 'guesstimates'; and it overestimates the Israeli proportion, since Israel's Jewish population includes many church-going non-Jewish Russians who opportunistically claimed Jewish ancestry as a way of emigrating from Russia.

Today, any Jew anywhere has the opportunity to go to live in Israel to determine themselves there, and nearly all have the means to do so. But they continue to choose the diaspora. So Israel is not the only place where Jewish self-determination happens, or even where it mostly happens, but the only place where Zionists recognise it as happening. The EUMC report colludes completely with this view.

Jewish self-determination means to live life freely and make choices as a Jew, both individually and collectively. It means having the right to form and join Jewish organisations and institutions, read Jewish newspapers and literature, speak Jewish languages, eat Jewish food, carry out Jewish religious practices, celebrate Jewish festivals, be buried in a Jewish cemetery, and bring Jewish concerns – for example, about antisemitism – to the attention of government and civil society organisations. Nearly all Jews are able to do this today, whether they live in Israel or the diaspora. But most prefer to do it in the diaspora. And if you look at emigration patterns from Israel, there are lots of Israelis who prefer to practice their self-determination in the diaspora too.

Ideas of Jewish autonomy and self-determination preceded Zionism. And Zionism was only one model among several that have been fought for. In Eastern Europe, religious Jewish communities formed kehillas – autonomous collective institutions – which levied taxes on Jewish families, provided a range of Jewish services, and organised their own legal systems. Ultra-orthodox Jewish communities today still live very much within their own collective frameworks. These are not democratic and they don't provide for secular Jews but, in themselves, remain a form of Jewish self-determination.

In 1897, the same year that the Zionist movement was declared in Basle, the Bund (General Union of Jewish Workers) was formed in Vilna. The Bund developed the idea of national cultural autonomy – Jewish self-determination that was not contingent on territory but recognised the multinational character of the Jewish people.

In 1905 a group calling themselves 'territorialists' split from the Zionist movement and were active for

two decades pursuing the idea of forming a Jewish territory or compact Jewish territories in various parts of the world and not necessarily in Palestine.

In the Soviet Union, a Jewish autonomous region was formed called Birobidzhan. While remaining under strict party control in an authoritarian state, Yiddish was (and continues to be) taught in schools there, and a range of Jewish institutions operated.

Stalinists, Zionists and territorialists chose to understand Jewish self-determination as contingent upon a defined and ghettoised territory. In the case of the former, the territory was far from where Jews were already living but within the territory of the state in which they lived. In the latter two cases the territory in question was under the jurisdiction of other rulers.

The insistence on connecting Jewish self-determination with a distinct and hermetically sealed territory runs completely against the grain of Jewish history. Writing in the 1950s, Professor Leibman Hirsch of Geneva University stated that, 'the period when the entire Jewish nation was united in a truly independent state of its own was limited to 80 years (the combined reigns of David and Solomon), or only about 2% of the period described in Jewish history.'

Israel's 59 years, with a significant proportion of Jews united in a Jewish nation state, will not have increased this percentage substantially. Which means that the normal condition of the Jews has been that of practising their self-determination as a minority living within various nations. In certain places in certain periods they struggled against discrimination which limited many or few aspects of their self-determination, but, in general, the Bund's notion of achieving full self-determination in the diaspora chimed in with the reality of the Jewish condition.

The Bund was not alone in its view that national cultural autonomy was both possible and necessary in diaspora communities. The Jewish historian Simon Dubnow was instrumental in forming the Jewish Folkists – a secular liberal movement which supported Jewish cultural autonomy in the diaspora, published a Yiddish daily newspaper in Warsaw, and was represented in the Polish parliament during the 1920s and '30s.

So it has been, and it remains, perfectly possible to completely reject and oppose Zionism's version of Jewish self-determination while supporting other kinds of Jewish self-determination and supporting full equality for Jews and non-Jews in the world.

The EUMC says anti-Zionists are antisemites for 'claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour'. If Jewish people had located a remote place on Earth where they would settle in a territorial unit without harming the rights of people indigenous to that territory, I can't imagine that anti-Zionists would condemn this, or see it as a racist endeavour.

Of course, the EUMC know that anti-Zionists are not objecting to 'a' State of Israel in abstract, but to the impact 'the' State of Israel has had on the Palestinians – the people living within the territory that the Zionists selected for their state. They know, too, that it is not the desire for self-determination that is condemned as racism but the attitudes of Zionist leaders to the population of the land they had chosen to settle, and the exclusivist laws made by that state to privilege the new Jewish majority.

Many Jews arrived in Israel in the late 1940s as refugees who had no desire to treat others as they themselves had been treated, but they were

incorporated into a system which granted them permanent privileges at the expense of the indigenous population of Palestine.

This state was founded against the wishes of the neighbouring states whose hostility to a Jewish enclave in the Arab world was probably more pressing than their concern for the Palestinians. But more significantly, it was established against the wishes of the majority who were already living on that territory, and was firmly established through terror and expulsion, through razing Palestinian villages and building Jewish settlements on this land. The discriminatory character of the state was established through laws that reserved ownership of most of the land exclusively for Jews and denied the right of Palestinian refugees to return.

The Bundist approach to Jewish self-determination was the opposite to that of the Zionists. Bundist theorist Emanuel Scherer described it as: 'Rights and justice for Jews everywhere without wrongs and injustice to other people anywhere.' The Bundists separated statehood from peoplehood and rejected the idea that Jews living outside of a Jewish nation state were homeless.

They argued that, for their full liberation, the Jewish people did not need to change territories, but to make changes within their territories. The Bund argued that there were no separate Jewish solutions for the problems Jews faced; these would be found within solutions to humanity's problems of majorities and minorities, oppression and inequality.

While Zionism proclaims that the answer to antisemitism, especially in the form of Nazism, is found through self determination in a nation state, Bundists argue that they have failed to identify the root of the problem: the national chauvinism encouraged through the nation state itself.

So, in effect, Zionism has lined up in philosophy and practice with the nationalist systems that have inflicted the greatest misfortunes on the Jews, and is inflicting its own misfortunes on its national minorities.

On Israel's 10th birthday, the renowned Polish Jewish Marxist, Isaac Deutscher, wrote: 'The Jews were conditioned by the circumstances of their existence to rise above the limitations of the nationalist outlook, to overcome the fetishes of state and empire, and to look forward to supra-national forms of social existence. Now, however, when the nation-state is decaying, when it has become as crass an anachronism as the feudal princedom once were ... Jews are investing their boundless enthusiasm and their great talents in their own nation state.'

Deutscher advised Israelis to 'beware of being carried away by their new-fangled and already red-hot nationalism ... their state is not above criticism; it is an earthly creation not a Biblical sanctity, not a "chosen" nation state.'

Objective commentators would probably describe Deutscher as prophetic or prescient. I suspect that UJS and the EUMC would not hesitate to describe him as antisemitic.



Israel's first President, Chaim Weizman, described diaspora Jews as 'human dust'

MISGUIDED MEMBERS?

Rather than providing a solid basis for action, the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism adds to the confusion about the problems facing Jews in Britain, says BRIAN KLUG

When word of his own demise reached him, Mark Twain is reported to have said, 'The rumours of my death have been greatly exaggerated.' The same could be said about the claim that antisemitism is on the rise in the UK.

This does not mean that we should dismiss the claim. A deep vein of antisemitism runs through European and British culture and persists to this day. But with the public debate in a state of such confusion, we first need to clarify the concept. For this reason, the report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism (September 2006) was a missed opportunity – and worse.

The contents of the report are a mixed bag. We could try to sift the good from the bad, but this would be misleading because the report, taken as a whole, is a deeply politicised document. It tends to reinforce the old monolithic idea of 'the Jewish community' and to blur the difference between fighting antisemitism and defending the State of Israel. These two tendencies together give the report a decided slant.

Paragraph 1 states: 'The Inquiry was established to investigate the belief, widely held within the Jewish community, that levels of antisemitism in Britain are rising.' The report repeatedly refers to 'the Jewish community' as if the UK Jewish population can be thought of as a collective entity with a collective character.

Consider, for example, how the report defines antisemitism. Citing the view taken in the Macpherson Report that 'a racist act is defined by its victim', the authors say: 'We conclude that it is the Jewish community itself that is best qualified to determine what does and does not constitute antisemitism' (emphasis added). Setting aside the problems inherent in a subjective approach, note how the All-Party report moves from the individual to the collective without pause, as if the Jewish community has a 'self' that speaks with one voice.

The Inquiry was certainly presented with evidence to show that there is a diversity of opinion among UK Jews, and occasionally this is reflected in the text. But the report generally proceeds as if there were a single Jewish bloc which, regardless of internal differences, presents a common face to the world via the communal institutions that represent it.

This traditional model, created in another era, of the Board of Deputies as the secular, and the Chief Rabbi the religious, voice of British Jewry, goes with the idea that an immigrant group, as a group, has to work out its own 'fit' into the host society. Note the compliment paid to British Jews: 'The Jewish community has integrated in a highly successful manner into British life and has made a tremendous contribution to the country since it was readmitted 350 years ago' (par 13), as though integrating were something that Jews have done. There is also a pat on the collective Muslim kop, acknowledging that the

'great majority of British Muslims are integrating well into British society and consider themselves to be fully British' (par 125).

Beneath the surface of this report, though, is a certain conception of British society – one that goes with the old monolithic idea of 'the Jewish community' and the voices that speak for it. These 'representative' voices have a pronounced tendency to blur the difference between fighting antisemitism and defending the State of Israel. The report reinforces their message. It endorses the Working Definition of Antisemitism, a text produced under the auspices of the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) in 2005.

Actually, this text is not so much a definition as an article, several hundred words long, produced by a small consultative working group. Like the All-Party report itself, it is highly politicised. According to the American Jewish Committee (AJC), it was their initiative to suggest this process to the EUMC who 'accepted' their 'invitation' (AJC press release, 16 June 2004). The EUMC emphasise that the so-called Working Definition is 'part of an ongoing process having no legal basis'. It is one of several articles on their website which appear under the disclaimer that they 'do not necessarily reflect the official position of the EUMC'. But the Working Definition is taking on a life of its own.

The EUMC's official position is expressed in their report on antisemitism (2004), adopted by their Management Board. In this report, antisemitism is defined in terms of the familiar stereotype of 'the Jew': deceitful, crooked, corrupt, powerful and so on. The Working Definition, though, refers more vaguely to 'a certain perception of Jews'.

Strictly speaking, the Working Definition does not contradict the EUMC's official position. Rhetorically, it does. Halfway through, we are told that the ways in which antisemitism manifests itself with regard to the state of Israel taking into account the overall context 'could include' certain positions. There follows a problematic list. Take, for example, the first item: 'Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, eg, by claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour.' It is true: this could be an expression of antisemitism. But equally, it might not be! On the other hand, the list could include support for the existence of Israel. (There have always been antisemitic advocates of Zionism.) But it doesn't. The Working Definition is a politically loaded statement that does the opposite of defining: it muddies the waters.

Overall, the All-Party report contributes to the confusion it was meant to dispel. It is vital, moreover, to place the battle against antisemitism in its proper context: as part of the wider fight against racism and xenophobia, not the wider fight of Jews against the world.

SURFACE TENSION

I was sipping tea in a darkened room in a dusty village somewhere off the Lahore-Multan road in Pakistan. My host was a rental car driver. We'd been chatting on our way across southern Punjab's flat plains, beginning with cricket, and eventually, in a transition common across south Asia, politics. We had been passionately agreeing on the barbarism and insanity of the invasion of Iraq and US foreign policy in general. And I had been invited to his house to meet his family and continue our talk. Now, with a palpable heaviness, he said, 'But why do they act like this? I think it must be the Jews.'

I wasn't surprised by the remark. Across Pakistan, and in many other Muslim (and indeed some non-Muslim) countries, there is a casual assumption that the Jews are behind the West's assault on the Muslim population. It's a safe bet that at least tens of millions around the world believe some form of the 9/11 mythology: that the Jews working in the Twin Towers were warned in advance; that Mossad or Israel or the Jews organised the whole thing.

My host mentioned that he'd heard these stories, but readily agreed when I described them as conspiracy theories. What he raised next, however, required more discussion. 'Maybe it's all because the Jews run America.'

This thesis, or a variant on it, is even more widely believed than the Twin Towers legends – and obviously, not only in the developing world. The atrocious US behaviour in Iraq and its support for Israel are explained by 'Jewish influence' – often specifically the influence of 'Jewish money'.

I asked my host how many Jews he thought there were in the US. He pondered for a moment, then answered: 'Maybe about 50%'.

He was struck when I told him it was under 3%, and more than happy to abandon the Jewish power thesis when I explained its improbability and offered him an alternative. This has been my experience in all the conversations on this topic I've had with people in Pakistan, ranging from drivers to NGO workers to mullahs to young male cricket fans in replica Nike trainers.

What's common to all these encounters is the absence of any personal hostility to Jews. Certainly, as soon as I have identified myself as a Jew, I have felt nothing but the warmest welcome, coupled with intense, entirely friendly curiosity. There is also a widespread awareness that Muslims and Jews were once friends and neighbours, and a puzzled sadness that this is no longer so.

The antisemitism I encountered in Pakistan was driven not by hate, but by confusion. People are seeking an explanation for the daily horrors of US and Israeli aggression. Israel identifies itself with the Jews and with the West; the West identifies itself with Israel, as do many Jews. These facts, rather than antisemitic propaganda – of which there is little in Pakistan – are what lead people towards blaming the Jews for the 21st century nightmares. In the absence of left and anti-imperialist analyses – the Pakistani left has never recovered from the Zia era – they grasp at an ethnic conspiracy theory. In this, of course, they are hardly unusual.

In all the discussions I've had in Pakistan, people

have always been quick to accept that oil, money, greed for power, colonialism, racism etc are far more likely to explain US policy than 'the Jews'. After all, these are the same factors they see shaping their own society. So the good news is that this form of antisemitism is not deep-rooted and is easily challenged. The problem is that there are so few people around challenging it.

Thanks to the Jewish Socialists' Group, I was able to resume the conversation – on air – in London last November. A local Muslim community radio station in Hendon sought a Jew for its Friday night topical discussion programme and I was lucky enough to fill the spot.

The topic was: 'Are we (British Muslims) in danger of hating Jews because of Israel's actions?' Since a Zionist group had declined to participate, I found myself the only studio guest. Listeners submitted questions by email and text, and the presenter expanded on them. The questions ranged from the naïve to the sophisticated. But the premise of all of them, and of the entire discussion, was that it would be wrong for Muslims to hate Jews because of Israel, and that this was a tendency Muslims had to resist.

Some listeners were puzzled that I described myself as a Jew even though I did not support Israel. They believed support for Israel was a scriptural commandment for Jews. Others cited various unsavoury goy-bashing passages from the Talmud and asked if such beliefs caused Israeli soldiers to behave as they did in the West Bank and Gaza. Why could Muslims eat kosher food, but Jews could not eat halal? Was it true that Jews slaughtered Muslims in the 15th century? Do Jews control the media in the 21st century?

The hardest questions to answer were those which asked, bluntly, whether there was any hope for the Palestinians, if attitudes in Israel would soften and whether the Jewish diaspora would join with Muslims in protesting against Israel's cruel behaviour. There was no Holocaust denial, but there was anger that other crimes against humanity were not acknowledged in the same way – Iraq, Chechnya and Kashmir.

In my attempts to respond to all these queries, I felt I was listened to not only with courtesy, but with eager attention. There was a hunger for hard facts and logical analysis. What made it possible to pursue the discussion, however, was that I fully shared their anger over Iraq and Palestine, and specifically that I acknowledged the Naqba and the historic dispossession of the Palestinian people.

After nearly two hours of these exchanges, I was completely exhausted. The presenter decided to bowl me a last googly. Wasn't I just what they called a 'self-hating Jew'? Having run out of sober logic, all that popped into my mind was a Larry David joke on this subject. Accused of being a self-hating Jew, as he whistled a Wagner tune, Larry replied: 'I do hate myself – but not because I'm Jewish!'

The presenter cracked up, as did the producer and technicians gathered in the little studio. So, if nothing else, I've had the satisfaction of telling a bona fide Jewish joke on a Muslim radio station.

On a journey through Pakistan, MIKE MARQUEE encounters antisemitism driven not by hatred but by confusion

Mike Marqusee's most recent book is *Wicked Messenger: Bob Dylan and the 1960s* (Seven Stories Press, 2005). For more about Mike, visit www.mikemarqusee.com

WEB_{OF} DECEIT

A battle has been going on in cyberspace about Palestine, Jews and antisemitism. Two of the protagonists are Israeli-born saxophonist Gilad Atzmon and Paul Eisen, co-Director of Deir Yassin Remembered. Rather than targeting the Israeli state, in the name of Palestinian rights, they have focused their attack on Jewish anti-Zionists. **MICHAEL ROSEN**, a prominent anti-racist and longstanding opponent of Zionism has been answering them back. Julia Bard interviewed him about this twist in the struggle for justice for the Palestinians.

Michael, have you been surprised at this development within the pro-Palestine movement? It seems extraordinary that if there is a struggle going on and there are people who are supporting the Palestinians, and if then these supporters are attacked in a non-fraternal way, you ask yourself: 'Why are you doing that? Why are you expending all that energy on attacking people?' And it seems to be because the people being attacked are Jewish.

Are they saying that Jews as Jews cannot be a part of the Palestinian struggle?

The answer coming from some quarters is that the only way for a Jew to support the Palestinians is be an 'ex-

Jew'. In other words, the only way you can be a Jewish anti-Zionist is to surrender something or give up something or stop being something. I think this is theoretically nonsense – you can't stop being something because you say you are no longer that thing. We are all blends and mixtures and pots pourris. You can't just say, 'I've lost that bit of myself'. These are attacks on people who are on your side, for being who they were born and what they are. There seems to be something particularly vituperative about attacking every single Jewish anti-Zionist or even Jewish non-Zionist groups. In any campaign you don't say to people: 'You can only join if you stop being a Christian, a Muslim or a Buddhist or a Zoroastrian.' You wouldn't

Who's who

Gilad Atzmon's main platform for attacking Jewish supporters of the Palestinians is peacepalestine.blogspot, hosted by Mary Rizzo who calls herself 'thecutter'. Here, Atzmon has written several long tirades against Jewish anti-Zionists, whom he labels 'crypto-Zionists' or 'elders' – an unabashed reference to the notorious antisemitic forgery, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which has been a key reference for Jewish conspiracy theories, normally associated with the Far Right.

Threads on peacepalestine assume the legitimacy of a struggle against 'Jewish power'. They also provide a regular outlet for Rowan Berkeley, who peddles the line that Jews were responsible for the First and Second World Wars. It is widely suspected that several contributors are Atzmon himself using aliases and arguing with himself.

The 'Jewish power' thesis has been expounded at length by Paul Eisen. He also wrote 'Holocaust Wars' – a fawning eulogy to Ernst Zundel, recently imprisoned for Holocaust denial. Eisen notes how Israel abuses the Holocaust for political purposes and to shield itself from legitimate Palestinian demands. He urges anti-Zionists to combat Israel by undermining the 'Holocaust narrative', stepping closer to the world of Holocaust revisionists and deniers. Eisen recently wrote about Auschwitz: 'the evidence for the use of homicidal gas-chambers is not good at all. The evidence against it is much, much stronger.'

Eisen and Atzmon's views are broadly shared by 'Israel Shamir' (who also seems to operate under the names of Adam Ermash and Jorgen Jermas), and they often recommend each others' work. Shamir refers to Auschwitz as 'an internment facility, attended by the Red Cross' and does not accept 'the vision of [an] "industrial extermination factory" which, he claims 'was formed only well after the war'.

Shamir has encouraged support for far right activists as a counterweight to alleged 'Jewish power'. He wrote: 'For as long as Richard Perle sits in the Pentagon, Elie Wiesel brandishes his Nobel Prize, Mort Zuckerman owns the USA Today, Gusinsky bosses over Russian TV, Soros commands multi-billions of funds and Dershowitz teaches at Harvard, we need the voices of Duke, Sobran, Raimondo, Buchanan, Mahler, Griffin and of other anti-bourgeois nationalists.'

In 2003 Atzmon wrote: 'Zionists complain that Jews continue to be associated with a conspiracy to rule the world via political lobbies, media and money. Is the suggestion of conspiracy really an empty accusation?... We must begin to take the accusation that the Jewish people are trying to control the world very seriously ... American Jewry makes any debate on whether the "Protocols of the elder of Zion" are an authentic document or rather a forgery irrelevant. American Jews do try to control the world, by proxy... Israel's behaviour throws some light on the persecution of Jews throughout history.'

Perhaps to deflect criticism, he has now amended some essays by swapping the word 'Zionists' for 'Jews' in places, but without altering the basic analysis.

While some pro-Palestinian voices tolerate or even welcome these individuals focusing on 'Jewish power', many others steer clear of them or actively oppose them. Socialist organisations also give them a wide berth, with the notable exception of the Socialist Workers Party, which has provided platforms for Atzmon to play his music and articulate his beliefs, though it currently claims to use him only as a musician.

The debate around the presence of an antisemitic tendency in the pro-Palestine movement has become hotly debated within Palestine solidarity groups, left wing movements and on websites concerned with the Israel/Palestine issue.

do that. So why, on this one campaign, say: 'You can only join this campaign if you stop being a Jew.'?

But Jews have been active in the pro-Palestine struggle for decades.

And such Jews puncture the claim that there is one monolith that is Jewish Zionism. According to several writers and commentators at the peacepalestine website, though, we are all 'Elders'. They believe that, whenever Jews get involved in pro-Palestine, they put themselves first instead of Palestinians. The analogy would be liberationists in Africa claiming that white liberals dominated the discourse about liberation struggles in Africa.

Peacepalestine picks on us precisely because we are Jewish anti-Zionists. They try to lump all Jewish anti-Zionists with every other possible kind of Jewish activity. They end up doing what both classic antisemites and Zionists do, which is make one big generalised lump of 'Jew-ism'. It ends up with an essentialised view of the Jew who can't escape from the 'Jewish power' nexus. It was explained to me in great detail on the peacepalestine site that someone like me is part of the 'Jewish power' nexus whether I like it or not.

What do they mean by 'Jewish power'?

The implication is that 'the Jews' are acting collectively or conspiratorially, in some kind of collaboration, in order to have some kind of world power domination, for the sole purpose that it should be Jews in power.

The only evidence they ever come up with is that there are some very powerful Jews. Just in logical terms, this is nonsense. You've got powerful white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, but if you're going to claim some collective intention you've got to have people in rooms acting together. And if, as in this case, you say it is 'Jewish', then there must be a collective will that is part of every Jew's life. In fact, I see that Atzmon claims that the Purim festival is really a lesson to Jews teaching them that they must infiltrate powerful institutions in order to gain power.

This idea echoes the same principle as Mein Kampf: 'Look around the world, see those Jews, they're powerful, they must therefore be acting collaboratively and conspiratorially.' From that position, you say it's so insidious that it applies all the way down to everybody who's got the J label. In other words it's a 'totalising' and 'essentialising' idea.

For an action or theory to be antisemitic it has, in some way or another, to lump all Jews together. All racisms are like that. 'The problem with black people is...' and then you lump hundreds of millions of people together. That's why this 'Jewish power' stuff is antisemitic and racist.

Is it the same as other forms of racism?

Other racisms imagine enslaving, abusing or oppressing. Antisemitism says: 'If there were no Jews, life would be better; if all Jews became ex-Jews, then the world would be better.' But my understanding of capitalism is it doesn't matter who runs it, white capitalists, black capitalists, brown capitalists – it's still capitalism. If you reduce capitalism to the personae running it, it's like saying: 'The problem with Murdoch

is he's Australian; wouldn't it be better if only we had a nice British capitalist who owned all the media?' Peacepalestine and now the Counterpunch website seem to have adopted the Jewish power notion.

What is the greatest danger facing humankind at this moment? In one of his posts at peacepalestine Paul Eisen answered the question: 'Jewish power'. If you believe that, it implies a follow-up question: 'what action or programme would rid the world of Jewish power?' The answer has to be some kind of elimination.

But there's more! In particular, I hadn't noticed that Gilad Atzmon, in particular, had revealed his hand about how much he loathes Ashkenazim. The people he really despises, it seems, are the people who eat chicken soup, and the people who use bits of Yiddish – a 'vile folklore', a language with 'no grammar' and 'no etymology' apparently. This would make it the world's only and first language to be such a nothing! I like his music, precisely for the reasons he despises – it's so intercultural. It strikes me that if you have a fusion you can't loathe one aspect of the fusion. I was quite struck that, off the back of all this Jewish power stuff, there's a cultural loathing. That surprised me because it's quite possible to hold to the 'Jewish power' thesis without this individualised loathing of one section of Jews.

When Atzmon and Co encourage Jews to become ex-Jews, isn't that merely a similar demand to assimilate to that held by many orthodox leftists?

I'm neither for nor against assimilation. If people want to assimilate – assimilate. If they don't want to assimilate – don't assimilate. What I'm against are people who say: 'You should assimilate.' If you say this or that group should assimilate that is a form of racism because you are saying that you cannot be the cultural, political, birth person that you are and so I cannot work with you.

There's another problem: assimilation holds a notion of a neutral host with minorities in a satellite around the host. It replicates a ruling class idea that somehow this neutral host welcomes the outsider and has the right to tell the outsider how to behave. It is a form of cultural domination or cultural imperialism to believe that there is this neutral place that you should assimilate to. The host culture (strictly speaking a mix of cultures itself) is never neutral. It is itself a cultural fact. That's what you are being asked to assimilate to. I believe in inter-culturalism, where we influence each other.

So can anti-Zionism become antisemitism?

The crossover from anti-Zionism to antisemitism is if you say that the problem with Zionism is Jews. In actual fact the problem with Zionism is Zionists. After all, there are Jewish and non-Jewish Zionists. Are the Jewish Zionists more powerful than the non-Jewish ones? I don't think so. It's slippage if you say that the problem is 'Jews' or 'the Jews'.

The other area where the discourse crosses over is where you equate Zionism with Nazism. You have to have a notion of the order of atrocity, historically speaking. To simply equate what has happened and is happening in the Middle East with what happened in Europe between 1933-45 is not helpful to anybody.

THE CROSSOVER FROM ANTI-ZIONISM TO ANTISEMITISM IS IF YOU SAY THAT THE PROBLEM WITH ZIONISM IS JEWS. IN ACTUAL FACT THE PROBLEM WITH ZIONISM IS ZIONISTS.

This group seems to have gone further, diminishing the crimes of the Nazis, and flirting with Holocaust deniers. Atzmon claims that 'Israel rather than Nazi Germany is the ultimate evil'. Some of them seem to be Holocaust revisionists. As far as I can tell, the line coming from this group is that all sorts of terrible things happened but it wasn't the big H; it wasn't 6 million. This loses sight of the fact that you have to remind yourself that, however you describe the Holocaust, it involved putting people on trains and taking them places in order to kill them.

You can argue the Finkelstein position and talk about the use that is made by Israel of the Holocaust but, as a historian of 1933-45, you say: there were 400,000 Hungarian Jews – what happened to them? As a historian of that period, you don't ask: there were 400,000 Hungarian Jews – what have the Israelis said about it? This group refuses to allow a discussion about Nazism distinct from the foundation of the State of Israel. The Third Reich did what it did without reference to the then non-existent state of Israel.

If you are going to argue about the Holocaust, argue about the Holocaust. If you are going to argue about Israel, then argue about Israel. And if you want to argue about the links, argue about the links between them but don't muddle the three forms of argument.

What are the implications of this analysis gaining credibility in the pro-Palestine movement?

It racialises an economic analysis. If you take racism into the liberation struggle then it will be self-defeating. Liberation for all won't happen. You have to have an equality of peoples on your side. If you say 'you lot can't join' or 'your lot/race/group are the problem', you tie one hand behind your back. You cannot liberate yourself.

If you have an analysis of capitalism, imperialism, or colonialism and you say that the problem is one group of people (based on birth, religion or culture), you drain it of politics and you create false bogeymen.

In the English Revolution, Gerrard Winstanley realised that they had replaced the king by what he called 'kingly power' – they had actually replaced the king they had with another kind of king. If you just simply say, 'we've got rid of the "no-no people", we're free!', without thinking through the nature of the politics and economics you simply reproduce the power that is oppressing you, but in another form. You end up still being exploited.

In Germany, Hitler said the 'problem' was the Jews, so he went to the working class and said the problem is capitalism; capitalism is run by Jews. Some people agreed and they got themselves another kind of capitalism, which was even worse.

There must be the temptation in any liberation struggle to look at the people who are oppressing you and dominating you and to typify them on the basis of their skin colour or some other essentialised factor and think if you just get rid of all of them you'll be in the clear. We can now look back and say that part of the weakness of some liberation struggles in Africa was to say that all we had to do was to get rid of the coloniser. Then they replicated what was there. They filled up the white places with black faces but

there was the same exploitation and oppression. That's part of the problem of Mugabe.

Though one unhesitatingly supports the liberation struggle, the weakness is locating the problem in the imagined genetic or unchanging, essentialised make-up of the people doing the oppressing. It is not just simply the imagined essence of the coloniser that is the problem. You have to change the structure and create new unities.

The credibility of this tendency though, has been boosted by the Socialist Workers party (SWP) giving Atzmon a platform at its annual Marxism event, at its bookshop, and most recently as part of the Cultures of Resistance tour.

I don't think the SWP are strongly attached to Atzmon and not at all to peacepalestine. There's a wish to have Atzmon's sax playing on board, partly because he pulls in Wynton Marsalis, Courtney Pine and others for big events. If Atzmon was not an accomplished sax player, would they be having any truck with him? Absolutely not. Any left political party looks around for people with skills and talents, and if they do or say things the party disagrees with, the party will say: 'Yeah, but he or she has just come on board for this gig.' You can never guarantee that you will agree politically with everything said by people you get along for a cultural event. I don't organise events. I would be more choosy but chances are if I was, many fewer people would turn up! I myself would not appear on the same stage as Atzmon but no one's asking!

Your letter to Socialist Worker went further though.

The specific thing I was objecting to was that, having said that they weren't asking Atzmon to speak about anything, he was then quoted about why he supports Cultures of Resistance. I thought we'd reached a point where we were taking on board someone who has expressed racist ideas in an anti-racist campaign – which, in my book, is a nonsense. So that was my annoyance and irritation.

The second half of my letter was saying, maybe this is the racism that some people think doesn't matter so much. Some people tend to think (wrongly) that antisemitism is the Holocaust and that this is what the word 'antisemitism' means. But if that's how you see antisemitism, it prevents you from seeing how it works now. If someone comes out and says 'the fucking Jews', I think some people say to themselves, 'So what? It doesn't really matter that much, the Jews are powerful, they can take it.'

The racism they care about is the racism that is linked to liberation, and their attitude is that there isn't an issue about antisemitism because there aren't any Jews who need to be liberated. So it is seen as 'less important'. Some see the racism towards black people is more significant because it's part of the world system of oppression. We shouldn't ever be put in a position where one set of racist ideas is more important than another set. At any given moment, the consequences of racist ideas will affect different groups of people with differing levels of oppression. If then, you say that the racist ideas about a not-so-oppressed group don't matter so much, in the long run it will be self-defeating.

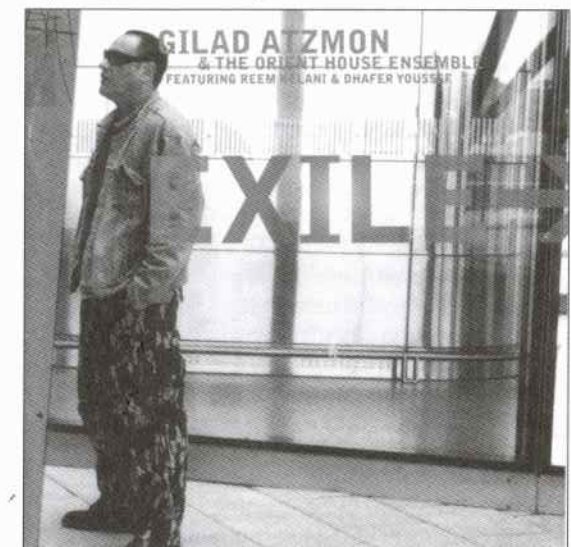
How did the letter play with those who see themselves in a battle with 'Jewish Power'?

They accused me of acting like an 'Elder', then tried to prove that I had been in touch with many other people before writing the letter to Socialist Worker. The hysterical thing is that I was being accused of the very thing that I don't do: which is get in touch with other people before writing a letter like that! Then they tried to find another conspiracy I was supposed to have been involved in: because George Galloway refused to speak with Atzmon, they thought I must have been on the blower to George Galloway. I wasn't. Their notion of Jewish power is so paranoid that they cannot believe that I could possibly have done such a thing as write a letter to SW about Atzmon without having got in a dark room with other Jews and then said: 'how do we get this...?'

At the end of the day how serious is the antisemitic anti-Zionist tendency?

Insofar as it is just writing up stuff on weblogs, it probably doesn't matter very much – it's not going to be instrumental in any way at all. All we can hope is that the conversations and actions that take place can have a bottom line about racism and people will say, 'I won't

cross the line and say the problem with oppression and exploitation is that it's the consequence of the actions of one whole people.' Instead they will say that it is the political and economic situation that is causing it. Hopefully, the real dialogue will continue.



No sax please – we're antiracists!

POEMS BY DAVID KESSEL

TO THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

What was this rabble doing here?
Miners, poets,
poet-miners.
They leave their stars and bones
with ungentled plains
and in the blood of the Asturias.

1972

THE WEALD

Lines in memory of Keith Douglas

Sink yourself in the earth, its rough
grit, its bitterness, its worm-milked leaf.
Feel the clod between bent fingers
and the harrowed clay within old shoes.
The line of the earth against the evening sky.
Breaking bread beneath a pollard willow
a hedger dreams a hard broken land;
in his face a March wind and the cry of the
lapwing
over the marsh. Before he was born he lived
with a crow. In this bare field, sleet
in his eyes and stones in his gizzard.
The crow's halting low, warning flight his
midwife.
As a kid he fished in the ditch with stern
mind;
now grimly he plods the dark rainy field
listening to rabbit, owl, vixen.
In rough hands he grips a barren time
and a gutting winter, and lays bare
a field of rape and his grey, bare home.
O the hate and the love for his chill, grafted
home.

1988

AUTUMN-BY-SEA

In memory of my mother Peggy

Breaking waves teach us
the torture of dark distant lands
and our own blind needs.

All war and peace in headland gale caught
in the face, the rapture and villainy
of a cross-grained land.

A pebble turns in the surf dense as a star,
bright as Armageddon, cold as cod, turns to
the sun
to fathom its hapless unspeakable wrath.

A searching threnody of gulls across a blinded
town.

A blackbird in a headland laburnum sings of
honour
yielding the depth and infinitude of our stolen
world.

On the beach youths surge and cry
plying their futures with darkening horizons.

In November twilight an old man spades
roses against fierce winds, humming
a tune his father learnt on the Somme
His pity rakes the terrible sky with June.

November 1986

Poems from The Windows of the Bookshop Must Be Broken
Collected Poems 1970-2006 by David Kessel (£8). Available
from Survivors Press: www.survivorspoetry.com

AS A HISTORIAN OF 1933-45, YOU SAY: THERE WERE 400,000 HUNGARIAN JEWS – WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM? AS A HISTORIAN OF THAT PERIOD, YOU DON'T ASK: THERE WERE 400,000 HUNGARIAN JEWS – WHAT HAVE THE ISRAELIS SAID ABOUT IT?

TURN OF THE CENTURY

Recent government action against trafficking of sex workers from Eastern Europe recalls the debates of 100 years ago, when East European Jews were both victims and procurers in the 'white slave trade', says STEVE COHEN

The issue of sex work has recently been prominent in the popular press and in feminist and left circles. One reason for this was the murder of five women in Ipswich. Another is because of government legislation introduced to outlaw trafficking generally, and trafficking for sexual exploitation in particular. This legislation received a mixed reception amongst some feminists and groups opposed to immigration control. The No One Is Illegal group distinguishes trafficking, where there is force or deception, from smuggling, where there is consent. Some feminists argue that 'consent' can never be given where sex is a commercial transaction. What is really required by those opposed to immigration controls and solidarising with those wanting entry into Britain is a modern form of Underground Railroad, like the one that helped free slaves in the USA in the antebellum period.

Along with other migrant labour, sex work has many attributes of modern slavery. But many women wishing to flee war, mayhem and poverty and avoid immigration controls see traffickers as a route to freedom. And the British state, in ostensibly criminalising trafficking, is actually attacking these women by erecting yet another form of immigration control. It is not minimising exploitation, but maximising border patrol. The British government is not even prepared to sign the extremely limited European Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, which allows for temporary residence for those trafficked. So when brothels in Birmingham and elsewhere have been raided to the fanfare of prurient media exposure, migrant women found there have been deported.

Women have always found themselves as victims of so-called 'regulatory' legislation. This was noted by Sylvia Pankhurst shortly after the first explicit anti-sex trade trafficking laws in the 1912 Criminal Offences Amendment Act. In the Women's Dreadnought of 19th December 1914 she wrote an article entitled 'Protecting Women?' which was critical of the legislation. The original 1895 Criminal Offences Amendment Act is important for two reasons. Firstly, because of its content. It criminalised sex work and therefore sex workers. Also, in passing, the Act outlawed male gay relationships. Secondly, the legislation is also significant as it shows how the issue of sex work was, at that time, a matter of huge popular resentment. According to Judith Walkowitz in her book *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, the Act was demanded by a mass demonstration of 250,000 people through Hyde Park where 'for one brief moment, feminists and personal rights advocates joined with Anglican bishops and socialists'.

Under the 1905 Aliens Act, Jewish women sex

workers in Cardiff had been deported. The Jewish Chronicle of 30th April 1909 reported a meeting in Cardiff organised against women sex workers where it was stated that: 'Owing to the leniency of the Cardiff stipendiary magistrate a few years ago, two Jewesses out of 37 who had been before him were allowed to remain in Cardiff, the other 35 having been deported.'

There has been no comprehensive study on the history of trafficking and anti-trafficking legislation in this country dealing both with trafficking for sex and for other forms of labour exploitation. I was surprised to discover that the major history of sex trafficking internationally – Edward Bristow's *Prostitution and Prejudice*, was sub-titled *The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery 1870-1939*. The contents show the centrality of Jews – as procurers, traffickers, pimps, brothel owners, madams and sex workers – in the global trade appropriately termed 'white slavery'. The trade was not exclusively Jewish, but it was disproportionately so. It stemmed from the towns of Eastern Europe, as young women flocked there from the shtetlekh in search of employment and independence, to Western Europe, to South America, to the USA, to Africa and Asia.

This history has been especially suppressed in the context of the Jewish community's continual search for upward mobility and respectability as an ultimately futile defence against antisemitism. The book's author deliberates whether its publication might generate yet more antisemitism – as it confirms the stereotypical image of the Jew as corrupt in general and sexually corrupt in particular, and has links with vile antisemitic myths – the blood libel accusation and the defilement of Christian children. And yet, most of the women procured or trafficked by Jews were Jewish themselves.

At the peak of white slavery there was an anxious debate within the Jewish community as to whether speaking out about what was happening would 'give our enemies a sword to smite us with'. Certainly it is the case that propaganda about white slavery spread by antisemites such as Arnold White contributed to the 1905 Aliens Act in the UK. However antisemitism is never about the truth in respect to real Jews but always about myths and conspiracies. Jewish prominence in the international sex industry, like the prominence of Jews in mediaeval usury, was itself the result of antisemitism – of the marginalisation of Jewish life to the social and economic fringes. Women existed on the absolute fringes.

Some of the information uncovered in *Prostitution and Prejudice* is remarkable. In country after country procurers and traffickers were excluded from mainstream Jewish

TRAFFICKERS



The Central Committee of the Warsaw Bund, the Jewish revolutionary party, organised to physically defend the women. In the course of a few days several combatants were killed including at least one sex worker. In Buenos Aires members of Poale Zion (the workers Zionist party) had a bloody battle with pimps in a theatre during the showing of the play *Miriam*, which is about white slavery. In Chicago the Jewish branch of the Socialist Party held mass meetings explaining the economic causes that forced women into the sex trade, polemicising with the

Jewish immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe in 1903

institutions. So they established their own parallel institutions. These functioned as both trade associations but also performed religious functions with their own synagogues and burial grounds (and rabbis). Generally the women sex workers were also 'permitted' to worship in these synagogues and be buried in these grounds. In Johannesburg this cartel was inaugurated (most had formal charters) as the American Club. In New York it was known as the Independent Benevolent Association, run by evil monsters with names straight out of Damon Runyan and running the Manhattan Preparatory School as a front for the 'training' of the oppressed sex workers, with some of its members operating as part-time strike breakers. In Buenos Aires it was the Zwi Migdal Society whose cemetery can still be visited.

The existence of the trade had consequences within the wider Jewish community. Like the Indian Dalit outcasts, like unkosher meat, all those involved in the trade were denounced as 'ritually impure' as 'the unclean ones'. Women sex workers were the most ostracised and least powerful. The Jewish middle classes tended to organise elitist 'rescue' groups within the philanthropic anti-white slavery movement. Their work should not be underestimated – particularly 'travellers aid' where, wearing Hebrew badges, they would try to make contact with single women at docks like Tilbury as these women embarked or disembarked. Sometimes they intervened to stop deportations. Jewish pimps also gathered at the docks for their own reasons.

Occasionally they sponsored vigilante groups against the women – one example was in Cardiff in 1903 through the Jewish Vigilance Society. Jewish workers hated the gangsters and pimps who controlled the trade. In May of the revolutionary year 1905 the Warsaw workers attacked the brothels, dens and cafés around which the trade was organised. They also attacked the sex workers.

rabbis who argued that it was all about spiritual decline; and the Zionists who argued it was a product of life in the galut (exile). In Germany Jewish feminists (organised in the Jüdischer Frauenbund, led by Bertha Pappenheim and comprising 20% of all German-Jewish women) saw solidarity with sex workers and fighting white slavery as a number one priority. There is one example of Jewish sex workers revolting en masse against their pimps and leaving the trade. This was in Johannesburg in 1908. As Bristow writes: 'There must have been a Spartacus in the group and it would be nice to know who she was.'

There exist today major Jewish communities, particularly in Argentina and Brazil, who are descended from trafficked women. The white slave trade was in effect ended by the Holocaust. The source of the women was liquidated – though Bristow argues that the trade had already ceased by the late 1930s. The renewal of the trade in the last few years, with the source again often being East Europe but the controllers no longer being significantly Jewish, is another story. But there are lessons to be learned from the earlier experience. One is that there is no point in keeping any of this secret. Just the reverse. We need to remember the women victims of yesterday. And we need to solidarise with the women sex workers of today and reject all notions of vigilantism and criminalisation.

None of the original story is accidentally 'hidden' or 'lost' history. At the time it was very well known. There were popular Yiddish plays and novels such as Sholem Asch's *Motke the Thief*. Rather it is consciously suppressed history. It has been suppressed by the self-proclaimed Jewish leadership, the makkers, in the name of 'respectability'. Our opposition to the traffickers, the procurers and the pimps, alongside our fight for open borders and equality for all, does not require us to embrace either respectability or its historical myths.

AT THE PEAK OF WHITE SLAVERY THERE WAS AN ANXIOUS DEBATE WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AS TO WHETHER SPEAKING OUT ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING WOULD 'GIVE OUR ENEMIES A SWORD TO SMITE US WITH'.

WHEN THE SPRING WAS OVER

EVA TURNER
and her partner
KAREL
SCHLING write
about their
contrasting
memories of
21st August
1968, the day
the tanks rolled
into Prague

EVA'S STORY



Photos, left to right:
Eva and Karel in 1968
Below right: Prague 1968

I was born in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and have spent the last 28 years living and working in London. However I did spend 18 months between 1967 and 1969 in England working as an au pair, and later in a variety of manual jobs. Now I lecture at the University of East London, life is good and 21st August 1968 seems like the distant past. On 21st August last year, while working at the university clearing centre, it hit me how distant the memory of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia now is, and how my experience of that event and what followed it was so different from that of people who either stayed in the country or emigrated immediately.

Curious about other people's understanding of the event, I sent the following email to my colleagues.

Dear colleagues

Sitting at clearing I just realised that today is the 38th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. I was in England at the time and remember being dragged out of bed early in the morning on 21st August 1968 to watch the news. Shortly after, I received a desperate letter smuggled out of Prague through Yugoslavia from my Mum, begging me never to return. Mum [had been] a refugee fleeing Prague just after the German invasion of 1939. I returned to Prague in February 1969 for another 10 years.

The 1968 invasion was a very significant event. It meant an end to Socialism with a Human Face, the final end of the British Communist Party and other international political fallout, the start of the cruel depression of human rights in Czechoslovakia and also the birth of a very exciting cultural and political dissident movement which led to the Human Rights Charter 77 and the Velvet Revolution of 1989. For me the 10 years that followed were a time of immense personal changes.

Do you remember the day? Did it mean anything to you?

In reply, I received a number of emails from colleagues, all personal and all very interesting. I was fascinated by how this date had stuck in people's memories. Of those who were adults at the time some were already politically active in their own countries, some were just starting families and having children. Of those who were children at the

time, some were on holiday with their parents (some even in Central Europe) and they remembered the effect of the event on their adult relative. Some remembered Jan Palach more than the invasion itself. To my surprise, for all of them my email brought back a feeling that something very significant had occurred, which made me feel very emotional.

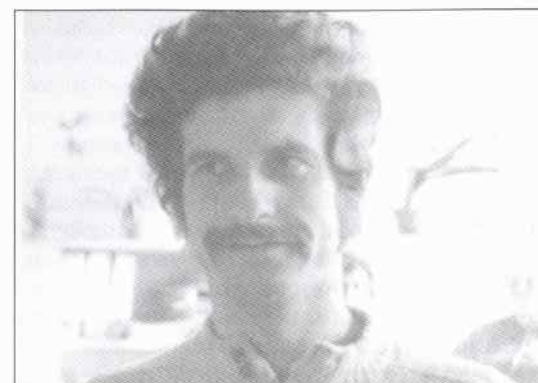
I have a clear memory of my parents associating the 1939 invasion with the 1968 invasion and I understand why this was so emotional for them. How, for them, did the appearance of foreign tanks in the streets of Prague in 1939 differ from that nearly 30 years later? Hardly at all. I am sure my parents did understand intellectually that a second Holocaust was unlikely, but how does one avoid the emotions thrown up by that experience? Though my parents were both involved in the 1968 Prague Spring, and could have been worried about their own and their children's safety after the invasion, their reaction was not political (as was the case with so many people); it was purely emotional.

Emotions ran high right across Czechoslovakia during the first days of the invasion. There were highly charged nationalistic scenes in the former Sudeten towns (one of which was my mother's birthplace) when the East German tanks rolled in. Everyone – those who had lived through the 1939 German occupation and those who had not – was angry and frightened, but those like my parents, for whom the 1939 invasion had brought death, family destruction and forced exile, had additional emotional burden to bear.

On 21st August 1968 I was living in London. A phone call from friends woke me up; they told me to turn on the television. We saw film of tanks in the streets of Prague; and spent the morning watching the same clips over and over again, and contacting the few Czechs we knew in London. Later on we went to Trafalgar Square to meet up with other people, but we were numb and didn't really grasp the situation.

I had spent the previous year working as an au pair in Nottingham, removed from my political context and not real understanding of the seriousness of the situation. I was a typically politically ignorant and naïve product of the pre-1968 Czechoslovak regime. I found it bewildering that the English people I knew, who previously had not even known the difference between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, suddenly became hospitable and friendly when they found out where I came from. Working as an interpreter in a refugee centre for newly arrived Czechs, I found it difficult to understand this sudden interest in helping them with money and university, regardless of their motivation for coming to England. My emotional bond with my parents, and my difficulty in associating myself with those refugees even though I was one of them, made me feel so alienated from Britain that I returned to Czechoslovakia for another 10 years. Those years enabled me to become acquainted with the country's cultural and political dissent and allowed me to grow politically.

KAREL'S STORY



I will never forget 21st August 1968. Today it is clear that, on that day, a group of dogmatic old men signed the death warrant of Soviet Union. But I did not see it that way at the time. I was overwhelmed with anger and frustration.

It was a strange morning, which started with even stranger wake up call. I was in the north Moravian industrial town of Karvina. My future brother in law came into the room with small transistor radio and said: 'They're playing something strange on the radio.' It was the news of the Soviet invasion.

The flat I was staying in was close to the police station. I opened the window and looked out and indeed there were two armoured personnel carriers with machine guns and Soviet troops sitting on top. All of a sudden I felt that the world has crashed around us. The feeling of betrayal, anger and frustration was overwhelming. All my hopes of building a better world were crushed on that morning.

I should briefly explain my family history. My father, Otto Schling, had been a member of Czechoslovak Communist Party before the Second World War. He came from a wealthy Jewish family, studied medicine at Charles University in Prague, and had joined the Communist Party as young, liberal idealist. When the Spanish Civil War started he interrupted his studies and joined the International Brigades, helping to organise a field hospital and working there as a paramedic. He was injured twice during the war but luckily recovered.

When Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia he managed to escape through Poland to France and from France on one of the last ships to England. After spending the War years in England, he became the regional secretary of the Communist Party in Brno in Czechoslovakia. In October 1950 he was arrested and after two years imprisonment and torture in the infamous political show trial with Rudolf Slansky and others, he was sentenced to death. The sentence was carried out two weeks after the trial. In 1963 Czechoslovak High Court quashed my father's sentence.

It seems strange but, even after what had happened to my father, I believed that there was a possibility of building a better society. It may have been naïve, but I believed that the Communist Party could be reformed. I believed that because the

Prague Spring was a logical outcome of a reformist movement which had started after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956.

Czechoslovakia's dire economic situation finally forced the party leadership to act. When they tried to introduce economic reform it quickly became clear that economic reform could not be achieved without political reform. The push for change became overwhelming. The more liberal atmosphere gave rise to a new wave in Czechoslovak cinema and literature. Czechoslovak society started to diverge from Soviet society while the Party's conservative elements were still in power. The conflict erupted in autumn 1967, when the Czech police brutally suppressed a student demonstration. Novotny was deposed in the new year of 1968 and Alexander Dubcek replaced him as party leader.

And now back to Karvina where I was staying in August 1968. There was no shooting. The Soviet army had strict orders to behave, because Karvina was a miners' and steelworkers' town. So they stayed outside the city limits and the only Soviet military presence was the two APCs outside the police station.

A sizeable crowd gathered around them. People were angry and they shouted at the soldiers: 'What do you think you're doing?' The Soviet soldiers were totally confused. They said: 'We are only obeying orders – we have come to help you.' They said: 'We liberated you in 1945 so you have no right to turn against us.' We argued with the soldiers, saying they had betrayed us; no one had invited them so they were carrying out an occupation. We told them to pack their guns and leave. Finally the soldiers received an order to leave the town. Meanwhile, on the radio, news came through about the fighting in Prague. There was a battle around the Prague radio station. Soviet troops, in the mistaken belief that they were storming the radio station, were shooting at the National Museum.

We did what we could. We argued with the soldiers. We removed all traffic signs and street names to confuse the occupying forces. Passive resistance got into full swing and we gave them a very hard time. I thought that if we stayed united we might manage to defeat those dogmatic old men in the Kremlin. But the reality of life is different.

Finally, politicians took over and 'normality' was restored. Spring was over and autumn prevailed.



JEW^{IN THE} IN THE CZECH LANDS

Around 10% of Czechoslovak Jews survived the Nazi era, some like **IRENE BRUEGEL's** family had been exiled in Britain. She explores the little known history of what happened to that community during and after the Second World War.

Schindler was not the only Sudeten German who put up some resistance to Hitler. Amongst those 'ethnically cleansed' from Czechoslovakia in the post-War era were thousands of socialists and communist militant anti-Nazis, including Jewish survivors. After all, at least half the German Social Democratic Party of Czechoslovakia, including its leader Ludwig Czech, had Jewish backgrounds. Jewish survivors in what is now the Czech Republic were subject to much less violence than the surviving Jews in Poland, and often, as with Rabbi Hugo Gryn, rejection was by their own family members and old friends, anxious to keep their distance from those dehumanised by incarceration in Nazi camps.

But the story of what happened to Jews in post-War Czechoslovakia, the only Central or East European Country with a tradition of respectable treatment of Jews, raises a number of issues for Zionists and anti-Zionists alike. While it can serve to show how paper-thin liberalism was in the context of heightened nationalism, it also illustrates how pro-Zionist politics of the political elite became a cover for a wider 'clearing out' of surviving Jews.

The Czech national movement in 19th-century Bohemia and Moravia often viewed local Jews as the most fanatical opponents of the emerging Czech nation because a very high proportion identified strongly with the Habsburg Empire and were German speakers. In the 1930s, Czechs still tended to 'merge Germans and Jews into one enemy'. As German troops entered the German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia in 1938, the massive Czech sports organisation SOKOL maintained that 'German' Jews, who had in fact lived in the area for centuries, should return to their country of 'origin', meaning Nazi Germany.

But even after the Holocaust, when only a minority of Jewish survivors classed themselves as German, Jews returning home from exile or incarceration could be refused entry to their houses. Those who had been classified back in the 1930 census as having a German mother tongue could be made to wear a 'D' (for Deutsch) on an armband in place of a Star of David, and were restricted to prisoners' rations. For example, in *I Don't Want to Remember* (Weidenfeld, 1973), Heda Margolius describes how, on returning from Prague to Auschwitz to her family's country house, she was greeted with 'Good God. You've come back. Oh no, that's all we needed.' Some were initially denied Czech citizenship and threatened with deportation. 'Half-Jews' could find themselves detained in the very camps where they had been incarcerated by the Nazis, this time alongside ethnic Germans, but with a smaller baggage allowance than the Nazis had permitted. Underlying this was said to be the 'friendly attitude of many Jews towards Germanisation'.

After the so-called 'wild period' of May-August 1945, nevertheless, in part under pressure from UNRRA and the World Congress of Jews, the leftist

Czech state reined in some of the excesses in the treatment of Jews, both in Slovakia and in the West. For example, in September 1946 they agreed not to deport German-speaking Jews, alongside other Germans, but in many ways the deed was already done. Jews got the message they were not wanted. Those without skills that were highly valued by the regime were granted the right to emigrate, though the emigration tax was greater than under the Nazis. In principle, those with immediate family connections in Great Britain could join them, but the Public Record Office documents show that many were refused, as possible burdens on the state. About half emigrated to Palestine/Israel with support of the pro-Zionist Czechoslovak government. Though Jews retained individual rights to practise their faith, their pre-War community rights were rescinded: those wanting those rights were expected to go to Palestine. Czechoslovakia was one of the first countries officially to recognise Israel in May 1948, but even before that, it had facilitated the transport of Jewish survivors from Eastern Europe to Palestine, supplied weapons and planes to the Haganah and trained Zionist pilots and parachutists.

The accusation of Germanisation might simply have been a front for antisemitism and rank greed, but there is also evidence that it had some basis in the identity of Sudeten/ethnic-German Jews themselves. In general, Jews spoke German more often than the local population of different towns. Saul Friedlander who was born in 1933 in Prague to a 'Sudeten' mother describes how 'everybody around us felt themselves German', and says that 'the first song he learnt to play was' the German army song, *Ich hatte einen Kameraden*.

Knowledge of German and identification with the Habsburg monarchy had brought the Jews of the Austrian Empire considerable advantages – in the 19th century they had access to an education system second to none. In 1890, 97% of Jewish children in the public school system in the Crown Lands were taught in German, and still had instruction in Judaism. Despite the power of the Catholic Church, and restrictions on employment in sectors of the public service, Jews generally prospered, certainly compared to Jews further east.

But the Germanness of the German Jews of the Czech Lands was particularly fluid, and the proportion for whom German was their mother tongue declined with the establishment of the Czechoslovak state. There was considerable bilingualism, and Jews shifted their language according to place and occupation, rather than being wedded to German. What limited the Jews' identification with Czech national aspirations were the anti-Jewish riots of 1848, when the Habsburg soldiers protected them, and the outbursts of Czech antisemitism at the turn of the century, culminating in the Hilsner affair in 1899, when a young Jewish vagrant was accused of 'ritual murder'. Even so, by 1930 most Jews in Bohemia and Moravia classed themselves either as Czech nationals or as Jews.

One could argue that the German speaking Jews were just an example of assimilation, and that the experience of being 'misidentified' as Germans suffered by some after the War was no different from internment by the British of German Jews fleeing the Nazis. Indeed it would seem clear that some of the insensitive treatment meted out to those German speaking Jews returning to their homes in Bohemia and Moravia can be traced to the notion that people should be treated equally, without reference to ethnic or religious background, expounded at least in theory by the Allies. Benes justified his refusal to exempt Jews explicitly from the 'ethnic cleansing' of Germans and Hungarians on the grounds that 'this would represent a yellow badge for Czechoslovakia'.

For the Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer on the other hand, it wasn't the Germanness of the Jews that was the issue, rather that Czech proletarians hated Germans in the 19th century as a consequence of antagonism to their affluent (German) Jewish bosses. Such a class-based narrative remained relevant: Jews were seen as capitalists and capitalism as foreign to Czech history. Though Jews were just 2% of the whole population, an estimated 30% - 40% of the total capital invested in Czechoslovakian industry in the 1930s was Jewish owned. Since they had been forced to abandon their homes on deportation or exile, and since they owned factories in far greater numbers, they were inherently more vulnerable to dispossession and forced nationalisation.

But sometimes Jews were not trusted in the post-War era because they were prominent in the leadership of the Communist Party. And, where they had learned Czech, or 'czechified' their names, as advised by the army, they stood accused of opportunism.

The Masaryk/Benes governments were perhaps not free of antisemitism either. While the Czech Government in Exile in London had a predominantly Jewish staff, since 70-80% of Czech emigrants in the UK were Jewish, Jan Masaryk's prestigious Foreign Office had few Jews, and Benes' Cabinet Office none, not even amongst the clerical staff. A typical response to the large number of Jews in the industrial ministry was to describe it as a 'den of Jews'. The Minister reacted to that taunt by demoting a Jew from a top position and replacing him with a much less competent man, so nobody could charge him with allowing Jews to run the show.

German speaking Jews were over-represented in the Czech army, even after Dunkirk, when half the Czech Army was Jewish. They were harassed for speaking German and also faced considerable antisemitism. The position taken both in relation to the army, but even more strongly in the political parties, both Communist and Social Democrat, was that Jews weren't 'real' refugees. Since they were at risk of their lives, while the political and the military had chosen to leave Czechoslovakia for their beliefs, Jews' loyalty to the Czech State was suspect.

This type of argument was heard most strongly from Communists, partly reflecting the Soviet line and partly pandering to a popular sentiment. But political expediency was also an issue in Jaksch's takeover of the German Social Democratic Party of Czechoslovakia from Ludwig Czech in the 1930s. This was abetted by Benes on the grounds that Jews were not well placed to confront the Nazi Sudeten Germans.

Beyond that, the fate of Jewish survivors in the rest of Czechoslovakia shows that antisemitism remained potent. Certainly the Slovaks collaborated readily with Nazi extermination policies; and Jews in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia were even more trapped by the retrospective use of 1930 census registration than the German speaking Bohemian and Moravian Jews. In the 1930 census, the majority of the Ruthenian Jews had classed themselves as Jews or Hungarian – which they were fully entitled to do. As a result they were denied any right to move to Czechoslovakia in 1945 when their home area was ceded to the Ukraine. Those who sought to cross into Slovakia were classed as 'Jewish scum' by Kopecky the Communist Minister of the Interior, anticipating, of course the flowering of antisemitism in the show trials of the 1950s, when 11 out of 13 of the main accused were Jewish Communists.

The anti-German sentiment was not only a desire for revenge for the wartime deprivation, but also what would now be seen as post-colonial reprisal, for all the years of German ascendancy under the Hapsburgs. There was also a desire to push out all evidence and memories of Czech collaboration with the Nazis – and the surviving German Jews personified that history.

The simplest of the different narratives concerning the native German-speaking Jews of Bohemia and Moravia in the post-War period is that of enduring antisemitism. Antisemitism was hardly confined to the Reich- or Sudeten Germans, or to the peasant Slovaks and Ukrainians, or even to the Czech masses, but it infected Czech, British, Canadian and US officials, and, of course, Soviet policy. It might be viewed as the obverse of the vaunted Zionism of Masaryk and Benes. Tomas Masaryk who famously supported Hilsner against allegations of blood-libel, also 'saw Jews as alien, and assimilation as impossible, laughable'.

Without denying that Jews could/can be despised just for being Jews, whether they are rich and cultured, or poor, German, Czech, Slovak, or English speaking, this remains an incomplete explanation. It ignores the divisions between the Jews themselves. Czech nationalist Jews had opposed the post-Munich flood of German Jews out of the occupied territories into the Bohemian centre, as Germanising, while German Jews had feared the immigration of Eastern Jews into the Crown Lands. Moreover it feeds into the nationalist, or even neo-Nazi rhetoric of the Sudeten German organisations in Germany. If antisemitism is general, and Germans were also put into Terezin, made to march carrying all their belongings and trundled for days in cattle trucks, why single out the German Nazis for opprobrium? Post-War German apologists grotesquely merge Jewish and German identities in their statistics of Sudeten suffering, and include Jews in their accounts of what happened to the mass of Sudeten Germans after the War. According to his nephew, a German-speaking Czechoslovak Jew who died in May 1945 featured in



Synagogue in Prague – an indication of the pre-War thriving Jewish community

Irene Bruegel's father, who came from an Austro-Marxist background, worked in the Czech Government in Exile in London and was subsequently an historian of Czech German relations. This article is based on her parents' memoirs and on documentation of the post-Holocaust history in Central Europe. Her uncle became an Israeli diplomat/emissary in post-War Germany and in 1960s Prague. The fuller paper with references is available from joza@jozabruegel.com

three separate counts of the victims of the war: once as a Jew, recorded on the walls of the Piska Synagogue in Prague; secondly as a Czech victim of German atrocities; and lastly – and more accurately – as a German victim of the Czech vengeance in the 'wild' period of May-July 1945. Neither the charge of universal antisemitism nor of German particularism suffice as explanations of such a fate.

A second narrative sees the 'transfer' of Jews alongside other German speakers as *realpolitik*: a reflection of the impossibility of any multi-ethnic state, where loyalties are divided, particularly where regions are individually quite mixed and economies interwoven. In this, the German speaking Jews were just the unfortunate double-victims of anger at Prussian and Austrian occupiers and suppressers of Czech nationhood. With the depression of the 1930s, which hit the Sudeten area hard, and the behaviour of the 'Great Powers' from the late 1930s to the 1950s, the ideals of a multi-ethnic state expressed by Masaryk and, initially at least, by Benes could not hope to hold.

The third narrative places the particular history of what happened to the German Jews in post-War Czechoslovakia as resulting from German antisemitism, anti-Slav sentiments and the development of Israel as a national home. The Czechs learnt the mechanisms of repression and deportation from the Germans – albeit without extermination, and with the hope that Israel might provide an alternative home for Jews displaced from the new Slav nation state. Antisemitism was carried through, rather than reversed, because the Czechs had largely accommodated themselves to the German occupation and needed to expel Jews as the surviving witnesses to that complicity. Complicity was far from total, and there were as many tales told of brave Czech support of Jews as tales of Jewish victims of Czech anger and frustration. But the distorted mirroring of victim and perpetrator, which has carried on beyond those boundaries down the years, rendered post-War Bohemia and Moravia emptier of Jews and Jewish culture than the Nazis alone had achieved.

THOROUGHLY MODERN GENOCIDE

Attempts to explain the Nazi genocide remain the subject of heated debate from several opposing perspectives. **GARY FRASER** believes that Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of modernity, combined with Foucault's analysis of discourse applied to science, offer a basis for understanding what happened then as well as its continuing legacy.

The belief that society was in a process of continual progress dominated the ideas of the European Enlightenment. From this perspective history was understood as linear and in the final analysis progressive. This line of thought strongly influenced the dominant philosophies of the period including early Marxism. The arrival of the First World War challenged the idea that society evolved along a progressive route. The Second World War and the Holocaust should have killed it off altogether. However, ideas have a tendency to persist in the face of contradictory evidence. If European society was developing from barbarity to civilisation, then how do we explain the Holocaust? Traditional historians have answered the question by locating the Holocaust as a deviation, albeit a major one, from European history's hitherto progressive route.

The historical, cultural, political and economic context which constitutes the European Enlightenment can be identified as modernity. Capitalism and socialism, the development of science, and the decline of religion as a ruling force in Europe are all part of modernity.

The Holocaust has been characterised in conventional historical terms as being the bastard offspring of modernity, utterly contrary to a society based on reason, science and rationality. The Nazis were seen as a throwback to a more primitive form of society and humanity; and the Holocaust an

emotion-driven response of an entire nation who, under the spell of a charismatic helmsman, had committed the act of genocide. If only reason and rationality had prevailed.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSES

The triumph of science over religion, of reason and rationality over superstition and mysticism is a key factor determining the era of modernity. Scientific conquest has opened up new frontiers and extended the consciousness of what it means to be human. Scientists are the real revolutionaries in any society. The accomplishments of science are beyond doubt but, looked at dialectically, the discourse of science has not only challenged old prejudices and practices but has actively replaced them and created new ones.

Scientific discourses do not exist independent of politics and ideology. For Foucault, the point of analysing discourses is not to pronounce on what forms of knowledge are true or false but to study how certain discourses become authoritative. Social scientists often draw upon the language and practices of the natural sciences to illuminate their theories. Engels proudly proclaimed that Marx and Darwin were the two most important 19th century thinkers, since Darwin had discovered the universal laws that govern nature, and Marx had discovered similar laws that govern history and economics. Early followers of Marxism regarded it as superior

to other forms of socialism on the premise that the Marxist version of socialism was scientific.

Right wing ideologies also immersed themselves within the cloak of science. The language and imagery of Darwinism was borrowed to explain capitalist social relations as inherently natural. Moreover, Social Darwinism evolved into Scientific Racism and the Eugenics movement, both of them powerful discourses informing far right ideologies across much of Europe.

The language and imagery of science has often been used as a weapon in the oppression of particular groups. The advent of modern scientific discourses coincided with vicious witch-hunts across much of Europe. The new discourses of science informed by a strict positivism began the process of constructing the modern form of 'reason'. 'Witches' were among the first casualties in the new rationalism's persecution of the 'irrational'. In later centuries the 'homosexual', the 'madman', the 'criminally insane' and the 'vagabond' would join the list. The term 'homosexual' was created by medical men who used it as a reference to a pathologically deviant form of sexuality. The 'madman's' departure from 'rationality' would justify being locked away and institutionalised. All of these categories were persecuted by a rationalism which paraded itself as scientific. Included in this list is the construct of the 'Jew'.

JEW AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

The Holocaust scholar, Raul Hilberg discusses three versions of antisemitism – religious, economic and scientific. Religious antisemitism begins with Christianity's ghettoisation of the Jews. In medieval Christian doctrine Jews were responsible for the death of Christ. When armies of the First Crusade set out to rescue the holy places of Christianity from Arab conquerors, they slaughtered thousands of Jews along the way. With the arrival of the Enlightenment and the move towards a more secularised Europe, antisemitism takes on new forms. At the dawn of the new bourgeois era the Jews are persecuted for economic reasons. In literature the stereotypical Jew is always a moneylender. The final stage in the history of antisemitism is scientific. The discourse of science now takes centre stage in the persecution of Jews. Identified as an inferior race, the Jewish people are discussed as a disease threatening to engulf civilised society.

Taking the three strands of historical antisemitism together, Hilberg concludes that the 'Nazis did not discard the past they built on it'. The language of modern racism is intrinsically interwoven with the vocabulary of science. The metaphors of modern medicine are used to illuminate racist discourses. The discourse of modern medicine has created a dualism between the 'healthy' and the 'disease ridden' body. Bauman notes that the purpose of medicine is to separate useful elements destined to live and thrive, from harmful and morbid ones, which ought to be exterminated. Consequently, a central theme of modern medicine is its model of health and normality coupled with a strategy of separation and the technique of surgery. Early schools of functionalist sociology compared society to the human body, and drew upon this dualism created by modern medicine. Bauman concludes that it is

difficult to think of genocide without the entrenched metaphors of modern medicine. He argues that the exterminatory version of antisemitism was a thoroughly modern phenomenon.

The speeches of leading Nazis, such as Hitler or Goebbels, confirm the relation between antisemitism and pathology: the Jews are consistently portrayed as a disease or compared to vermin. The healthy body, in this case the German nation, is under attack from an inside invader. The Jew according to Nazi ideology is a cancerous growth on society, requiring elimination.

The Nazi regime, far from being backward or primitive, prided itself on its scientific demeanour. German universities, like their European counterparts were committed to the scientific method of positivism. Strict positivists, regard science as a value free activity whereby reason is emancipated from emotion. Taken to its extreme, strict positivism leads to Doctor Mengele's laboratory in Auschwitz where he carried out brutal experiments: placing subjects in pressure chambers, testing drugs on them and in some cases freezing people to death. He performed many unnecessary amputations and even attempted to change eye colour by injecting chemicals into children's eyes. Mengele's eagerness to understand genetics knew no limits. Children were killed in order to study their corpses. He was particularly interested in twins, which he killed at exactly the same time as a way of expanding genetic knowledge which he hoped would scientifically verify Nazi racist doctrines. Mengele regarded his research as unique, for only in a Nazi death camp would you be able to conduct an experiment that involved killing twins at exactly the same time.

The Nazis were early converts to Scientific Racism and Eugenics. 'Eugenics' asserted that society should discourage breeding by those of its members who were unfit physically, mentally and socially. When the Nazis passed the Nuremberg Laws shortly after coming to power, they outlawed Jews from having relations with non-Jews. These laws and the beginning of a state-sponsored persecution of an entire people were drafted by university-educated experts who regarded themselves as scientific and demonstrating reason and rationality. The concept of the Holocaust, as Bauman notes, was born and executed in our own rational society, at the high point of our civilisation and at the peak of human cultural achievement.

MURDERED BY BUREAUCRACY

The nation state with its vast bureaucratic apparatuses is an essential feature of modernity. It is perhaps impossible to truly understand the Holocaust without an insight into the role played by bureaucracy and bureaucrats. Primitive human emotions like rage and fury, resentment and hatred are ineffective in carrying out a killing programme on the scale of the Holocaust. The emotion-led lynch mob will tire before the genocide is complete. The manic obsessions of Hitler and leading Nazis, although crucial, are not the determining factor in the completion of mass murder. Only a modern nation state with a vast bureaucracy can commit murder on such a scale.

By highlighting the role of bureaucracy we gain an insight into the psychology of those responsible



Anti-Nazi demonstrators
in Frankfurt, 1932

for the implementation of the Final Solution. Bauman notes that racism is a policy first and ideology second. Like all forms of politics, racism requires organisation and structure, securing employment for a layer of managers and experts. In his landmark study, *Ordinary Men*, Christopher Browning discusses the ways in which modern bureaucratic methods are pivotal in the organisation of an event like genocide:

'Modern bureaucratic life fosters a functional and physical distancing in the same way that war and racial stereotyping promote a psychological distancing between perpetrator and victim.'

Bureaucratic culture creates docile servants capable of implementing directives from above. In his memoirs Albert Speer, who was Germany's armaments minister during the war, wrote:

'Dictatorships of the past needed assistants of high quality in the lower ranks of the leadership, men who could think and act independently. The authoritarian system in the age of technology can do without such men. The means of communication enable it to mechanise the work of the lower leadership. Thus the type of uncritical receiver of orders is created.'

Applying the logic of reason and rationality, dividing the world into inputs and outputs and equipped with a conception of society as an administrative empire to be controlled, the bureaucrat is a far more competent killer than the emotion-led lynch mob. Bureaucrats become dehumanised and are capable of being involved in the killing process without the psychological burden of killing. As Hilberg states:

'Most of the participants of genocide did not fire rifles at Jewish children or pour gas into gas chambers...most bureaucrats composed memoranda, drew up blue prints, talked on the telephone and participated in conferences. They could

destroy a whole people by sitting at their desks.'

One way in which bureaucracy dehumanises is through language. The subject is only ever expressed in purely, technical and ethically neutral terms. This neutrality performs a normalising function in the implementation of genocide. In her study of the Eichman trial, Hannah Arendt notes that the mass extermination of European Jewry is never referred to as 'killing', or 'murder'. Instead we find terms like the 'Final Solution'. The deportation of the Jews from the Ghettos to the killing centres of Auschwitz and Treblinka are known as 'resettlement programmes' or 'evacuations'. In official memoranda the Jews receive 'special treatment', never are they 'gassed'.

INDUSTRIALISTS AND NAZIS

The unique and striking feature of the Holocaust was the way in which it was industrialised. According to Bauman: 'Auschwitz was a mundane extension of the modern factory system. Rather than producing goods, the raw material was human beings and the end product was death, so many units per day marked carefully on the manager's production charts. The chimneys the very symbol of the modern factory system, poured forth acrid smoke produced by burning human flesh.'

The industrialisation of the killing process created a physical distancing between perpetrator and victim and the killing could be carried out on an economically efficient mass scale.

Industrialists in Germany were keen supporters of the Nazis. By eliminating the corrupt elite of the former Weimar Republic, Hitler and the Nazis rescued German capitalism. For the industrialists, Nazism was a price worth paying if it meant the elimination of the Communist threat. Leon Trotsky argued that by expropriating the bourgeoisie politically, Hitler had managed to save it economically. In destroying the trade union movement, Hitler made Germany safe and secure for capitalism.

German industry benefited enormously from the Holocaust. In the early days of the Third Reich, German companies colluded with the Nazi state in the forced purchase of Jewish businesses. Unlike Oscar Schindler, portrayed in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, most German businessmen were completely unheroic and were motivated by blatant opportunism and greed. German 'entrepreneurs' received their share in the spoils of the war and were eager participants in the massive plunder of the companies of Nazi-occupied Europe. German multinationals benefited from the Nazis persecution of Jewish, Soviet, Polish and Slav prisoners of war. German car companies such as BMW and Volkswagen employed slave labour and have only recently paid compensation for the crimes they committed during the Nazi era. IG Farben profited from the slave labour of Auschwitz prisoners, and its subsidiaries were involved in the production and development of Zyklon B gas.

THE ROLE OF ANTISEMITISM

Two questions emerge when trying to understand the role of antisemitism in the Holocaust. To what extent was antisemitism a key factor in the popular consciousness of ordinary Germans? And how big a role did antisemitism play in support for Hitler and the Nazi regime? Scholars have been divided into

two camps: 'Intentionalists' and 'Functionalists'. The first camp, a view promoted by Zionists and successive Israeli governments, insists that the Holocaust was conceived the moment the Nazis took power and implies that the extermination of the Jews was the prime factor in Nazi ideology since the party was formed in the early 1920s. From this perspective, the road to Auschwitz was paved at the dawn of the Third Reich. The 'intentionalists' locate antisemitism as a key factor in popular support for the Nazis during their reign of power.

'Functionalists' talk of a 'twisted road' that leads to genocide. They give attention to forces both inside and outside Germany rather than portraying the Holocaust as a uniquely German experience. There were many among the armies, police forces and administrative departments of occupied nations who collaborated keenly with the Nazis. Research has challenged the claim that militant antisemitism was widespread in Hitler's Germany. Bauman says: 'There is a growing consensus among historians of the Nazi era that the perpetration of the Holocaust required the neutralisation of ordinary German attitudes towards the Jews not their mobilisation.'

This is a challenging but pivotal point. The annihilation of Jews was carried out by the institutional apparatuses of a modern state and not by a fanatical population. The only major attempt by the Nazis to galvanise popular antisemitism was in the events of Kristallnacht. This was a pogrom that consisted of the destruction of Jewish businesses and an attempt to terrorise the Jewish population. Browning records that the event produced a negative response among many Germans. Kristallnacht was carried out by the old guard, the Brownshirts (SA), and lumpen elements in the Nazi Party. Most Germans played the role of bystanders. Bauman believes the sight of murder and destruction put off as many as it inspired. Leading Nazis despised the primitive antisemitism of the SA and the old guard, which they regarded as backward. Hitler thought that his version of antisemitism was modern and based on reason and logic.

In one of his first writings on the 'Jewish Question' back in 1919, Hitler distinguished antisemitism of 'emotion' from the modern antisemitism of 'reason' and 'science'. The former, Hitler argued, would only give rise to temporary eruptions or pogroms whilst the latter would herald a series of legal measures aimed at the eventual elimination of the Jews. The thoroughly modern version of antisemitism dominated life in the Third Reich. It meant that the 'Jewish Question' was one for functionaries and experts of the state and not really a major concern for the German community. Modern persecution of the Jews required the distancing of violence from the populace. Subsequently antisemitism in Germany was passive rather than active. Bauman comments: 'most people probably thought little and asked less about what was happening to the Jews... the road to Auschwitz was built by hate, but paved with indifference.'

SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Attempts to understand the Holocaust in terms of individual psychology have proved futile and ultimately reactionary. Initial studies of the Nazi genocide interpreted it as an outrage committed by born criminals, sadists, madmen or otherwise

morally deficient individuals. According to established orthodoxy, the perpetrators were thoroughly wicked and incorrigible. Such accounts, which have dominated popular consciousness, do not stand up to close scrutiny. When probed deeper the experiences of the Third Reich are far more disturbing. Psychologists interviewing members of the SS after the war concluded that fewer than 10% could be described as 'abnormal':

Their cruelty was social in origin rather than a product of individual psychology. A sociological approach to the Holocaust reveals the extent of the crimes that individuals were prepared to commit within an authoritarian command system. It is within these command systems such as the army, the police force or the bureaucratic departments of a modern nation state, that individual morality is moulded and shaped.

Modernity gave birth to a new rationalism whose highest achievements were scientific endeavour and the extension of democracy. In the process, the overall framework of modernity challenged religion and the delusions which constitute most religious ideas. Despite its achievements, though, modernity possessed a dark underbelly and has proved as brutal and oppressive as any previous epoch. Modernity provided new victims to persecute and modern subjects to oppress. The towering achievement of modernity's underbelly was the Holocaust. The features of modernity discussed here remain the organising themes by which our society is governed. We have not made a qualitative break with modernity.

The Holocaust helps us to better understand the human condition. It illuminates what we as a species are capable of. One of Marx's favourite aphorisms was 'nothing human is alien to me'. Using this as a starting point we can begin to understand the actions of 'educated' and 'rational' people who participated in humanity's worst crime.

For Marxists wishing to transform society we have to understand the ways in which hierarchal regimes reproduce themselves in each of their citizens. Consciousness is produced and reproduced in our lived realities. That is why hierarchal command systems, which are a dominating feature of the modern state, need to be analysed and understood. Only when we understand how such regimes are reproduced within the psychic structures of the individual will we be truly in a position to supersede them with a new mode of organisation. Perhaps one of the main lessons of the Holocaust and the experiences of the Third Reich in general, in the words of an unknown Holocaust survivor, is that we should fear the person who obeys the law more than the one who breaks it.

FURTHER READING

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Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland by C Browning (Penguin, 1992)

Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945 by Raoul Hilberg (Harper Collins, 1992)

Inside the Third Reich by Albert Speer (1970)

FEIGENBAUM'S FOLLIES

From Fingal's Cave to Abkhazia and Tuvalu to the Stock Exchange, **CHARLIE POTTINS** delves into a global trade

Imagine the perfect profitable post-modern product ... Ephemeral and completely useless – a mere representation of something real – but deeply addictive, leaving its consumers, who neither know nor care about its actual nature, avid for repeat acquisitions. Ridiculously cheap to produce, it commands huge profits, with a multi-million dollar turnover way beyond its material value or cultural significance.

J M Chute, *Illegal stamps: Philately's rough trade*

Among the boys on the back row in cheder, one particular heavy tome was handled with care and studied with reverence. Our guide to the perplexed, authority on values, source of erudition, and orthodoxy – the Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue.

If some gaudy label with perforated edge but dubious authenticity was proffered for admiration or swapping, the words, 'It's not in the catalogue,' were enough to banish the imposter.

In those days of innocence, even if we understood that stamp dealing was a business, who could foresee that trading in Stanley Gibbons shares would be suspended within minutes of their flotation on the London stock exchange? Or that the Gibbons chairman who had to resign would be a pillar of the Jewish Board of Deputies?

In August 1983, Clive Feigenbaum, a Gibbons 'consultant', became chairman on a £45,000 salary. Then on the eve of shares being floated the Sunday Times ran an article about his previous business affairs. Feigenbaum resigned as chair, and sold his £4 million controlling shares.

Four years later, Feigenbaum re-emerged as a major shareholder in Gibbons, while Feigenbaum family members acquired a controlling interest in Format Security Printers. Stamp collectors will remember the British Commonwealth stamps (such as the 1952 Coronation stamps, from Antigua to Windward Islands, identical except for the name, issued by the Crown Agents. With privatisation, the Crown Agents' stamp department became Caphco, sharing business with the Philatelic Distribution



Corporation (PDC) - owned by Clive Feigenbaum. Many printing contracts, previously a specialty of Waterlow and Sons, now went to Format Security Printers. In 1989 police raided

warehouses in Hampshire and the East End of London, taking away stamps and documents. The governments of Gibraltar and Tuvalu in the Pacific (former Ellice Islands) discovered that Format had printed far more stamps than they ordered. Printing stamps for collectors rather than mail was nothing new. We remember the stamps from Monaco, far too large and awkwardly shaped to stick on a postcard; or the many stamps from places like Tanu Tuva, which few people, apart from stamp collectors, had heard of. For many countries stamps became a means of raising revenue, as well as their commercial and patriotic profile.

From 'saving stamps' as children, many collectors turned to specialising in countries or themes – stamps depicting flags, or flowers, or famous people. For thematic collectors stamp production expanded, with 'topical' subjects sometimes quite unconnected to the country ostensibly issuing them. When a set of stamps commemorating Britain's Royal Wedding was issued in the name of North Korea, clearly a new age of surreal co-existence had arrived!

With printers and stamp dealers collaborating, even owned by the same people, it became possible to bypass the countries and sell pretty pieces of paper directly to the philatelist.

That wasn't all. Stamp collectors look out for errors and imperfections. If the watermark, let alone the monarch's head, was inverted, you could expect the authorities to withdraw and destroy a sheet of stamps. Any which escape acquire curiosity and rarity value. In 1918, the US post office issued a 24 cent airmail stamp showing a Curtis Jenny biplane. A collector bought a sheet of 100 in Washington and found that the biplane was apparently flying upside down. These were the only inverted ones discovered. A US stamp catalogue lists the 24 cent stamp as \$109, but if you find one with the inverted Jenny, if genuine, it is 'worth' £150,000.

The police took 7 million stamps, from 28 countries, from Clive Feigenbaum's warehouse near Southampton. Some 1.5 million were reported to have missing colours, misperforations, inverted watermarks or other imperfections and errors. The Tuvalu government had wondered how so many flawed Tuvalu stamps were advertised for philatelists. They decided to terminate their contract with PDC, and obtained an injunction restraining Format from printing any more of their stamps. But on 18th April 1988, it seems a PDC employee gave Format an order for more Tuvalu stamps – 21,000 sets unflawed, and 14,000 sets flawed.

In July 1989 Clive Feigenbaum, chairman and managing director of PDC, was found guilty of breaching the Tuvalu court order and committed to prison for three months. Two of his partners received suspended sentences. Feigenbaum

appealed, and on 20th October 1989 the judge in the Court of Appeal, taking into account his 'good record and character' quashed the prison sentence.

But on 27th April 1992 Clive Feigenbaum and seven others appeared at Southwark Crown Court, charged with fraud and conspiracy. The prosecution alleged stamps with deliberate errors had been sold to collectors who thought they were purchasing rarities. 'It was an Alice in Wonderland situation that security printers who were supposed to be checking stamps were being employed and paid to make sure errors occurred,' said chief prosecutor Michael Worsley QC. 'Right at the centre of the group of related people and companies was Mr Feigenbaum in a position of trust. Wherever you look you find him – something more than a coincidence.'

Seventy-year old William Peeling, a craftsman, pleaded guilty, then gave evidence for the prosecution. He said flawed stamps or 'deliberate varieties' were ordered for philatelic companies. Aart Lagerwaard, former managing director of PDC, claimed he had warned the Tuvalu government about deliberate errors and varieties being produced. He said that proofs of a St Vincent locomotives set had been sold to the public at high prices because 'only 250 were printed'. Some 3,000 were sold.

Lagerwaard and other defendants were found not guilty. William Peeling was allowed to reverse his previous guilty plea and discharged. The men were awarded costs, and Judge Cotran said they should not feel the prosecution had blotted their character. This left Clive Feigenbaum accused of fraudulent trading in stamps with deliberate imperfections. Feigenbaum told the court that he had simply provided stamps and 'varieties' for collectors. He argued that the famous American stamp with the aeroplane upside down would have been worth the same whether or not the error was deliberate, 'either way, it frankly does not matter. It would make exactly the same price.' Feigenbaum claimed that if errors and varieties had been advertised as genuine rare errors, it was without his knowledge. His contracts with certain Commonwealth countries were open, and allowed reprints and varieties. After four hours of deliberation, the jury found Clive Feigenbaum not guilty. Feigenbaum thanked the jury, and Judge Cotran thanked Feigenbaum for his patience.

IN GOLD WE TRUST

As kids we were intrigued by those German issues with denominations like 10 thousand marks overprinted with 10 million. A teacher told us about the 1923 inflation, the man who left a wheelbarrow full of paper money outside while he queued for something, and found someone had dumped the worthless money and run off with his wheelbarrow. Citizens saw their work and savings become worthless. By 1st July 1923 the mark had fallen to 160,000 to the dollar; by 20th November 1923 it was down to 4.2 trillion to the dollar. People turned to barter. Food riots broke out. There was an abortive communist revolution. The Nazi party began its rise. From dumping millions of marks, the downward path began to destroying millions of human beings. In the death camps, the Deutsche Bank salvaged victims' gold teeth.

In 1944, delegates from 45 countries met at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, to discuss post-War recovery in Europe, and how to avoid a return to the crises of inflation and slump. The Bretton Woods Agreement set up the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). To achieve stability, exchange rates for other currencies would be set against the US dollar, and the dollar would be backed by gold, stored in Fort Knox. One fine ounce of gold to 35 US dollars.

The 'mighty dollar' dominated world trade. Until 1971, when the United States economy underwent a hammering, like its armed forces in Vietnam. The war was costing \$9 billion a month. Before surviving the May-June 1968 events, Charles De Gaulle had demanded to know what all these paper dollars were worth, which had been loaned to boost US exports and used to buy out European industries. The international system should have 'an unquestionable monetary basis that does not bear the stamp of any one country', De Gaulle said. 'Yes, gold, whose nature does not alter, which may be formed equally well into ingots, bars, or coins, which has no nationality, which has, externally and universally, been regarded as the unalterable currency.' The Bank of France had been hoarding gold.

British pundits ridiculed the General's old fashioned fancy for shiny metal, but the pound was devalued by 14% in November 1967, and its plight worsened as City speculators bought gold, and changed dollars into Deutschmarks and Francs. By 1970, the United States had lost 20% of its gold reserve, and its economy was in recession. President Nixon tried lowering interest rates to revive the economy before the 1972 election. This only encouraged the flight of funds. By August 1971 US gold reserves were half what they had been in 1958. Fort Knox had only a quarter of the bullion it would need if foreign banks wanted to change their dollars to gold. On 15th August 1971, Nixon announced that the US Federal Reserve would no longer redeem dollars with gold. Bretton Woods was dead. Without the golden yardstick, embodying real labour, who could say what anything is really 'worth'? Welcome to the age of post-Modernism.

Oil-producing states, seeing their dollars purchasing less of inflation-priced imports, resolved to redress matters. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war and oil embargo only accelerated the crisis. Without cheap energy and petrochemicals on which it had thrived, the West now experienced 'stagflation', inflation and recession combined.

People with money looked for ways of saving that were less risky than shares or banks, perhaps even more fun. They started buying real estate, gold kruggerands, works of art, antiques, jewellery, old coins, 'limited-edition' tat and, of course, stamps. Anything that they were told would retain and increase value. Thoughtful entrepreneurs appeared on the scene to help nervous new investors and collectors spend their dosh.



Monica and Bill – very collectable

It's doubtful whether Pamela Anderson ever visited Birobidzhan or if the locals would ever use these Jewish Republic postage stamps

ALL THAT GLITTERS...

In 1974 '23 carat gold stamps' issued for the island of Staffa, 'heirlooms the moment they are made', appeared on the US stamp market. Staffa is a hunk of basalt in the inner Hebrides. A visit to its Fingal's Cave inspired Felix Mendelsohn's Hebridean Overture. The inhabitants of Staffa don't have much use for gold or postage stamps, being puffins and visiting seals. But the isle inspired Clive Feigenbaum and his artist to produce a set of gold-leaf stamps on the theme of Nations of the World.

In 1976 the US postal service brought a case of 'false representation' against Calhoun's Collectors' Society Inc of Minneapolis over Staffa stamps sold by mail order to US collectors. Estimated by the US authorities to have a gold value of little over 5 cents each, the stamps had been selling at \$20 dollars each or \$460 a set. Accepting they were legitimate 'private local issue stamps', Judge Rudolf Sobernheim rejected claims to their 'official' status, rarity, or 'guaranteed' investment potential. Calhouns cited Gerald Rosen's Catalogue of British Stamps, 1969, 1975 and 1976 editions. Gerald Rosen & Son has since become part of Clive Feigenbaum's company Stampdile Ltd. Dismissing the claim that the Staffa items were 'both a philatelic treasure and a limited edition art object', the judge found against Calhouns.

Staffa stamps have continued being sold on eBay. A website, 'Gold Stamps', offering them for sale claims their authenticity as 'local stamps'. 'The Laird of Staffa has established a Postal Service that operates daily from April to September. Mail is picked up and carried by a boatman to British Post Offices on Mull and Iona, where it is re-mailed with regular British postage added'. This makes the 'stamps' similar, if more expensive, to those sold as souvenirs to trippers on Lundy island. 'Laird' is a Scots word for landowner, not a title of authority.

Though Staffa's owner authorised him to produce these stamps, Feigenbaum gave himself permission to produce stamps for another Hebridean island, Easdale, where he is the landlord. However, Easdale is inhabited, and residents objected: 'No resident of Easdale Island, nor of the surrounding area is, to the best of our knowledge, involved with the production of these stamps...These stamps cannot be used as a postage stamp, as Easdale Island is part of the United Kingdom. Therefore our postal service is provided by The Royal Mail.'

'The stamps are produced by Stampdile, a company run by Feigenbaum from a Harrow PO Box, near his home. He also runs the Easdale Island Company Limited from the same box.' (Stamps are easily licked by Tony Levene, The Guardian, 15th June 2002).

Flattery may get you nowhere, but philately can take an imaginative child or a creative businessman

from the Hebrides to the South Pacific, like a Robert Louis Stevenson adventure. Aspects of the business

bring to mind a modern writer. In Eric Ambler's Dirty Story (1967), after surviving scrapes with officialdom, police and mercenaries hired by a mining company, hapless hero Arthur Simpson creates a new career for himself. The pre-War Nansen passport is no more, he reasons, but so many new countries with new names have emerged, immigration officers can't keep track. Why not invent a sovereign state that, for a reasonable price, will provide stateless persons like himself with passports.

Replace passports with stamps, add former Soviet regions to former African colonies, and you're in business. The Universal Postal Union, a specialist UN agency, lists 15 ex-Soviet republics that issue their own postage stamps. But 'stamps' purporting to be from another 42 territories appear in stamp dealers' catalogues, and on the website of the Belarussian International Stamp Co. These include stamps inscribed 'Jewish Republic'. If the Jewish autonomous region of Birobidzhan has issued them, it is odd they are inscribed in English, rather than the official languages, Yiddish and Russian. Their featured topics, like the Spice Girls and Oasis, have little connection with Jewish culture, or Birobidzhan. But that's not as incongruous as the Marilyn Monroe stamps supposedly issued by Afghanistan during Taliban rule!

Perhaps 'Jewish Republic' stamps have sentimental appeal. But Clive Feigenbaum is no narrow nationalist. In late 1998 Stampdile was a distributor of a sheet of stamps featuring a cartoon of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, issued in the name of the ex-Soviet territory of Abkhazia, where separatists resisted rule by Georgia. The Georgian government protested the stamps were illegal, but not even the laws of taste prevented their sale around the world. Georgia apologised to the Clintons and offered them a free Black Sea holiday. I don't know what they said to Monica.

The man who drew the Staffa stamps, A Ryman, also designed stamps for Nagaland, a rebel area in north-east India, under a deal between Naga campaigner A Z Phizo and Clive Feigenbaum. Stamps for 'Somaliland' (a breakaway region of Somalia taking its name from the former British colony) and Angola (ie the Unita rebels) have also appeared. Most remarkably, stamps apparently linked Feigenbaum, a leading member of the right-wing Zionist Likud in Britain, with Syria, and left-wing guerrillas in Arabia! Such illusions only take shape in the parallel universe of creative philately.

THE STORY DHOFAR

In 1966 the Imam of Oman, opposing the rule of Sultan Youssef Salim, sent a mission to Lebanon to form a government-in-exile. Tadoros, the Imam's 'postal counsellor' was to issue stamps. A rebellion broke out in Oman's Dhofar province in 1971, led by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf (PFLOAG), which had no time for imams or sultans. The PFLOAG established liberated areas, with literacy classes, medical care, and women's organisations. After five years it was suppressed by the Sultan with help from the Shah of Iran's forces and the British SAS.

But while the Dhofar insurgency was in the news, agent Tadoros tried marketing his stamps as

though they came from the liberated areas. When the Sultanate joined the Arab League and the Arab Postal Union, other countries would not accept the Imam's stamps, but Syria did for some reason in 1972, so Tadoros stayed in business. Sets of Dhofar stamps had been ordered from Clive Feigenbaum's company, and a 'Dhofar Philatelic Agency' was set up in London. Some stamps were sent back to the Middle East to get postmarked. Syria stopped co-operating, but Clive Feigenbaum carried on turning out the stamps until 1986. It's doubtful if people in Dhofar ever saw these stamps, let alone made any money from them.

Stampdile is only one company in this trade. Conquest Trading Corporation, based in Vilnius, Lithuania, but registered in the Bahamas, where accountancy laws are fairly relaxed, supplies several dealers with stamps and what its owner Karolis Malinauskas is careful to call 'perforated labels' when journalists suggest they are 'illegal' issues.

END OF PHILATELY AS WE KNEW IT

On 4th April 2001, Stampdile and two of its directors, Clive Feigenbaum and his son Jonathan, were fined £5,000 plus costs at Harrow Magistrates Court for supplying 'Star Wars' and 'Teletubbies' stamps which breached trade mark legislation. Feigenbaum blamed the publishers. The Crown Court overturned the decision on appeal, accepting the printer was to blame, and Stampdile was an innocent distributor.

Teletubbies, Spice Girls, Elvis and Marilyn. Gone are the days when poor but proud nations not only earned revenue from issuing stamps, but used them to educate people about their history, natural products and culture. Call it cultural imperialism or dumping down. The topics would not matter much to people who bought stamps as investments. Many just left their sheets of stamps in safes and bank vaults, as others did their jewellery and oil paintings. But those days, too, may have gone.

In November last year Stanley Gibbons launched a rare stamps investment fund, registered in Bermuda. Investors trust Stanley Gibbons to value their stamps, keep them safe and insure them. Stanley Gibbons said research over 50 years showed rare stamps rose each year by nearly 10%, more reliably than shares. Experts queried the 15% management fee, 20% performance fee and lack of regulation.

Stanley Gibbons recorded 2,500 new customers in 2004. Many people were under the impression that stamps, along with fine wines and property, would qualify for tax relief under the Self-Invested Personal Pension (SIPP) scheme. But Gordon Brown did not include these 'exotic investments' when he launched SIPPs in December. Clive Feigenbaum was most disappointed. Still, investment advisers continue recommending that clients diversify into stamps, and collecting a commission from dealers.

'Stamps set to lick inflation,' enthused a Times article on 8th April 2006 noting that besides dealing in rare stamps from Britain and the Commonwealth, Stanley Gibbons was 'poised to capitalise on the new wealth in Russia and China by extending its range to rare stamps from those nations, as well as increasing its focus on stamps



Suburban exotica. Almost inconspicuous next to its impressive Art Deco neighbour, Clive Feigenbaum's Stampdile shop is centre of a business touching the world's far-flung corners.

from India, ...'. There are many new wealthy collectors in these countries. Valuable stamps are an easy way to transfer wealth. But the writer added: 'While I would be nervous of holding perishable little pieces of paper in the form of rare stamps, I believe that the adequately liquid shares in Stanley Gibbons will lick future inflation...'

Then in May 2006 two Spanish stamp firms collapsed amid claims of pyramid selling, false pricing and fraud. More than 350,000 people, many of them pensioners, had invested their life savings, on the promise of big returns. Fraud detectives raided the offices of Afinsa and Forum Filatelica. Police outside had to stop angry investors ransacking the buildings. Afinsa was linked to a New York firm Escala, registered on Nasdaq, and ranked with Sotheby and Christies. Forum Filatelica sponsored yacht racing and had invested in property. Police, noticing fresh plaster at the mansion of a senior director, discovered £7 million hidden behind a wall. It wasn't in stamps.

It was reported that some stamps had been priced at 100 times their real value, and investors might be lucky to see one tenth of their money back. The firms had put together stamp portfolios which guaranteed annual returns of up to 8% – while promising to repurchase collections at the original price at the end of the deal period. This looked better than bonds or bank accounts. As more investors were sucked in, prices rose, and you got a pyramid scheme which could only be kept going if it kept expanding. To keep buying enough European stamps they could not rely on rare ones, so they made up values, and paid out interest from the money from new customers.

'This can't do any good to the stamp market,' admitted Stanley Gibbons chief executive Mike Hall, though his company assured investors it had no connection with the Spanish firms, and operated quite differently. Stanley Gibbons shares fell 12% on 10th May.

It is unlikely the 'Hobby of Kings' will ever regain its place as 'King of Hobbies' for schoolchildren. So many other things can claim their interest and money, and postage stamps are rapidly losing their importance in communications. It is too soon to write off stamps as an investment, for those who know what they are doing, but others have had some shocks. As for the 'perfect post-modern product', stamps – or 'perforated labels' – produced for no use except sale to the gullible may escape the laws of nations, but not the law of value.



Taking liberties, or claiming freedom? Abkhazia stamps are not for posting.

A PARTIAL VIEW

ANAT PICK
traces the
trajectory of the
UK Jewish Film
Festival

The UK Jewish Film Festival has been expanding in interesting ways since 2004, when it relocated from Brighton to London. As the questions about British Jewish identity and the relationship between Jews worldwide and Israel become more loaded and complex, so has the festival's programme. The diversification of the programme in recent years reflects the organisers' cautious attempt to grapple with the inevitably political implications of a Jewish film festival. Settling the debate around the meaning of 'Jewish cinema' is less important than offering audiences an exciting and challenging showcase of films whose theme is in some way Jewish. The festival this year has done so on several fronts.

The event offers a unique opportunity to see Israeli films, both features and documentaries. Vidi Bilu and Dalia Hagar's *Close to Home/Karov La Bayit* (2006), which was also screened at the London Film Festival, tells the story of a group of female army recruits entrusted with the random ID checks of



Left: *Close to Home/Karov La Bayit*
Far left: *First Lesson in Peace*

Palestinians in Jerusalem. It is a modest film that works its way in quietly and avoids overstatement. The film's final sequence, in

which a Palestinian is set upon by a Jewish crowd, shows an accomplished cinematic eye which is also acutely and irreverently political.

Several Israeli documentaries, such as Danae Elon's *Another Road Home* (2005), Ayelet Bechar's *Just Married* (2005) and Amos Gitai's *House/Bayit* (1980), highlight the fate of Israel's Palestinian inhabitants and profound inequalities between the Jewish and the non-Jewish population in this so-called democratic state. Bechar's film in particular testifies to the absurd situation in which Palestinian citizens of Israel who marry Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza now find themselves. Israel's Citizenship Law, which came into force in 2003, means that those Palestinians residing in the Territories are barred from living inside Israel even if they have married an Israeli citizen. This law is designed to prevent the reunification of Palestinians with their Israeli Arab relatives, and is part of the (frankly hopeless) demographic battle to sustain a Jewish majority in the state of Israel. Less successful is Eran Riklis' *The Syrian Bride* (2004), a well acted, well made but ultimately apolitical film about a wedding of an Israeli Druze bride and a Syrian groom across the fragile border in the occupied Golan Heights.

Paul Smaczny's *Knowledge is the Beginning* (2005), a documentary about conductor Daniel Barenboim's West Eastern Divan Orchestra, and *First Lesson in Peace* by Yoram Honig (2005), offer a less acrid view of Jewish-Arab relations. Both films were followed by a discussion with a panel comprising Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers and activists. This shows the festival's genuine efforts to openly address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Another obvious area for the exploration of

Jewish identity and themes is the Holocaust, and this year's festival included several films on the subject, the most

interesting of which are Paul Verhoeven's much talked about *Black Book/Zwartboek* (2006), and Rex Bloomstein's documentary *KZ* (2005). Verhoeven's film is charmingly flawed. The treatment of the Holocaust with Verhoeven's characteristically 'trashy' touch is – if you like Verhoeven – successful enough. *Black Book* sets out to cross the lines between 'us' and 'them', 'good' and 'evil' through the story of a Dutch Jewish woman who joins the Resistance and finds herself working undercover for the Nazi occupiers. The film ends some time after Nazi surrender and the arrival of the Allies. If anything, Verhoeven could have gone further in playing up the moral and political pitfalls of post-War 'liberation'. Some would no doubt find the *Black Book*'s lush palette and occasionally overblown theatricals inappropriate, but I found the film extremely, if unevenly, effective. Carice Van Houten's performance as the Jewish Resistance fighter in love with a Nazi officer is nothing short of radiant. Like Sharon Stone in Verhoeven's 1992 neo-noir masterpiece *Basic Instinct*, this is a performance which is both exuberant and effortless, and it manages to recapture and rekindle the genius of cinematic stardom – from Dietrich to Garbo.

KZ differs from most other Holocaust documentaries. It is concerned neither with survivors nor with perpetrators (and is only marginally, and a little superfluously, interested in the third category of bystanders). Instead, the film follows several of the tour guides at the Mauthausen concentration camp. This in itself is a startling and clever choice and it brings to the fore questions about the cultural institutions of remembrance and about the Holocaust's persistent impact on those living today in the shadow of the atrocity.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, have we as a civilization achieved any moral or ethical clarity either in theory or in practice? People do not like to admit this, but at the level of collective memory, the Holocaust all too readily yields clichés, and self-righteous ones at that. This is why on the whole I liked *KZ*, which is a film about commemoration and remembering, but especially about haunting and about the strangely infectious quality of the Holocaust as a cultural marker. The film registers this infectiousness visually, on the bodies of its subjects, as a kind of oblique but obsessive heredity that sticks to the flesh like nuclear fallout. This makes it an odd film, perhaps beyond what its director intended. *KZ* revolves around the physiognomy of one of Mauthausen's young guides – an Austrian (gentile) called Florian – whose shaved head and emaciated, angular features are immediately readable in the familiar terms of Holocaust iconography. But Florian



(whose image appeared on many of the film's publicity posters) is an uncomfortably ambiguous figure. His physicality is puzzling. As a haunted man, what or who has he literally morphed into: a Haftling or a camp guard? Florian reminds one simultaneously of a camp prisoner and of a Nazi. His manner too suggests that he is deeply entangled in his role of a guide, but this guiding us through the camp is in itself an ambiguous process in which Florian is somehow both executioner and executed. To be ethically (not just historically) valuable, Holocaust films must avoid the reproduction of false assurances. *KZ* should have triggered some unease in the auditorium.

Not surprisingly, however, the post-film discussion veered away from the film's more unsettling qualities and towards those run-of-the-mill assertions about Austrian reluctance to confront its past. For a film which is so much about discomfort and the mysterious contamination by the past, the principally Jewish crowd at the Screen on the Hill remained excessively comfortable. Herein lies the rub of a festival which walks the fine line between catering to a particular community, and engaging with the broader political issues this community faces. As an Israeli Jew living in Britain, I believe the problem rests squarely with the majority of British Jews and their reluctance as a community to openly criticise Israel's actions and policies.

This suggests a complex relationship between the diaspora and Israel, a relationship which is often founded on fantasies rather than on hard facts. One film which takes this affinity between the 'old' and the 'new' Jews as its theme is Chantal Akerman's *Down There/Là-bas* (2006). Akerman's experimental nonfiction is, in this sense, a culmination of the tensions inherent in the festival as a whole in terms of its clandestine theme of the 'special relationship' between the diaspora and Israel. Akerman went to Tel Aviv, 'down there', to make a film about Israel. Once there, however, she refuses to go out, eat local food, or spend time on

the beach. From her rented flat Akerman painstakingly surveys the peeling facades of apartment blocks and listens to the grumbling engine noises of the city. Hers is a petrified pilgrimage. Israel remains forever 'down there', a remote and rather loveless place. Akerman's film indicates the difficulties of negotiating the connections between 'here' and 'there', 'home' and 'away'. The screening of *Down There* was preceded by Akerman's earlier *Tomorrow We Move/Demain on déménagement* (2004), a screwball French farce about a mother and daughter weathering the chaos of their own apartment.

Including non-commercial work by seminal filmmakers like Akerman is one of the festival's major achievements. It also signals the festival's reaching beyond the north London enclave to cinemas like the ICA with its cinematically savvy clientele. All this helps edge the festival towards a more experimental exploration, rather than simple affirmation, of Jewish identity. One hopes that, as part of the delicate balancing act required of it, the UK Jewish film festival will continue to take risks, aesthetically and politically, refusing to make Jewish films an uncomplicated space or a political safe haven.

In the plush foyer of the Washington Hotel, Mayfair, on the opening night gala, plainclothes Israeli security guards with semi-discreet ear pieces prowled around like big cats in a savanna. I watched them from my seat in the corner. As one of them poked beneath a coffee table, a young English woman inquired: 'Have you lost something?' The Israeli guard looked at her, a little puzzled, and said: 'No.' 'Security,' I called out to the woman from my corner. She heard me but did not respond. 'What a beginning for a film festival,' I sighed to myself.

Above left: *Black Book/Zwartboek*



The next UK Jewish Film Festival opens on Saturday 3rd November 2007. Visit the festival's website at: www.ukjewishfilmfestival.org.uk/

TRAVELLER'S TALE

Last year, during the commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street, I was privileged to share a platform with Aubrey Morris, a veteran socialist and anti-fascist who had helped erect the barricades in Cable Street, near his family's bagel bakery.

Although Aubrey became a media star last October, appearing on TV, radio and in the press, he was quite diffident about it. He was elevated to prominence, he felt, not because his actions had shown extraordinary courage but because those interviewed a decade before, were now selling papers and organising in yene velt. He had moved to the top of the veteran pile on this earth. At 88, Aubrey remains committed to

the causes of his youth and speaks and writes about them with warmth, humour and honesty.

That same week he launched his autobiography, *Unfinished Journey*, which platforms these memories and reflections. His journey starts on a familiar road – as a child of Jewish immigrants to London's East End, struggling to make a living. His father sought to fast track the family's progress through gambling but instead landed them with more debts.

Attracted to the political struggles of the time – against poverty and fascism – Aubrey joined the Labour League of Youth and became increasingly close to the Communists, whom he later joined. Describing the economic depression of the early 1930s, he

says: 'Welsh miners came to the area to sing in the street for a few pennies; grown men and young boys would hang around all day long on street corners devoid of hope ... women knocked on the door, asking for yesterday's bread so they could feed their children.'

He returned from military service in Normandy in World War II even more committed to socialism but was convinced that the Labour Party still provided the best vehicle: 'I was exhilarated by ... the Labour victory of 1945 for which I'd worked incessantly.' But he was soon disappointed. Having moved to Hackney he became deeply involved in tenants' struggles and found Labour councillors and local party workers an obstacle rather than a force for progress. He joined

UNFINISHED JOURNEY
Aubrey Morris

Polemicist and Artery Publications, £12.99

the Communist Party, which, at that time was championing tenants' rights very effectively, and he stood as a Communist council candidate in several elections (often partnered by the then loyal communist Frank Chapple).

By now he had swapped one significantly Jewish profession for another, joining the ranks of the taxi drivers, but as a cabbie his journey took an unusual turning. Long fascinated by Italian language and culture, he made plans for a family camping holiday in Italy. The



Right: Aubrey Morris with Bobby Moore

family travelled in Aubrey's cab. His vivid description of trying to put up a tent for the first time, will be instantly recognisable to Jewish 'handymen' everywhere. This holiday gave birth to a desire to join the travel business. With a partner, Joe Morrison, he built Riviera Travel, pioneering package holidays, at first for fellow cabbies, and later organising football excursions for Spurs and England fans.

His determination, willingness to take risks and open attitudes to other people and ideas brought him great commercial success, but he retained his cabbie's certificate for many years in case times became tough. His economic success achieved through the free market failed to dent his critique of capitalism and its by-products of exploitation and war.

He recognised the values that entrepreneurs claim as the basis for success: innovation, hard graft and risk-taking, but regarded these as vital for any progress in life generally, and not the sole

preserve of determined capitalists.

In retirement he had more time to devote to politics and trying to understand a world that defied the hopes and dreams of the socialists and communists among whom he worked and struggled. He founded the Anjou Club, a monthly discussion group where like-minded souls of his generation, equally committed to gaining new insights, meet over a sumptuous Hungarian lunch at the Gay Hussar in central London, and welcome a guest speaker, particularly from politics or the media.

One guest, the anarchist writer Colin Ward, made quite an impact on Aubrey and prompted him to look 'fairly deeply into the philosophies of anarchism and pacifism'. Aubrey's open-mindedness and willingness to reflect are qualities that many younger socialists tied to sectarian parties and political lines would do well to emulate. Buy this book and enjoy the ride.

David Rosenberg

LIFE AND SOUL OF THE PARTY

THE LOST WORLD OF BRITISH COMMUNISM by Raphael Samuel

Verso, £19.99

The Lost World... comprises three long essays which appeared in New Left Review between 1985 and 1987, originally planned as the basis of a longer book which had not appeared by Samuel's premature death in 1996. This volume was published at the end of 2006 in memory of the author, and launched at the Bishopsgate Institute which keeps a special Raphael Samuel collection.

Raphael Samuel was a historian, long connected with Ruskin College and the History Workshop movement and journal. For several years History Workshop produced excellent volumes on social history, including one on the Rothschild Buildings, model buildings for working class people in the Jewish East End.

Samuel was of course Jewish, and one of the enticing parts of these essays is a small description of how many members of his family, one by one, joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. These included a relative who ran a religious bookshop, and thereafter buyers could choose between taleism (prayer shawls) at one end and volumes by the communist publisher Lawrence and Wishart at the other. There is

not space here to rehearse the heavy involvement of Jews in the Communist Party, suffice to say that there are still many upstanding members of the community who will mention (often rather proudly) that their family used to take the Daily Worker.

Samuel's essays were written at a time when the CPGB was self-destructing, the fault line being between the 'tankies' – historically more pro-Soviet, older, male, more working class; and those around Marxism Today, more Euro-communist, iconoclastic, more interested in 'new movements'. The 'tankies' lost out but after the final collapse in 1991 have hung on with the daily Morning Star and their own Communist Party of Britain, not quite the successor organisation of the old CPGB. Marxism Today vanished, and the CPGB was wound up, with some of their writers like Bea Campbell and Martin Jacques cropping up from time to time in The Guardian. The last I heard of the direct successor organisation, the New Politics Network, it was fiddling about making proposals for House of Lords reform. While Alison Light,

the widow of Samuel, has written a foreword it would have been useful to have had a summary of developments post-1987 for new readers unfamiliar with left history.

The strength of Samuel's book is to remind us or tell us of the history of the internal life of what people simply called 'the Party'. Some of this is inspiring, the way this grouping of largely skilled working class people believed and fought for a communist future. Engineers were hugely over-represented in the CPGB, and within other trades it was usually the skilled or craft workers – cutters from the tailoring trade for example – who joined. They made sacrifices, of course, but also saw themselves as representing the Party at all times, even in their presentable dress and personal relationships. On the downside, Samuel reminds those of us who may be tempted to forget that this really was a Stalinist Party, and that the CPGB's leaders drew their authority from the Party not the members, and that it was built from the top down. The Party taught, led, enabled, but was never responsible to its supporters. Little wonder then that modern times saw its demise.

Unfortunately, there are still parts of the left that have happily adopted the worst features of the Party they once despised.

A writer friend of mine in Middlesbrough recently said that every day of his life he regrets the demise of the Communist Party of Great Britain. (For the sake of

accuracy, there is a tiny organisation still calling itself the CPGB, producers of the Weekly Worker.) His shelves are stacked with the literary magazines of the Party's intellectuals and worker writers. The first old Party member I met was an electrician who would quote from Shakespeare

and Shelley, who could play the violin beautifully and insisted that our local community association started its meetings on time, ended on time and that decisions were properly made. There are many people like him mentioned in Samuel's book.

Ross Bradshaw

TILTING AT WINDMILLS

I barely know where to begin. I'll start with the addendum slip. On page 357 and 358 of What's Left? Nick Cohen praises Reading Lolita in Tehran, a memoir published by the Iranian feminist Azar Nafisi. He remarks on the cryptic dedication in her book, sketching out that Nafisi 'Once would have seen the liberal-left as her natural ally...'. But now... well, the dedication was 'to Paul' and 'that Paul was Paul Wolfowitz, and by 1993 it was no longer surprising that an Iranian feminist should turn to an American neo-Conservative, for where else was she to look for support?' Not of course Western liberals. 'Nafisi had had her fill of them.'

The only problem is that the erratum slip reads that Nafisi did not dedicate her book to Paul Wolfowitz. The book is dedicated to her family. No doubt an easy mistake for a journalist to make.

Let's skip to the end of the book – the acknowledgements. Here we find Oliver Kamm helping with information on the Left in the 1930s, and Oliver Kamm advising on the Bosnian and Kosovo conflict. And here is Oliver Kamm who, with Norman Geras, 'helped clear away many misconceptions'. Good work Ollie. It was kind of Conservative-voting, Bush-backing, Iraq-invasion-supporting Kamm to take time off from being a banker to help so much.

But knocking copy like my paragraph above is easy. It's easy to discredit people by association. And lazy. Nick Cohen does this all the time. We have here a book which, though its sub-title suggests it is about 'liberals', its heart is a full-scale trial of the modern Left. The witnesses for the prosecution? Well, step forward the long-defunct Workers Revolutionary

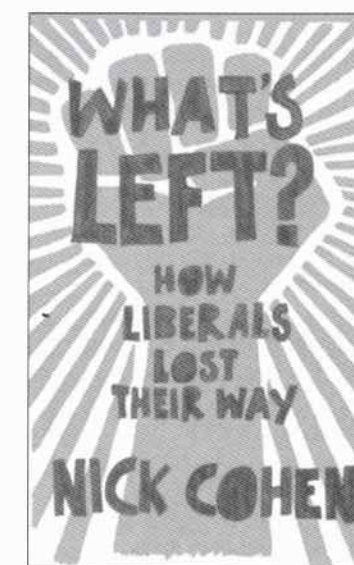
Party of Gerry Healy, who nobody but the odd Equity member and Mayor of London* ever thought was a good thing. And then there is the defunct Revolutionary Communist Party, whose successor organisation, The Institute of Ideas, enables Claire Fox to make a good living in the media. But whoever thought the RCP was left wing? I can remember arguments with them when they came out against safe sex. The night the first Gulf War started, as the organiser of a local protest demonstration, I was harangued by the RCP because I was 'one of the people who cause wars'. And then there's George Galloway.

Nick Cohen's description of the leader of the Stop the War Campaign licking milk on Celebrity Big Brother is a treat. But his view of the pussycat imitator is common currency on the left. Who did not cringe?

Describing the biggest anti-war march he talks about how the marchers were there to protest against the overthrow of a fascist regime in Iraq. All I can say is no, we were prescient. He reports with surprise that though people from the old Socialist Alliance built the march, their later electoral vote was derisory. Of course it was. People marched whoever booked the buses. It was the cause that mattered, not the booking agency.

Nick Cohen uses a wonderful phrase, 'Writers write badly when they have something to hide,' and he can do bad writing as well as good. He can make unsubstantiated accusations, set up straw men (and women), and when he gets on to Israel and Palestine, and antisemitism... oh dear!

What Nick Cohen is hiding most is that he lost his way, ending up producing quickly



WHAT'S LEFT? HOW LIBERALS LOST THEIR WAY by Nick Cohen

4th Estate, £12.99

forgotten manifestos in a pub in Euston. Writing about 'the God that failed', socialism or communism, is nothing new. Nick Cohen stands in that tradition. The tradition that this magazine follows rejects totalitarianism, as he wishes the left did. And fundamentalism, as he wishes the left did. Just as we once saw value in the slogan 'Neither Washington nor Moscow but international socialism' (though we had doubts about the organisation that produced it), history moves on and now we have to argue with that same organisation, 'Neither Washington nor Mecca but international socialism'. Nobody ever said it was going to be easy. To slightly misquote Maimonides, 'I believe socialism will come. Though it is a little late, I still believe.' Cohen has lost his belief, and has fallen back on easy and lazy journalism.

He starts his book with the old socialist joke, about his family almost dying of scurvy in the 1970s from boycotting American, Israeli, Spanish and Portuguese fruit. It's a good joke. Perhaps he should have left it there.

Ross Bradshaw

THE MAN WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN...

BLACKSHIRT: SIR OSWALD MOSLEY AND BRITISH FASCISM
by Stephen Dorril

Penguin, £9.99

It may say something about the character of British society that the only fascist leader who came within a whiff of power was a scion of the landed aristocracy and officer class. Even after the War, when Sir Oswald Mosley returned to be among his faithful, the emotional scenes of followers touching the Leader's sleeve had something of the mediaeval.

Yet the man who would be dictator had begun by launching the New Party, claiming to speak for the young, and bringing to his side enthusiasts for fast cars, planes and planned modern capitalism. He was even ready to call it 'socialism' for, like several of his continental counterparts, the British fascist leader had his spell as a Labour man, however unconvincing. Those who gathered at Mosley's country house at Denham included Fabians and ILPers, some of whom remained by his side when the New Party gave way to the British Union of Fascists. He was even able to find ex-communists to start his own unemployed movement.

Not that ideas or parties were what counted for Mosley. He went through party allegiance almost as promiscuously as through the upper class loose box, cavorting away from home while first wife 'Cimmie' was ill. The 'comradeship of the trenches', idealised as a supposed alternative to the capitalist free-for-all, had nothing of equality, or even the common touch. The masses, like the other ranks, were to know their place and do as ordered or else, like the Labour crowd who shouted at him outside Ashton town hall, they were the enemy.

Unlike previous British fascists, however, with their amateurish Bulldog Drummond antics as anti-communist thugs and strikebreakers, Mosley realised he must pose as being 'above' left and right; he needed to win recruits among the small shopkeepers and working people hit by recession, as well as backing from rich businessmen and

landowners looking for a 'strong man'. How was he to unite them and cover the contradictions of an 'anti-capitalism' designed to save capitalism?

'You can hardly exhort your stormtroopers to street fighting with an involved analysis of the difference between productive capital and loan capital,' wrote Cecil Melville. So 'instead of just downing the banker for being a banker, let's down the banker as being a Jew!' At the insistence of Harold Nicolson, Mosley deleted a passage about 'international Jewish' conspiracy from his book *The Greater Britain*, making do with allusion to 'a power largely controlled by alien elements.'

Even as New Party speakers were starting to attack Jews, Sir Oswald assured the press he did not approve. Seeking support from Israel Sieff, chairman of Marks and Spencer and backer of Political Economic Planning (PEP), Mosley told Sieff he wanted PEP as his 'brainbox'. But he also said, according to Sieff, that a political party must be based on emotion, and supporters must be given something to hate. 'In this case it should be the Jews'. He hastened to add 'of course, it does not apply to Jews like you, Israel,' but Sieff was not reassured.

Coming out as the British Union of Fascists meant openly linking with Europe's fascists and Nazis, and emulating their means. Though not sharing the fanaticism or racial theories of antisemites like Beamish and Leese, Mosley would use antisemites and antisemitism if it helped him. It meant shedding quite a number of Jewish supporters. Perhaps the best-known, boxer 'Kid' Lewis, who had trained Mosley's Biff Boys, ended the association allegedly by giving the Leader a good slap. Harold Soref, later to be a Tory MP and Monday Club chairman, stayed around long enough to be a Blackshirt standard bearer at the Olympia rally.

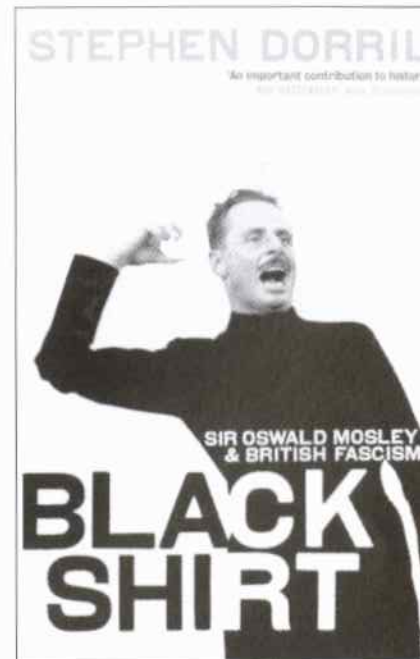
With support from the likes of Lord Rothermere and his Daily

Mail, as well as money to be had from and via fascist Italy and Germany, Mosley hardly needed to worry about Jewish opinion. Supporting Mussolini's savage invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, the fascists combined anti-black racism with antisemitism, claiming Jewish finance supported Haile Selassie. 'Over the whole dispute rises the stink of oil. And stronger even than the stink of oil rises the stink of the Jew,' Mosley told a cheering rally at Manchester's Free Trade Hall. Claiming that sanctions against Italy would drag Britain into war, the Blackshirts chalked 'Mind Britain's Business' and 'Mosley Says Peace' on walls around the country.

In London's East End, particularly the depressed furniture-making district, where Jews were seen as competitors, Mosley's lieutenants like Mick Clarke, the cockney 'Julius Streicher', and Jock Huston, worked up crowds at street corner meetings with virulent antisemitic attacks, which inevitably led to violence. Sometimes they had to be rescued from hostile crowds – the fascists had squads on stand-by for this – but they did get support.

Drawing on the earlier work of the British Brothers League against 'alien' immigrants, and appealing to Catholic antisemitism, they gave excited young supporters an 'enemy' nearer at hand than mysterious 'international finance', in the form of the Jewish shopkeeper or neighbour. Mosley himself weighed in at Stratford Town Hall on 17 July 1935 with: 'Who backs the Conservative Party? Who but international Jewish financiers? They are the people who put razor gangs on the streets. Who finances the Labour Party? The Little Jews in Whitechapel who sweat you in your sweatshops.'

Renaming his movement the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists, or British Union for short, Mosley was turning from Mussolini to Hitler for support. The Nazis had more than one franchise outlet in



Britain. The Anglo-German Fellowship had support from Tory MPs, peers and big business. The Link, including Mosleyite Major-General Fuller, Lord Tavistock and Admiral Sir Barry Domville (in later life a founder of the National Front) held more local meetings.

The Battle of Cable Street, a humiliating defeat for Mosley, did not stop the Blackshirts' antisemitic activity. If anything, the violence intensified, as fascists took their revenge on synagogues, cemeteries, Jewish shops and individuals, even children, and promised full-scale pogroms. But it was seen and noted as a setback. In Rome, Foreign Minister Count Ciano told Mosley his patrons were considering ending their subsidy. Mosley promised that his fascists would sweep the coming London County Council elections. In March 1937 they stood six candidates in East London, none of whom was elected. Mussolini stopped his cheques, and Mosley had to dip in his own pocket. There was a leadership crisis, Becket deriding the leader's unreality. Joyce who had enjoyed the violence, broke away to form his own, more openly Nazi group before going off to Berlin to become Lord Haw-Haw.

As war loomed nearer, Mosley's prospects declined in the regions, where industry was reviving, and with it Labour. In London, too, antisemitism was not enough. Awareness of the Nazi threat aroused both class conscious and patriotic opposition. In the Silvertown by-election in 1939,

the Mosleyite candidate obtained 151 votes, against Labour's 14,343, and only one sixth of the vote received by communist Harry Pollitt. All the same, sections of the upper class still hoping for peace with Hitler pursued secret contacts in wartime, and considered a Vichy-style regime headed by Mosley with the Duke of Windsor.

Despite knowledge of what Nazism had done, and strong hatred against the man who might have been Britain's Quisling, Mosley's movement began coming back together as the war ended, returning to old haunts like Hoxton, and finding new openings, like

the anti-refugee campaign initiated by Tories in Hampstead. There were fights with the left and with militant Jews. Reaction to Jewish terrorism in Palestine, afforded a brief but violent antisemitic campaign. Then, in the 1950s, Mosley and Jeffrey Hamm turned to west London, blaming housing and other problems on the new, mainly West Indian immigrants. After the Notting Hill race riots, Mosley stood in North Kensington in 1959, and fascist youth leader Walter Hesketh stood in Moss Side, Manchester.

Racial prejudice and anti-immigrant attitudes which the Tories accepted with their Immigration Act, did not provide Mosley with the recruits he hoped for. There was still enough anti-Nazi feeling for his upstart rival Colin Jordan to be mobbed in Trafalgar Square, and Mosley himself was knocked to the ground when he tried to parade his supporters in Manchester. The South Africans to whom he turned for funds were sympathetic, but more inclined to back right-wing Conservatives. Get-togethers with leading European fascists did not produce the movement he hoped for, any more than nostalgic soirées with the Windsors in Paris. Though Mosleyite Danny Harmston mobilised the Smithfield porters' march for Enoch Powell, Mosley regarded the Tory MP as too much of a Little Englander. By the time a new generation of British Nazis emerged in the 1970s, Mosley was too old to lead them, and his

ideas on Europe were too new, for their racialism harked back to Empire.

Seeking respectability again, Mosley wrote to the Jewish Chronicle in 1966 saying his 'quarrel' with the Jews was over. Having spoken at universities and Liberal Party seminars, he took the BBC to the European Court of Human Rights to overturn its ban on him, and when he appeared on Panorama, the JC said he appeared 'moderate and reasonable'. Sister-in-law Nancy Mitford was not impressed: 'Have you noted all the carry-on about Sir O? He says he was never antisemitic. Good gracious! I quite love the old soul now, but really!'

Away from the microphones, bitter Mosley had blamed Jews for everything from the rise of the rival National Front to the vandalising of first wife Cynthia's grave at Denham. Diana Mosley, asked by her sister Nancy about the millions exterminated in Nazi death camps replied: 'But darling, it was so much the kindest way.' Appearing years later on Desert Island Discs, Diana preferred to recall Hitler's blue eyes, and did not believe so many people were killed by the Nazis.

Still the rehabilitation continued, from Robert Skidelsky's praise of Mosley's policies, through to Channel 4's mini-series by Jewish writers, presenting Mosley as not too bad, albeit a philanderer. Though Mosley no longer received the open enthusiasm he had had from Rothermere's newspapers, Cecil King, Rothermere's nephew at the Mirror, campaigned for a united Europe and sounded out Mosley as 'strong man' to head a military-backed government.

Stephen Dorril deserves congratulation on producing what must be the fullest work on Mosley and British fascism, and gratitude for challenging those who tried to whitewash the Blackshirt. As a writer on the intelligence services, he has been particularly assiduous in opening up previously classified documents, revealing the fascists' secret links with foreign nations, and the ambivalent role of Britain's secret state. Some parts of the book could be clearer but providing such a rich mine of information, Dorril's minor transgressions can be forgiven. This book is essential reading if you want to know all about fascism or British politics in the 20th century.

Charlie Pottins

RAF SALKIE
reviews books
that challenge
orthodoxy

In my tireless pursuit of books that may stimulate devotees of this column (to enthusiasm or outrage – at least to something), I have found some gems this time. Richard Dawkins is probably Britain's best-known atheist, and his new book *The God Delusion* (Bantam, £20) has received sneering reviews in the *Times Higher* and the *New York Review of Books*. Don't believe them: the book is an excellent read. Dawkins argues that belief in a supernatural deity is intellectually pathetic, that moral codes based on winning the approval of the Almighty are smarmy and unpleasant, and that indoctrinating children with

RICHARD
DAWKINS
THE
GOD
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superstitious fears about God is a form of child abuse.

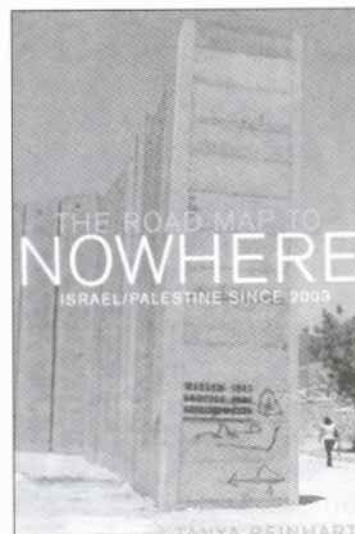
Not surprisingly, a central part of the book is a withering attack on 'intelligent design'. Faced with a complex mechanism like the human eye, the ID zealots say that it surely could not have evolved by chance, so there must have been a designer. Dawkins points out that natural selection in tiny, incremental steps is not 'chance' but a well-understood process, and that relying on a divine creator only raises the (pointless) question of who designed the designer.

Critics have said that the book lacks Dawkins' usual elegance, but that's unfair: it's a response to sleazy, devious bigotry, against which charm and subtlety are not very useful weapons. Personally I think Dawkins could have said more about praying. He has a few

pages on a silly medical experiment which showed that prayer actually reduced the survival chances of heart patients, but why do millions of people feel the need to recite old-fashioned words regularly to their invisible friend? God may be no different from fairies at the bottom of my garden but few people sing hymns to fairies every week. If you think you understand why, please let me know (fairy-worshippers too: write to rsalkie@yahoo.co.uk).

How should western atheists respond to the remarkable growth of Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Islamic Resistance Movement) or Hamas? In Hamas: A beginner's guide (Pluto, £12.99), Khaled Hroub, a Palestinian academic and journalist, gives a comprehensive history of the movement. The author is sympathetic to the 'resistance' bit but less so to the 'Islamic' part. He argues – correctly in my view – that after the Oslo accords of 1993, the emergence of a militant resistance movement was an inevitable response to Israeli occupation, not to mention the assassination of Palestinian leaders, and murderous incursions into the West Bank and Gaza. He says that Hamas has become more pragmatic in recent years, proposing ceasefire agreements with Israel. I don't know if this is true, but it's clear that they have a democratic mandate, and Israel is going to have to negotiate with them – may it be speedily and in our days.

An important clue to why Hamas has flourished comes in an outstanding book by the Israeli academic and peace activist Tanya Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere: Israel/Palestine since 2003* (Verso, £8.99). In an inspiring chapter on joint Israeli-Palestinian initiatives to oppose the West Bank Wall, with activists on both sides making friends and building mutual respect, she reports that Fatah officials gave them very little support and were often actively hostile. The general picture of Fatah as feathering their own nests and doing little else is no doubt the main reason why Hamas did so well in the January 2006 elections. Reinhart stresses



that Palestinian society is mostly secular, but that the people voted for politicians who seemed more militant and more trustworthy.

Reinhart describes the reaction among Palestinian villagers to the Israeli peace campaigners, many of whom are 'anarchists, punks, lesbians and wild-haired students': they are always, she says, greeted with grace and warmth. Most of the book analyses why around 70% of Israelis have consistently supported ending the occupation for many years, but somehow this never gets translated into political action by the Israeli state. Her explanation – as in her 2002 book *Israel/Palestine: How to end the war of 1948* – is mostly that the armed forces dominate elite sections of Israeli politics and society. She does not ignore the crucial role of the United States, noting that Washington continues to use Israel as a strategic ally. Occasional slaps on the wrist, such as sanctions after Israel made a deal to sell arms to China in 2004, are minor and soon set aside.

After this heady stuff it was a relief to read Carl Hiaasen's *Lucky You* (Time Warner, £6.99), an insane thriller set in the swamps of Florida in which a couple of white power thugs eventually die in animal-related ways. They say that Hiaasen's books have done more damage to the Florida tourist industry than anything except actually going there. What with religious bigotry, the Middle East sliding towards catastrophe, and Florida, it's a wonder I stay so cheerful.



WHAT ABOUT HITLER'S SAUCERS?

Back in the 19th century, French commerce, penetrating the Levant as ally and protector of the Maronite Christians, encountered Jewish interests in Syria. Rather than import such sophisticated luxuries as the Renaissance or *liberté, égalité et fraternité*, the colonialists pulled out their older stock. A monk had disappeared. The French consul, Ratti Menton, accused the Jews of doing away with him so they could use his blood at Passover. Thirteen Jews were arrested.

This 1840 Damascus Blood Libel brought an international campaign. Heinrich Heine pointed out that Jewish dietary law forbade consumption of blood, 'even from clean animals, let alone a filthy Capuchin'. Eventually the surviving Jewish prisoners were released, but four had died under torture. Nowadays not many people believe in the blood libel, though Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass wrote a book reviving it, and the sage Israel Shamir says he has discovered texts showing that Christian blood was indeed required for Jewish ritual purposes. <http://www.israelshamir.net/English/blood.htm>

Once setting the pace in enlightenment, the Middle East has taken Europe's old rags as fashion. We've seen the Protocols on Egyptian TV and Iran hosting Holocaust deniers like former Ku Klux Klan Imperial Wizard David Duke, to the dismay of progressive Palestinians, Arabs and Iranians. Britain's David Irving was otherwise detained, but what about the man who once tried to flog him a load of Nazi documents?

Over to Israel Shamir's website: 'We received many enquiries regarding the Holocaust conference in Tehran, and Israel Shamir's participation in it. Some media sources claimed that Shamir was at the conference. Let it be known that Israel Shamir was not invited, neither present at the conference.' (sic)

Not invited? That's a shame. Either Ahmadinejad drew the line, or the organisers sent Shamir's invitation to Jöran Jermas, the Swedish antisemite, at Shamir's address 16, Dalagaten, Stockholm, or Adam Ermash, his official name in Sweden? It might have looked odd inviting Shamir from Jaffa, when they had turned away Khaleed Mahameed, who runs a Holocaust museum in Nazareth, on the grounds that he is an Israeli citizen.

To show there's no ill-feeling, Shamir's website also carries a report by Daniel McGowan on a visit to Holocaust revisionist Ernst Zündel in prison in Germany. Shamir, who announced his conversion to Orthodox Christianity, says the visit was a *mitzvah*, a good deed in the sight of the Lord. It was McGowan who appointed Paul Eisen to be UK director of Dir Yassin Remembered, and Eisen who has warmly defended Zündel in his essay 'The Holocaust Wars'. And praising both Eisen and Shamir has been jazzman philosopher Gilad Atzmon.

But Eisen has yet to do full justice to Zündel's vision. Maybe he is saving the best till he judges we are ready for it. Author of *The Hitler We Loved and Did Six Million Really Die?* Zündel had been interested in the secret of Nazi UFOs, flying saucers from Antarctica, 'before I was forced by Germany's enemies to tackle the

hoary and fraudulent "Holocaust" claims'. (Zundelsite).

As 'Christof Friedrich' he appealed for funds to help his research, proposing to charter a South African plane which might fly from Rio or Buenos Aires over the South Pole, and land a swastika flag on some glacier, claiming it for new Schwabenland, while paying passengers and crew drink champagne. Its more earnest aim would be to find the hole in the ice beneath which was the entrance to an underground Nazi realm, from which their strange, mystery UFOs were emerging on reconnaissance flights to conquer the world. Zündel promised this 'Antarctic Expedition in Search of Hitler's Flying Saucer Bases and the South Polar Opening into Inner Earth will be the unique event of a lifetime.'

As he says: 'I was young, rich and adventurous then – and we were all roaring to go. I had lots of fun and did up to three and four talk shows a week on that "Nazi-Antarctic-UFO-Find-the Führer's Bases" story.'

What a pity he is now sitting in a German cell. But could the expedition of a lifetime not be relaunched? Maybe some media company can help with sponsorship. A great film. Co-starring the man of many names, Israel Joran Ermash Shamir and Paul Eisen, with bold sax-playing beefcake Gilad Atzmon as hero, in *The Search for Hitler's Hole*.

YOU CAN TELL US!

Do you have any news,
views or stories to tell us?
If so, send them to Jewish
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