

JEWISH SOCIALIST

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

Through this forum we aim to:

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

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JEWISH ★ SOCIALIST

IS A BOYCOTT THE ANSWER?

PLUS

- 90 years since Balfour
- Ocalan's Mesopotamia
- Connolly and the Jews
- Modern slavery
- Philosophy Football competition



EDITORIAL

The boycott tactic has become a much more prominent but still hotly disputed feature of campaigning work on the Israel/Palestine conflict. The demand for boycott has emerged from a wide range of Palestinian trade union and civil associations and they have called for international solidarity.

It represents the belief that, just as surely as it did with Apartheid South Africa, the world should see and react to the daily racism, humiliation and oppression that is meted out to the Palestinian people by the Israeli state and its occupying forces. But it may also represent a desire, borne out of desperation, to prioritise a different tactic where others have failed to make an impact. Where the struggle for liberation has been met, literally, with a concrete wall.

How analogous Israel today is with apartheid South Africa is a big debate in itself – the apartheid regime sought to maximise exploitation of its native population, not to remove and replace them completely as the Zionists dreamt, and perhaps still dream. The boycott tactic emerged at a point in the struggle against apartheid where a broad international solidarity movement gathered behind a strong and united liberation movement – the ANC – with one clear vision of what it wanted to achieve.

Today, though, the struggle for Palestinian rights is weak and fragmented. Because of the internal dynamics of Palestinian society and perhaps even more the deliberate policies of divide and rule by Israel and America, its leading organisations, Fatah and Hamas, are at odds, politically, philosophically and, since the events of Gaza, territorially.

For people wishing to act in solidarity, raise awareness among a wider public, bring new forces to bear and make a real impact from a distance, tactics have to be constantly reassessed. And boycott-style tactics may seem appropriate and useful. Boycotts have been aimed at the academic sphere, trade, culture and sport. Many activists argue for a blanket approach, as the ANC had, incorporating all aspects. Others question whether boycotts are equally useful and effective in

each area and propose more selective approaches.

The boycott Israel tactic has been brought into labour movement campaigns with limited success. It has proved controversial among those committed to ending Israeli occupation and promoting Palestinian self-determination. Proposals for academic boycott in particular, have been seized upon by those who are determined to defend Israel at all costs as tantamount to antisemitic discrimination. Proponents, however, believe that the tactic is condemned precisely because it is winning more support. Others hold that boycott debates are sterile and that activists get bogged down in the debate itself rather than engaging in positive actions that make a difference.

JEWISH SOCIALIST is committed to keeping the debate open. We want an end to Israeli occupation and the daily discrimination against Palestinians on an ethnic basis. We want an end to Israel's privileged trading status with the EU. We want Palestine to live, breathe and flourish economically, for its children to have an education and equal opportunities. We want to support progressive forces within Israel who share these aims. And we want to help develop tactics that can be effective precisely because they unite progressive forces and divide reactionary forces.

Demands that may appear right and justified in principle may not necessarily translate to being effective in practice. The Left must always be prepared to consider controversial tactics while retaining its critical faculties and replacing tactics that prove counterproductive.

In this issue of **JEWISH SOCIALIST** we give space to this debate (page 5) – looking in particular at boycott in the academic (page 7) and sporting areas (page 10). At the same time we acknowledge the history that underlies this conflict (pages 13 and 16) that may contain the seeds of its resolution. Looking more deeply into the specific roots of the Israel/Palestine conflict may indeed prove more fruitful than chasing possibly analogous situations elsewhere.

COMPETITION

TURN TO THE BACK COVER for your chance to win one of Four Fabulous Philosophy Football shirts!

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JEWISH SOCIALIST

NO 54 WINTER 2007

NEWS



The life of the late Linda Smith, a brilliant comedian who starred at a benefit for Jewish Socialist a few years ago, is celebrated in *Driving Miss Smith: A memoir of Linda Smith*, written by her partner and JS subscriber Warren Lakin. The picture above shows Linda relaxing with the other performers before the JS benefit: (left to right) Jeremy Hardy, Jo Brand, Ivor Dembina, Linda Smith and Arnold Brown. *Driving Miss Smith* by Warren Lakin, Hodder & Stoughton, £14.99

Moving the goalposts

In the run-up to the recent England vs Israel football match at Wembley, a tour by a Palestinian under-19 team from Gaza was cancelled because the players and their coaches were denied visas to come to Britain. They were due to come for a three-week visit culminating in a match against the Premiership club Blackburn Rovers on the same day as the England-Israel game.

The Jewish Socialists' Group wrote to the Foreign Secretary David Miliband protesting the ban. The letter concluded '...in asking you to issue an official explanation from the Foreign

Office as to why the visas were refused, we also strongly urge you to express regret that the tour could not take place, and to promise that HM Government will do everything in its power to assist such a tour in the coming year.'

Foreign Secretary Miliband passed it on to the UK Visas Department to reply (motto: making travel and migration work for Britain). On behalf of the department, Paul Roberts provided a 'Yes Minister' style reply: 'Please note that I am limited in the amount of information I can provide concerning the reasons for

refusal ... I would like to assure you that we have absolutely no interest in isolating Palestinians. The decisions made by the Entry Clearing Officers were entirely in accordance with the immigration rules ... I am sorry I cannot give you a more favourable reply.'

No regrets, no commitment to facilitating a tour in the coming year. It will be small comfort for young Palestinians, whose own football stadium in Gaza was destroyed by Israeli action, that Israel were decisively beaten at Wembley.

Turn to page 10 for an article on an initiative to build bridges between Israeli, Palestinian and British fans.

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Leon Rosselson shows why Israel must face its past

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John Eversley continues the debate about women who were trafficked 100 years ago.

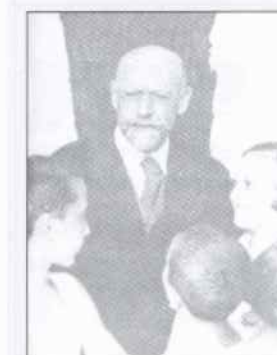
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WISEWORDS



'Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are the people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously, and to be treated with tenderness and respect. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be – the unknown person inside each of them is our hope for the future.'

Janusz Korczak (1878-1942)

Korczak was born Henryk Goldszmit in Warsaw. He was a paediatrician, worker with street children, director of Jewish and Catholic orphanages, writer, and advocate of children's rights. When the children of his Jewish orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto were deported to Treblinka, he refused the offer of rescue for himself, and accompanied them to the death camp where he and they perished.



CHANGE
THE
WORLD

FRIENDS OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE – BIL'IN

Bil'in is a small, peaceful village surrounded by hills and valleys, lying half way between Jaffa and Jerusalem. It is among a number of local villages that fall under the local authority of Ramallah. It has a population of 1,800, known for their hospitality and good nature. They love peace and freedom, and reject injustice and oppression.

The Bil'in residents depend on agriculture as their main source of their income. Traditionally such income has been generated by raising cattle and poultry, and collecting the produce of bees and olive trees.

Bil'in and its residents have stood up to confiscation time and time again. At the beginning of the 1980s, the Matityahu settlement was built on a portion of Bil'in land and, at the beginning of the 1990s, another portion of land was confiscated for the Kiryat Sefer settlement. In 2000, yet another new settlement (Matityahu East) was built on Bil'in's land. In April 2004, Israel began construction of its illegal Apartheid Wall on the western side of the village, expropriating more than half of the land of Bil'in.

The people of Bil'in have actively participated in non-violent resistance against Israeli oppression throughout the years of illegal occupation. Side by

side with international and Israeli activists, the people of Bil'in managed to achieve the recognition of the Israeli High Court, which recently ruled that the route of the Apartheid Wall near in the village is illegal and must be changed.

In line with their love of freedom and justice, an active group of young men and women decided to initiate a new group in the village called The Bil'in Friends of Justice and Freedom Society. This aims to build a wide network of people from all over the globe who support justice and freedom for all. It also aims to strengthen the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and to transfer the experience of Bil'in across Palestine. Finally, the society aims to help and support the education of young Palestinian people at schools and universities throughout the region and beyond.

Our message is that together we can remove borders and cross all barriers. Together we can build bridges of trust and achieve justice. Through our friends we can see the promising future, a future where all live in peace, security and dignity, a future free of racism, where all have the right to a full and free life.

For more information email majdarmajdar@yahoo.com
Tel: +972 547 847 942

Treifspotting...

...was the title of an afternoon of subversive Jewish film and entertainment held by jewdas at the Rio Cinema in Hackney in September. It featured the excellent 1980 documentary, *The Free Voice of Labour* – the Jewish Anarchists, and screened the European premiere of *Young Jewish and Left*, directed by Irit Reinheimer and Konnie Michael Chameides.

This film includes moving references to Birthright Unplugged – an American educational organisation that runs trips primarily for young Jewish people to their Palestinian counterparts in the Occupied Territories as an alternative to the heavily subsidised Zionist-propagandist Birthright trips which take young Jews to Israel. Also featured in this event was *Confession*, a film about the 23-year-old comic book artist Ariel Schrag.

The next jewdas event is earmarked for 8th December.

www.jewdas.org
www.birthrightunplugged.org

No 2:2 in St Thomas University

Veteran anti-apartheid campaigner Desmond Tutu who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his dedication to non-violent campaigning against apartheid is free to speak his mind in post-apartheid South Africa, but not so free elsewhere.

In October he was barred from a speaking engagement at the University of St Thomas in Minnesota. According to *Inside Higher Education*: 'Doug Hennes, vice president for university and government relations at St Thomas, said that when administrators were informed of the invitation, they did some research about Tutu, and found that some of his comments had been controversial. Then the university consulted with some Jewish leaders and concluded that Tutu had made remarks that had been "hurtful" to Jewish leaders.'

Tutu, who has always supported the right of Israel to exist within secure borders, has

compared the Israeli occupation to South African apartheid. Closer to home, Professor Geoffrey Alderman, wrote a column in the *Jewish Chronicle* the previous month proclaiming that Nelson Mandela 'is no friend of ours'.

With attitudes like this to the heroes of the anti-apartheid movement, it's odd that some Jewish spokespersons get so touchy about people comparing Israeli policies with those of apartheid South Africa!



JOIN THE JEWISH SOCIALISTS' GROUP

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.

Further information from:

Membership Secretary, Jewish Socialists' Group, BM3725, London WC1N 3XX.

Email: jsg@jewishsocialist.org.uk

Website: www.jewishsocialist.org.uk

ROOM FOR DEBATE

In September 2007 the Jewish Socialists' Group (JSG) organised a meeting to give activists from different strands of the campaign to end the occupation a chance to discuss the thorny issue of boycott.

Debbie Fink of Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods (JBIG) argued that we have tried other kinds of protest, and it is time to do something more effective. If governments will not act then it is up to civil society, to ordinary people to put pressure on Israel to change. Not everyone can lobby MPs or take part in demonstrations, but anyone can refuse to buy Israeli goods, so a boycott is a good way to raise the issues and involve people. The uproar from Israel's supporters in the Jewish press shows that it is effective.

Moshé Machover, one of the initiators of the boycott campaign of trade and tourism, also thought the row testified to the fact that it is hitting home, although he admitted some harmful mistakes had been made such as by Mona Baker removing two Israelis from her journal board. Moshé stressed that the boycott must be against institutions, not individuals, and pointed to the way some Israeli universities and senior academics have backed off from particular policies and have criticised treatment of Arab students as evidence that the prospect of a boycott is making them change.

Richard Kuper of Jews for Justice for Palestinians and Faculty for Israel Palestinian Peace demurred from the idea that the boycott campaign strengthens solidarity or awareness. He said that academic campaigners seem to have exhausted their energy fighting for the boycott and have done

little or nothing to strengthen links or mobilise practical aid for Palestinian students and education.

Charlie Pottins for the JSG said boycott is a weapon of the oppressed, and Jews have used it in the past, against Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa. But to be effective it has to be fairly targeted, and should be linked to positive demands – for assisting Palestinian access to jobs, markets and supplies. Charlie thought a cultural boycott would be counterproductive, and the call for boycotting Israeli sports teams, though understandable when Israeli forces have fired on Palestinian youngsters, is not appropriate. Unlike South African apartheid, Israel's soccer team is not racially selected, since it includes Arabs and an African player, and such differences ought to be acknowledged.

Giving an example of how a boycott can be misapplied, Irene Bruegel, cited the hostile reception given Juliano Mer-Khamis, of the Freedom Theatre, in some countries, despite the fact that he is an energetic campaigner for Palestinian rights.

There was a keen and mostly comradely discussion, with several people building on the speakers' contributions and recounting their own experiences. One important point made was that Palestinians were turning from violence to call for international support and methods such as the boycott, and we should respect this. Whether or not any of us changed our minds, we all came away from this discussion understanding and respecting each other's views better.

How and when is it appropriate to use boycotts to bring pressure on Israeli governments? Is it effective in mobilising people and helping to end the occupation and bring a just peace? At a meeting organised by the Jewish Socialists' Group, activists had a chance to discuss the pros and cons.

RIGHT NOT TO BUY

Early in 2007 a group of Jews in Britain marked 40 years of the occupation by issuing a statement supporting

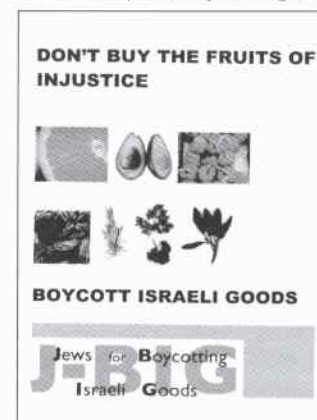
the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) until Israel abides by international law.

The BDS campaign began in April 2001, when a group of Israeli citizens and others called for a boycott of Israeli exports and tourism. In July 2005 a call came from organisations

representing Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of Israel for 'broad boycotts and ... divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era'. The Palestinian call was taken up by Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) in the form of a campaign to Boycott Israeli Goods (BIG). Our campaign to involve Jews joined these initiatives in the form of J-BIG – Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods. So far, though, actions have been small scale affairs, which have not received much publicity.

In J-BIG we believe that boycott movements involving different sectors of civil society, and especially Jews, have the potential to attract the attention of politicians and the public and to combat the widespread and persistent ignorance about the

NAOMI WIMBORNE-IDRISSI, describes an initiative to persuade Jewish people to get involved in the boycott campaign.



plight of the Palestinian people.

This is urgent. Palestine is threatened with oblivion and Israel's unapologetic breaches of United Nations resolutions and the Geneva Conventions are rewarded by Britain, the United States and the European Union with aid and trade preferences.

Palestine finally received some high profile attention this year when trades unionists, acting in accordance with their tradition of solidarity with the victims of oppression, brought boycott motions to several major union conferences (UCU, NUJ, UNISON, TGWU-UNITE). The fact that, in some cases, the union executives later caved in to anti-boycott pressure is an indication not that boycott is a wrong tactic, but that it is one which is feared by those who prefer to see Israel pursue its discriminatory policies unchallenged.

We recognise that, in establishing Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods, we stepped outside the comfort zone of many Jewish activists. People question parallels between Israeli and South African apartheid, between our campaigns and that earlier anti-apartheid struggle. They suggest that we will alienate too many other Jews by singling out Israel and that we risk the taint of antisemitism.

The antisemite slur and the charge that Israel is being unfairly targeted are not reserved solely for boycott campaigns and can be readily answered. We oppose all forms of racism whether directed at Jews, Arabs or any other target group. We believe that Israel, like South Africa, must be challenged for its actions because it is itself guilty of blatant racism, inflaming hatreds and rendering impossible the achievement of a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians. It has to be specifically targeted because it poses as a democratic state while oppressing an entire people and it has been granted impunity and protection under the wing of the world's greatest superpower.

Economic boycotts may not in themselves force Israel to change direction but they give activists the chance to explain why people should use their power as consumers, tourists or investors. They can use this



power, not to help finance an oppressive regime, but to support the Palestinian victims whose economy is in tatters because of restrictions on movement and other discriminatory measures. Public bodies and organisations can be called upon to endorse positive initiatives in the region and apply sanctions against those who support the status quo.

Campaigns against specific companies (such as Caterpillar) or sectors (construction, armaments, surveillance) raise political awareness by educating people about the realities of house demolitions, settlement-building and Israeli militarism.

Cultural, sporting and academic boycott actions – targeting institutions and not individuals – can be used to promote links with Palestinians and those few brave Israelis who stand out against the mainstream and highlight the unjust context in which Palestinian artists, sportsmen and women, students and academics operate. There have been more expressions of doubt than ever before from Israeli academics about the role of their institutions as bastions of the state since the UK boycott issue has been raised.

Members of the Jewish community may react with alarm at first, and participants in the campaign may differ as to their precise goals, but a boycott movement with the basic aim of building pressure on Israel to recognise the equal rights of Jews and non-Jews should win widespread support.



Find out more

Matzpun (Conscience)
www.matzpun.com
A group of Israeli citizens and Jews of other nationalities have made a continuing call for a boycott of Israeli exports and tourism since 2001.

The Big Campaign
http://bigcampaign.org/
The main campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and in support of the Palestinian people for national, civil and human rights.

FREEDOM IS NOT ACADEMIC

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION (UCU) MOTION ON BOYCOTT OF ISRAELI ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

This Motion was passed at University and College Union (UCU) delegate conference 30th May 2007. It was overturned four months later by the union's strategy and finance committee acting on legal advice that the resolution would fall foul of Britain's Equal Opportunities legislation.

Congress notes that Israel's 40-year occupation has seriously damaged the fabric of Palestinian society through annexation, illegal settlement, collective punishment and restriction of movement.

Congress deplores the denial of educational rights for Palestinians by invasions, closures, checkpoints, curfews, and shootings and arrests of teachers, lecturers and students.

Congress condemns the complicity of Israeli academia in the occupation, which has provoked a call from Palestinian trade unions for a comprehensive and consistent international boycott

of all Israeli academic institutions.

Congress believes that in these circumstances passivity or neutrality is unacceptable and criticism of Israel cannot be construed as antisemitic.

Congress instructs the NEC to

- circulate the full text of the Palestinian boycott call to all branches/LAs for information and discussion;
- encourage members to consider the moral implications of existing and proposed links with Israeli academic institutions;
- organise a UK-wide campus tour for Palestinian academic/educational trade unionists;
- issue guidance to members on appropriate forms of action.
- actively encourage and support branches to create direct links with Palestinian educational institutions and to help set up nationally sponsored programmes for teacher exchanges, sabbatical placements, and research.

Why do you argue for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions?

Over the last 40 years, nothing has made difference in improving the situation for the Palestinians, while the West, under different umbrellas, is supporting Israel. What – as human beings, as intellectuals, as academics – can we do? Very little, but that little is what we have to do. In the Anti-Apartheid Campaign the boycott campaign started in the same way. People said: it's not fair; it won't make a difference; why do you pick on South Africa when there are a lot of other nasty regimes? We fought apartheid in a number of ways – I don't think the boycott is the one that ended it. I am doing this from a sense of great frustration with the political machinery in the West and a great sense of impending danger, and because I have lost hope in any action that doesn't come from the ground up. What we are planning is boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS). We have to shock Israel into listening to what is good for it, which is peace.

How are Israeli universities colluding with the occupation?

The day after Sharon was elected in 2001, he met with Professor Arnon Sofer who runs a centre for demographic studies at the University of Haifa. Sharon asked him one question: where should the wall be built? Sofer, who has spent his lifetime working on how to divide up Palestine so Israel can have the maximum land with the minimum people, plans the route of the wall. But we should think beyond the person, to the institutional and community level. The Israeli academic community is quick to defend its own rights and privileges but is, on the whole, absent from the struggle for human or political rights for the Palestinians, not to mention their rights to academic freedom or even freedom of movement. Some of the colleges and universities are even built on illegally occupied land – like Ariel

College. Ariel has been given temporary university status by Olmert but before that it was a satellite of Bar Ilan University. Both are the mainstay of the right-wing settlers' movements and their intellectual hinterland. Rabin's murderer, Yigal Amir, came from Bar Ilan, for example. If we do not struggle against this illegal and immoral action by thousands of Israeli academics, we will betray Palestinian and Israeli academics fighting for peace and for life together.

How can a boycott campaign highlight the problems that Palestinian students face?

Over a period of seven years, Palestinian students in many universities have not been able to study for one complete academic year. Students from Gaza cannot study in other parts of Palestine, and vice versa. Often the university is closed but even when it's open, most staff and students find it very difficult to get there, because the roads, checkpoints and system of permits or non-permits is so complex, so unfair and so arbitrary. This is even worse than it was in apartheid South Africa, as the network of 'Jewish roads', closed to all Palestinians, a vile and racist invention, makes movement almost impossible. One has to remember Israel has collected taxes from four million Palestinians for 40 years, and has never done anything for them, which contravenes the Geneva Conventions.

Despite its international responsibility, Israel has never financed schools, universities and colleges in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. So Palestinians have to pay to set up universities that the Israelis then close. The difficulties of studying in Palestine include not having access to decent libraries because you can't bring materials from abroad into Palestine without Israel's agreement. There is only one proper library in the whole of the West Bank, and that is not in a university. It is Muwatin, the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy. All this is on top of the fact that they arrest lecturers and students, and Israel

HAIM BRESHEETH has campaigned within the UCU for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. **SIMON LYNN** interviewed him before the resolution voted on at conference (left) was overturned by UCU officers.

PALESTINE IS THREATENED WITH OBLIVION, AND ISRAEL'S UNAPOLOGETIC BREACHES OF UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS AND THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS ARE REWARDED BY BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH AID AND TRADE PREFERENCES.

has now refused to extend the visas for lecturers from abroad, who might be Arabs or Palestinians with British or Canadian or American passports. These are teachers who work for almost nothing because they are committed to improving higher education in Palestine.

When I worked in Israel, I had more money for one year's research than I have for 10 years in Britain. Israel looks after its academics and supports them generously. Its universities are some of the best supported on this planet. In contrast, Palestinian universities, which are supposedly funded from the same budget, have not a penny spent on them. It is credit to the Palestinians that they have invested so much in education despite the awesome odds. There is no economic activity left. So when Israel hurts the economy, it hurts human rights and education.

Do you think there are legitimate arguments against a boycott or are they all flawed or motivated by a pro-Israel agenda?

If there are legitimate arguments against a boycott which are not, basically, Zionist arguments, I haven't heard them. On the UCU website, apart from some abusive letters, there are some that seem to have some rationale. But when you examine them, they are all based on Zionist tenets and ideas of 'ethnic democracy'. None of the people writing against the boycott would consider the wisdom of arguing for or against a Jewish state. I am a Jew, like you. I am proud of my Jewishness, I'm proud that cosmopolitanism is a strong Jewish tradition. I am proud of the Bund and Jewish socialist and internationalist traditions that were once very strong. But Israel has changed all that. Israel has defused that type of energy by demanding that all Jews should support it by going there, by paying for it – but mainly by being a support system abroad. People who argue against the boycott say there are lots of really good things we can do without a boycott: we can twin with Palestinian institutions, or support peaceniks in Israel or work with Israeli universities in order to educate them on the need for peace. But we have had 40 years of occupation and all the movement has been in one direction. The time for educational campaigns is past. We need moral action from academics everywhere.

Does the response to the call for boycott depend on whether it is being advocated by Jews or non-Jews? In apartheid South Africa white people fighting against racism were decisive in bringing about the end of the regime, because no one could claim that it was only an issue for the blacks. Racism is a problem for all of us. Jews and Israelis, together with Palestinians and others, should all say we want an end to racism, violence and militarist occupation. This is one goal we share. There is another side to this: Judaism has had a longstanding, distinct contribution towards ideas of universal morality, and we are bound by this history. We can't say, as a lot of Israelis and Jews are saying, 'Why pick on Israel? There are so many other awful regimes, so we are just one of them.' Well I'm sorry, I don't want to be one of them – a Jewish version of the Taliban state. Jews cannot marry non-Jews, as civil marriage is not allowed. Jews in Israel own the land. There is no Christian or Islamic land. There are Jewish roads, Jewish water, and tomorrow there might be Jewish air. This is both immoral and illogical. In terms of

universal codes of morality which Judaism has instigated, this is crucial. Can you imagine what it means for Palestinians, if we stand with them, for us to say 'We are with you on this'? This is to take a Jewish stand, a moral stand, a human stand. In South Africa Jews were at the forefront of fighting racism. Of course they were on the other side as well, but that's always the case. The point is that Ronnie Kasrils and people like him stood with blacks saying: 'We are going to defeat the system because we are Jews and socialists, we are human beings, we are universalists, we are moral people and we won't allow this to continue.'

What about the backlash?

I get a dozens of nasty emails every week. They are horrific, undermining, nasty to a point that I don't recognise as human. Both my parents were survivors of Auschwitz-Birkenau. My father is now dead but in the past people telephoned my parents, and recently my 95-year-old mother, to say they should have died in Auschwitz rather than have given birth to such a terrorist and antisemite. I don't think my parents are to blame for my views and I don't think they are to blame for being survivors. So yes, you pay a personal price. My sister, who doesn't share my views, is being attacked. Why? There are no holds barred in this fight but that won't stop us. It also reminds us of the nastiness which Palestinians experience daily, and which we never have to face, which is sobering.

Do you think ordinary Jews in Britain have legitimate fears about the boycott campaign? How can a campaign address this constituency?

I do not wish to dismiss these fears but it is interesting how these fears play into the concerns of Jews living in a non-Jewish society without a distinct antisemitic tradition like Britain, as compared to the Continent, and feed a Zionist myth. Many of these people or their parents or grandparents came from the Continent and they are quite right to be careful about their social environment. I don't want to ridicule or minimise it. I don't believe their fears are founded but that is not to say they don't feel them. I think we should deal with those fears by discussing them rather than taking them for granted, seeing them as a constant of non-Jewish society. One fear is that if you don't have a Jewish state, or if you don't support Israel strongly enough, then it won't be a refuge for Jews.

As an Israeli who fought in three wars before the age of 26, I can say that the only place you are likely to die (or kill) because you are a Jew is Israel. And the only place Jews are in constant danger because they are Jewish is Israel. Israel has never been a refuge – now less than ever. Worse still, it radiates insecurity to Jews who fear not only the old antisemitism, but also feel fearful because of their connection with Israel. So, though they don't normally give those fears full cognisance, Jews here are worried about Muslims in Britain turning against them, as their support of Israel may well be read as anti-Muslim. I recognise this, and I want to make sure it never materialises. So how do you say to Muslims: we are not racists, we are not against Arabs and Muslims? You work with them against racism in your communities. East London was a place where people fought together against racism – Jews, non-Jews, socialists, non-socialists. In Cable

Street they all marched together against fascism. Now Jews do not relate much to Muslim society in Britain, but I believe we should build bridges between people who were once the targets of racism and people who are now the targets of racism.

But there are real antisemitic attacks in east London, such as desecration of graves.

Sure there are antisemites. When I recently visited Israel, the largest cell of antisemitic fascists was unearthed near Tel Aviv and there are others. Those guys have targeted Arabs, foreign workers, homosexuals and – wait for it – religious Jews. They painted swastikas in synagogues! So is Israel a refuge from antisemitism? I suggest that Israelis and Zionists who claim that the boycott movement is antisemitic should take look in the social mirror before blaming others.

We have to campaign against all forms of racism, both in Israel and outside. According to Zionism, Jews should go to Israel because they cannot live with others. This is as untrue as saying black people cannot live among whites. The only way to prove this is by working with others, living with them and creating an environment that is humane for everyone. Jews have been enormously important in creating a lasting humane environment in Europe. I don't want to lose our connection to that tradition.

Won't a boycott campaign further marginalise Israeli activists who oppose the occupation?

Those campaigns are so marginal that nothing could marginalise them further. On the contrary, if Israeli academia was put under pressure and had to examine its role, many people who sit on the fence enjoying their ample benefits, travel to Europe, the States and Australia on research trips and receive a warm welcome, may have to change their views. There will not be a revolution, but all of a sudden there will be small problems. They may not feel as welcome as they did before. Maybe some of them will join that tiny minority that 'cross the line'. That's what happened in South Africa in the endgame period. I am not a Maoist, but societies crumble because of internal contradictions. In the last resort, the change must come from within. Outside pressure is just a handmaiden.

Can the campaign include conscious links with those activists who cross the line?

It already does. Many of us are in daily contact, listening to what Israelis and Palestinians are saying and doing, in Ta'ayush for example. These are the people in the front line, not us. We should not forget that whatever is done to any of us for our beliefs, it does not add up to 1% of what every Palestinian is experiencing; and the Israelis who cross the line bear the brunt for resisting and we must support them.

Does the campaign aim to generate dissent within Israeli institutions?

This is an important aim. Dissent means a move towards resolution. In Northern Ireland we saw that dissent was fermenting underground. It looked for a while as if there would not be a resolution. Yet those currents continued to gnaw at the main pillars. Both sides there are now sitting together in government, and nothing terrible has happened. It is not heaven on earth, but it is better.

Do you support a wholesale economic, cultural, academic and sporting boycott or a more nuanced or targeted approach?

These are not mutually exclusive. I think targeted boycotts are really excellent because they are clear: people know what they are doing and why. On the other hand, what are we concerned about? Caterpillar Inc? Or what Israel is doing with the D9 bulldozers? Of course Caterpillar is making tractors but the main problem is what Israel is doing with them. So I want to see both approaches.

The Rachel Corrie tragedy helps us remind the American public that the issue is not just Caterpillar. Many other US companies sell military technology and armaments, including the cluster bomblets that have killed over 150 Lebanese civilians since the war in 2006 because Israel is illegally using weapons of mass destruction. I'm not happy with focused boycotts alone because they may miss the real target, which is Israel's crimes and racism. What about Northrop-Macdonald, all the companies that produce Israel's fighter jets, their attack helicopters, their artillery they target on Gaza civilians on the beach? They are much worse than Caterpillar.

A holistic boycott is useful because that is what Israel will have to worry about if there is a change in the US or Europe. Swiss citizens are opposing selling Oerlikon guns to Israel because they kill Palestinians. So they may start to pressurise both Oerlikon and the Swiss government. Most of the Palestinians are killed by armaments produced in the West, and we need to make people aware of this. We don't want any harm to come to Israelis – we just don't want them to harm others, and we don't want to finance national industries that sell weapons of mass destruction to Israel to be used against civilians.

How do you respond to those who say that singling out Israel for a boycott campaign plays into the hands of antisemites and by drawing the lines in the wrong place, alienates supporters of a just peace?

I hope it won't do that. I can't read the future – we can only learn from past experience. In South Africa, the boycott campaign did the opposite. It united people slowly, painfully. People said of the blacks then, just what they say of the Palestinians today: they are killing each other, how can you make peace with them? This is the situation and it is destructive but there are always arguments inside a community under enormous pressure. Israel's brutality against Palestine, produces more brutality.

For almost two years the Quartet has boycotted the Hamas government. This is a boycott by a powerful organisation which has been elected by no one and represents no one. Who are its officials? What is its constitution? Who takes its decisions and where are they taken? This institution instigated an illegal boycott against the democratically elected government of Palestine. Nobody who opposes our proposed boycott seems to have a problem with that. Our boycott is not going to cause harm, starve people or deny them medicines. There are boycotts out there which harm millions of people. Our boycott will not harm a single individual. It will harm a regime that is against people. Choose which boycott you wish to support – a boycott of the powerful and brutal starving a whole nation, or a grassroots boycott to end racism and occupation, to bring about peace.

SPORTING CHANCE



England fan **MARK PERRYMAN** describes an innovative project to bridge the gulf between Israeli and Palestinian, Jewish and non-Jewish football supporters.

Wembley Way isn't the usual site for protests and demos. But a small crowd gathered there with placards and banners to call for a boycott of the match when England played Israel in the early September qualifier for 2008. 'Show Israeli Racism the Red Card', said the leaflets strewn all across the pavement as fans rushed by in their tens of thousands scarcely spending a second to listen to, let alone join, the boycott.

No doubt the Palestine Solidarity Campaign activists went home with their assumptions about football fans in general, and England fans in particular, confirmed. All we care about is the score, and never mind the politics.

But if the protesters had contacted the England fans' groups they would have discovered a very different picture. They would have learned that, prior to the away match in Tel Aviv in March, fans had organised an ambitious programme to challenge the ignorance and prejudice which can too easily form the basis of antisemitism, while seeking to find ways to use the trip to engage with Arab football. In London and Manchester fans organised forums with the Jewish sports group MaccabiGB, the campaign group Kick Racism out of Israeli Football and the charity Football4Peace.

Fans who had never before experienced Jewish culture tasted kosher food and beer, heard about the problems with antisemitic and anti-Arab abuse at Israeli league clubs, and learned of the extraordinary work of Football4Peace in using the game to bring Arab and Jewish kids together. We learned a lot more about Israel and how the conflict with Palestine affects football than from those discarded leaflets on Wembley Way.

The preparations paid off spectacularly when the 3,500 fans travelled to Tel Aviv. On the day before the game, close to 100 England fans were the first ever group of travelling football supporters to visit Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial, and lay a wreath. This was national news right across the Israeli media and back home in the Jewish media here. England fans paying their respects, as previously we had done on visits during World Cup 2006 at Dachau, and when England played in Poland at Auschwitz in 2004. Bearing witness to the Holocaust, pinning to our St George Cross wreaths each time, bearing the same message: 'Never Forget - Never Again'. A popular anti-fascism, combining our patriotism with our solidarity. And supported by fans who would be derided by most boycott campaigners as uninterested in anything apart from the score.

We returned from Yad Vashem to support a showpiece five-a-side tournament in Tel Aviv organised by Football4Peace. When we heard about this initiative, fans from 16 different league clubs asked their clubs to donate a complete strip for

each of the competing teams. A connection was made between Crewe Alexandra, Manchester United, Reading, Spurs, Wealdstone FC and others with this innovative project which brings children together to play football. Each team would be a mix of Arab and Jewish children, taken through their paces in teambuilding exercises by the Football4Peace coaches.

Few of the England fans involved were Jewish. Supporters who had once included a fringe element of fascists and racists were doing something entirely different to the stereotype heaped upon us, including by wide sections of the Left.

On Friday evening, 70 fans joined a Shabbat meal hosted by MaccabiGB. The England fans were invited to join tables of Jewish Israel fans and in the course of the meal we learned just a little about each other's cultures. 'You only sing when you're eating,' was the England fans' chant of the night as each course was followed by yet another blessing. And when it was discovered the Rabbi leading the proceedings was Argentinian, we couldn't resist teasing him about England's most recent, 2005, defeat of Argentina. 'But we didn't have the hand of God,' he replied. To which we instantly responded: 'But which God?' Interfaith dialogue with a difference!

And then, on matchday, two coachloads of England fans travelled two hours north of Tel Aviv, seeing as we drove along the impact of dividing villages with the fences, barriers and walls which surround the West Bank. Our destination was Sakhnin, a predominantly Arab town and home to the top Arab team in the Israeli League, Bnei Sakhnin, the first Arab team to compete in the UEFA cup from Israel. At the magnificent newly-built Dhofar stadium some 1,000 of their supporters greeted us, filling the stands with cheers as the Bnei Sakhnin supporters club team took on our fans team in a friendly match. Not one fan told us we should have boycotted this trip, instead they were amazed and proud that so many of us had come to visit them.

Did we think that any or all of this would bring peace to the Middle East? It would be patronising in the extreme to presume that was our expectation so it was incredibly dispiriting to read in the generally progressive football magazine, When Saturday Comes, a sneering article which concluded: 'Thanks for the goodwill, but no thanks'. It seems as if there's no pleasing some cynics. If we're not stiff-armed saluting Nazi sympathisers, we're liberal do-gooders with a conscience getting in the way of the football. Of course we're neither. Football is the reason England and Israel were brought together in Tel Aviv and Wembley. For an increasing number of England's travelling support,

an away match means combining the game with a mix of cultures, finding out about the country and the place, experiencing what we have in common through football, and what we don't.

It was the same for the return, home, match. Following the success of the activities on the away trip, friendly fan matches were organised in Manchester and Wembley. Once more we shared bagels and kosher beer, united against racism in football, and on 27,000 seats at Wembley the plastic bags which formed the St George Cross and the Israeli flag also carried news of the fan events which had taken place in Israel, promoting our opposition to antisemitism, the football4peace initiative and our visit to Sakhnin. And in the match programmes? Articles about these same fan activities, the purpose behind them, the opposition to racism in Israeli football.

None of this appeared to have been noticed by those picketing the game. None of the protesting groups had found out what we'd organised around the games in Israel or Wembley. I wonder if it had ever occurred to them that football fans would be capable of thinking over the issues involved in Israel vs England and come up with a response. If so, the campaign on Wembley Way was spectacularly ineffective.

If they had asked us about our intentions, no

HIRE-ARCHY

An Ethiopian, Arab, Russian, strictly Orthodox, Ashkenazi and Sephardi man of the same age group and same educational background were sent by [the Israeli paper] Yedioth Ahronoth to look for a job, find an apartment and enrol a child in kindergarten. Would their ethnicity or skin-colour have an effect in 2007 Israel? The answer, unfortunately, is yes.

The six were chosen to represent different sectors of society. They approached more than 400 restaurants, cafés, apartments for rent, and kindergartens in 22 cities – from Kiryat Shmona [in the north] to Eilat [in the south]. In each conversation the applicant's background was mentioned either directly or in a roundabout way.

The Ashkenazi caller, Itai Unger, received the most positive answers and encountered no expressions of racism. The Sephardi, Yehuda Peretz, came in second, while the strictly Orthodox and the Russian immigrant took third and fourth places respectively.

More than half of the calls made by the Ethiopian representative, Senbato Tamanu, resulted in a refusal, and dozens contained derogatory remarks. Following closely, with more than 70% negative answers and numerous instances of the phone being slammed down, was the Arab caller Said Hanin.

Here are some examples.

Tel Aviv

In the kindergarten in the upmarket Dan neighbourhood, Senbato, Itai and the strictly orthodox Yisrael, received positive responses. Said, on the other hand, was told: 'We're booked, there are no vacancies.'

The waiter's position was no longer available when Boris called but magically materialised again for Itai.

doubt they would have questioned our view of Palestine. Personally, I would have given the same answer I gave to the Jerusalem Post. What we did in Israel and at the home game was about bringing fans together through football, against racism and antisemitism, a dialogue of cultures. I look forward to the day when we play Palestine at Wembley, laying out their flag, with a welcome in Arabic in the same way as we did for the Israeli fans.

That picket, wrapped up in a language and slogans unreadable outside a Leftist culture of protest and propaganda, was a sign not of strength of purpose but of an increasingly meaningless mission. This is a leftism incapable of doing the groundwork to build a durable mass movement founded on principles of popular internationalism. A left in retreat ever since the anti-war movement marched in their millions and failed to stop a war or bring down the government.

On the margins of Wembley Way the boycotters were on the losing side. If, instead, they'd bothered to ask the fans involved with these initiatives around the game what we'd got up to, they might have learned how to be on a side that wins, which combines a popular internationalism with the global appeal of football. A pride in our team and country divorced from the prejudice too many presume we're unable to distinguish from our patriotism.

Jerusalem

The kindergarten teacher from Pisgat Ze'ev in Jerusalem chatted happily with Boris in fluent Russian. Senbato was also answered positively. But when Said called, the answer was: 'I don't want to hang up on you but you'd better look for another place.'

At 4:50pm Yehuda was invited for interview at a food stall in the Mall. At 5pm Said was told: 'We are not hiring at the moment.' At 5:15pm Itai was asked to come in the next day for an interview.

Haifa

Three competed for the waiter's job in a coffee shop: Boris, Yisrael and Itai. Boris and Yisrael received negative answers while Itai was summoned for a job interview.

Said, who had many failures in other cities, received positive answers when trying to enrol a child in kindergarten and when asking to rent an apartment.

Bat Yam

At the café, Senbato applied for a job, they asked for an 'espresso-machine operator's certificate' and explained: 'The machine we use is very complicated.' Itai, on the other hand, was asked to attend a job interview even though he said he had no experience.

Holon

After many repeated calls, Holon turned out to be racism-free. All six representatives received positive answers. When Said asked a landlord: 'Don't you mind the fact that I'm an Arab?' the answer was: 'Not in the least.'

An Ethiopian, Arab, Russian, strictly Orthodox, Ashkenazi and Sephardi go out to find a job, rent an apartment and enrol a child in kindergarten. Discrimination? Racism? Absolutely. YUVAL KINAR reports

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Mark Perryman is the author of *Ingerland: Travels with a Football Nation*, Simon & Schuster, £10.99

Perverting rationalism

Gary Fraser's argument (JS53) that the Holocaust was an outcome of 'modernity' is based largely on Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust*. There are at least two theses in Bauman's work – a strong and a weak version. The strong version, which Fraser seems to take, sees the Holocaust as the outcome of modernity/the Enlightenment's creation of new categories of person judged irrational and therefore subject to persecution, including witches, Jews, homosexuals and others. The bureaucracy was the product of modernity par excellence. Under Nazism, 'rational' bureaucrats coldly performed the task of extermination within an organisation that absolved them of personal responsibility. The weaker version says 'modernity' is not a sufficient explanation of the Holocaust, but factory-style mass murder would not have been possible without the instruments of the modern world and the utopian desire to recreate humanity purged of 'imperfections'.

The weaker version, though, cannot explain why Nazism succeeded in Germany but not in countries more 'modernised' than Germany. This question is addressed in Norbert Elias' *The Germans*, which looks at specific features of 1920s German society – the humiliation of defeat in 1918 and at Versailles, the dominance of the traditional 'warrior' caste of Prussian aristocrats, the twin threats of capitalism from the west and Communism from the east that, combined with mobilising latent antisemitism, could be presented as part of a world 'Jewish-Bolshevik-Finance conspiracy'. Fraser refers to Hitler's belief in the (false) science of eugenics but not to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which underpinned his paranoid worldview, thereby minimising the specific role of antisemitism in Nazism.

Not just cranks

With regard to Mike Rosen's fascinating interview (JS53), it is easy to dismiss Atzmon, Eisen and Co as a few cranks, but they are symptomatic of a wider problem – the despair many people feel at the situation the Palestinians face and the search for shortcuts and easy explanations. Atzmon et al blame the Jews, not least those Jews who support the Palestinians! More serious voices, such as Mearsheimer and Walt, look to the pro-Israel lobby, AIPAC et al, but through the wrong end of the telescope. They attribute US foreign policy to the lobby without asking why this lobby accumulated such apparent strength.

I disagree with Rosen's response when asked if anti-Zionism can become antisemitism. You cannot 'crossover from anti-Zionism to antisemitism' without first abandoning anti-Zionism. Nor do I accept that equating Zionism with Nazism results in antisemitism. There are parallels between the two systems, and the fact that Zionism has not tried to physically exterminate the Palestinians does not negate those parallels.

When the Knesset recently approved the first reading of the JNF Bill, allowing the JNF/Israeli Lands Administration to continue debarring Arabs from using 93% of Israel's land, refusenik Jonathan Ben-Artzi, wrote to all MKs: '...On May 4th 1939 a law was implemented, forbidding a certain minority in a certain country from purchasing and leasing the majority's lands in that country. Instead of rewriting

The 'strong' version of Bauman's thesis, that the Holocaust was an outcome of modernity, lazily conflates very different processes. Fraser claims that the first results of an early modern purge of 'irrationality' were the witch trials of the 16th and 17th centuries. But these were driven by the Catholic Church through the Inquisition – beginning in 1486 with the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a document which ruled it heretical even to question belief in the existence of witches, which many had previously done. Scientists themselves (Galileo, Bruno) could fall victim to charges of heresy, so how exactly then were the witch trials part of the triumph of science over religion, as Fraser claims?

At the core of the Enlightenment were beliefs in pluralism, debate, freedom of thought and inquiry and the power of reason against superstition. Exponents of 'racial science' perverted scientific rationalism into totalitarian commitment to human perfection through the elimination of whole categories of people. There were those who dully performed bureaucratic tasks and pursued profit without concern for consequences. But many of those who fought against Nazism and Stalinism believed passionately in the central values of rationalism and justice, and to suggest an affinity between the two is to mock the dead.

For Kant, the Enlightenment represented progress to moral autonomy; we achieve the maturity to make choices based on rational reflection rather than edicts of tradition. For Bauman, everyone becomes a victim of society without individual choice. The Holocaust and the Gulag become merely results of an abstract entity called 'modernity' and no one is really to blame. On the contrary, the acquiescence of millions of people to mass murder was a denial not fulfilment of the core Enlightenment principles.
Larry Ray, Kent

this law now, why don't you translate and implement that law?' Was Artzi being antisemitic?

Atzmon has made considerable efforts to deny that he is a Holocaust denier. Yet clearly he and others within the orbit of Deir Yassin Remembered, are fatally attracted by Holocaust revisionism. In an essay in *Counterpunch*, he remonstrates with prominent Jewish anti-Zionists: 'Though they may be critical of different aspects of the exploitation of the Holocaust, they all accept the validity of the Nazi Judeocide...not a single Holocaust religion scholar dares engage in a dialogue with the so-called 'deniers' to discuss their vision of the events or any other revisionist scholarship.' Their fault, it seems, is to criticise Zionist misuse of the Holocaust rather than question the Holocaust itself.

Atzmon attributes the failures of the Palestine solidarity movement to the Jews who are active in it. 'For a Jew to fight Zionism' he must 'turn his back on Jewishness and to make peace with humanity... to join humanity and to leave the politics of negation behind.' There we have it. To be Jewish is to be set apart from humanity. In his loathing of a Jewish diaspora, Atzmon comes full circle to the classic Zionist position.

Mike Rosen is too kind by half to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). There was a time when they wouldn't have touched Atzmon with a bargepole, regardless of his celebrity status. Did Rock Against Racism invite Eric Clapton on to their platforms after his 'I back Enoch' outburst? The SWP, should be shamed and embarrassed into cutting its links with Atzmon.
Tony Greenstein, Brighton

SALE OF THE CENTURY

2nd November 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet:

'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely

Arthur Balfour

There's a moshav, a farming settlement, in northern Israel called Balfouria, and a Balfour Street in Tel Aviv. The Zionist Federation's headquarters in London is Balfour House. I knew a fellow whose parents had given him the forenames 'Theodor Balfour', after Theodor Herzl the founder of political Zionism and the right honourable James Arthur Balfour.

Yet this Balfour, as Prime Minister, introducing the 1905 Aliens Act in the wake of Russian pogroms, had spoken of 'the undoubted evils that had fallen upon the country from an immigration which was largely Jewish'. At that time the world Zionist congress accused him of 'open antisemitism'.

In 1917, asked to intercede with the Czarist regime for the removal of civic disabilities on Jews, Balfour refused, reportedly opining that: 'Wherever one went in Eastern Europe one found that by some way or another the Jew got on, and when to this was added the fact that he belonged to a different race and that he professed a religion which to the people around him was an object of inherited hatred, and that moreover, he was ... numbered by millions, one could perhaps understand the desire to keep him down...'

AN OLD TRADITION

Like others of his class, Balfour actually admired those supposed characteristics of Jews which set them apart. His Declaration was not just a ploy to send them elsewhere, but stood in a Christian tradition much older than the Zionist movement, which saw a happy coincidence between divine prophecy and material ambitions in the Middle East.

Already in the 17th century, when Cromwell readmitted the Jews to England the idea of restoring us to Palestine was discussed, seen as boosting prospects for the Second Coming and perhaps more immediately those of the English Levant Company. Fortunately Cromwell's first priority was bringing trade from the Netherlands to London, and the Jews

of Amsterdam saw greater potential in the New World than in ancient Bible lands. Hence Menasseh Ben Israel explained to the Puritan parliament that we must be dispersed all over the world before Messianic prophecy could be fulfilled.

At the beginning of the 19th century Napoleon tried appealing to the Jews of Asia during his Syrian campaign, promising to restore a Jewish Kingdom. Then Palmerston, seeing French claims to protect the Maronite Christians and the Czar asserting his interest in the Orthodox Christians, sought to trump them by instructing Britain's consul in Jerusalem to pay attention to the Jews. But in his wishful thinking that Jews would rally to serve British interests, Britain's Prime Minister wildly exaggerated Jewish cohesiveness and strength, as well as fervour for Palestine. He wasn't the last.

It was not until the First World War that Britain, no longer interested in shoring up the Ottoman Empire, but intent on dismembering it, was able to enlist the Zionist movement and to offer the prize of Palestine.

EUROPEAN ORIGINS

The heart of Zionism then was among the Jews of eastern Europe, specifically the Russian Empire with its pogroms and Blood Libel, where young Jews grew up between tradition, emigration and revolution. But its head was in the West, encountering disappointment with the liberal emancipation and assimilation of which others still dreamt. In Paris the Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl had covered the Dreyfus trial. 'I achieved a freer attitude towards antisemitism, which I now began to understand historically and to pardon,' he wrote. 'Above all, I recognised the emptiness and futility of trying to "combat" antisemitism.'

The following year, 1896 he produced *Der Judenstaat*, proposing a Jewish state, and in 1897 presided over the first Zionist Congress, in Basle. He predicted – not altogether inaccurately as it happened – that in 50 years people would realise he had founded the Jewish State. That same year 1897 saw the founding in Vilna of a very different body, the Jewish Workers' Bund. Bundists believed Jewish workers must fight for their rights where they lived, not by seeking some Promised Land but as part of the wider struggle for freedom, and a socialist future for all. What's more, they acted on this.

One of the most horrific anti-Jewish pogroms took place in Kishinev, in April 1903, encouraged by the Czarist authorities. The following month Herzl, with a mixture of naivety and cynicism, set out for St. Petersburg to meet the Czar's ministers Witte and Von Plehve. He offered to woo young Jews away from the socialists and help remove Russia's Jews, if the Russian government helped with Zionist aims for Palestine. Nothing came of this, for the Russian ministers had no influence on the Turkish Sultan, and Herzl could not control young Russian Jews. At Gomel, that August, the Bundists were joined by groups like Poale Zion in organising resistance against a further pogrom.

In London, the previous year, Herzl had appeared

On its 90th anniversary **CHARLIE POTTINS** questions the reverence among Jews for the Balfour Declaration and critically examines its roots and context.

ONE MEMBER OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT STOOD AGAINST THE BALFOUR DECLARATION – THE ONLY JEWISH MEMBER, EDWIN MONTAGUE

before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, telling them: 'The Jews of Eastern Europe cannot stay where they are – where are they to go? If you find they are not wanted here, then some place must be found to which they can migrate...' The Zionist leader reassured establishment British Jews that his Zionism was not meant for them, but for their poor brethren fleeing eastern Europe, whose arrival in greater numbers would only generate antisemitism and undermine those established here. Lord Rothschild, who had been worried about what impression this foreign adventurer might make on Her Majesty's Commissioners, was eventually won over.

Another ally won, strange considering his racial prejudice about Jews, but befitting Herzl's admiration for Cecil Rhodes, was the imperialist Joseph Chamberlain. They shared the idea that Europe's unwanted poor and 'problem' people could be made useful settlers overseas. Herzl and Chamberlain travelled together to El Arish, to look at whether Jewish settlement at this gateway to Palestine might help guard Britain's imperial lifeline through Suez. Nothing came of this, still less of a subsequent British offer of land in East Africa, a non-starter with Russian Jewry. Herzl died in 1904. But the seeds of a relationship had been started.

A TANGLED WEB

On 16th August, 1914, shadowed but not intercepted by the Royal Navy, the German warships Goeben and Breslau arrived at Constantinople, where they were renamed and hoisted Turkish flags, and the crew were issued with fezzes. Before long they were shelling Russian Black Sea ports and Turkey was able to close the Dardanelles – Russia's only access to warm seas.

Worried as it had been by Germany's influence in Turkey, the drive east, and Berlin-Baghdad railway, the British government – or at least sections of it – may have secretly welcomed Turkey's entry into the war, and hoped to gain from it. But Allied forces trying to force the Straits open suffered bloody defeat in an almost year-long struggle at Gallipoli. The British Empire's invasions of Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine, assisted by Jewish spies and the Arab revolt, were no walkover.

The diplomacy was more complex. In November 1915 the British diplomat Mark Sykes and the Frenchman Francois Georges-Picot sat down to plan how the Ottoman Empire would be carved up after the war. This Sykes-Picot agreement, extended to bring in Italian and Russian ambitions, contradicted promises which Sir Henry McMahon had made to Sherif Feisal Hussein of Mecca, of an Arab kingdom in return for assisting Britain against the Turks. The Sykes-Picot agreement was secret, only published by the Bolsheviks after the October 1917 Revolution, when they seized documents held in the Russian Foreign Ministry.

British forces used Feisal's army to stifle an Arab government that emerged in Damascus, then ordered Feisal out so Syria could be handed over to the French, as per the Sykes-Picot agreement. But the British government wanted to keep its allies well away from Egypt, and the canal. Haifa was to

be a British naval base, and the rest of Palestine to go into international trusteeship, to be decided. Sykes, though originally prejudiced against 'international Jews', had already discussed with Herbert, later Viscount, Samuel and Rabbi Moses Gaster how British interests might be advanced by promoting Zionist aims.

With the world Zionist leadership left in Berlin, Chaim Weizmann, his work as a chemist valued by Britain's Ministry of Munitions, emerged as chief Zionist negotiator with British ministers. He was assisted by the Manchester Zionists, Harry Sacher, Israel Sieff, Simon Marks, Albert Hyamson and Co. They brought introductions to Liberal and Labour leaders, the Manchester Guardian and New Statesman, and Lloyd George, who replaced Asquith as Prime Minister in 1916. They set up a British Palestine Committee with Jewish and non-Jewish members.

Zionism had more powerful backers in the cabal of British imperialists advising Lloyd George, including Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian), Lord Cromer, Leopold Amery, and Lord Milner, who had worked with Cecil Rhodes, and with Zionists, in South Africa, and drafted the final version of the Declaration issued by Balfour.

WHAT INTERESTS?

The war government was interested in using Zionism not just to cloak its claims in Palestine, but to win support for its aims from Jews, whose influence it exaggerated in Europe, Russia and America, just as it exaggerated Zionist influence among Jews. 'We might hope to use it in such a way as to bring over to our side the Jewish forces in America, the East and elsewhere, which are now largely, if not preponderantly, hostile to us,' explained a Foreign Office memorandum to the British ambassadors in Paris and Petrograd, dated 9th March 1916.

The election of the anti-war Socialist Morris Hillquit in New York, and Russia's slide toward its October Revolution (which British newspapers blamed on Jews) only accelerated the moves. The Foreign Office's Department of Information had set up a Jewish section in 1916, headed by Weizmann's co-worker Albert Hyamson. The War Office let Zionists communicate via its links to supporters in the United States.

When America's former ambassador in Turkey, Henry Morgenthau, set off on a mission ostensibly to assist Jews in Palestine – actually to investigate reports that Turkish leaders wanted a separate peace – Weizmann was sent to Gibraltar to intercept him, and persuade him not to proceed. In his book, *Trial and Error*, Weizmann tries to belittle Morgenthau, suggesting the experienced diplomat was just trying to give himself importance by chasing an illusion. But whatever the real chances of peace, Chaim Weizmann and his British backers wanted to make sure it didn't happen before they had taken Palestine.

One member of the British government stood against the Balfour Declaration – the only Jewish member, Edwin Montague, who asked what authority he could have as HM Secretary for India, responsible for dealing with nationalists and

Muslims, when HM Government proposed to declare his 'national home' was in Palestine. The rider added to the declaration, about Jewish rights and status elsewhere, owed something to his opposition, but not his alone.

Both the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Board of Deputies had expressed opposition. On 17th June 1917 Lord Rothschild wrote to Weizmann rejoicing: 'We have beaten them!'; and arranging an interview with Balfour to tell him 'the majority of Jews are in favour of Zionism'. But the vote on the Board had only been 56-51.

If Zionism represents Jewish 'self-determination', as we are told by Zionists and those who listen to them, it is strange that it aroused such doubts among Jews and depended so much upon its perceived usefulness to an imperialist power.

As for what the Balfour Declaration called the 'existing non-Jewish inhabitants' – that is the 90% who were Arabs and were to become today's Palestinian nation, Balfour himself observed that the fine words about 'self-determination' used by US

President Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations would not apply to Syria, still less to Palestine: 'For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country... The four great powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder importance than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land. In my opinion, that is right.'

Thus, even before the 'war to end wars' had ended, the scene was set in Palestine for almost a century of conflict, for which we still have to find a just end.



הנהגתו של מונטגיו
היה שבו בנים לגבולם
לפי דעתו לא יא
THEIR CHILDREN SHALL COME BACK
TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY
LEWIS MONTAGUE

'Jewish Social Democrats and Zionism' a statement in The Call, 27th June 1918,

We have received the following statement from the Jewish Social-Democratic Organisation (BSP):

Since the publication of the War aims of the Labour Party, statements have appeared from time to time in the Socialist and Labour Press on Zionism and the Jewish question which display a total ignorance of the facts of the situation and call for their elucidation.

1. The so-called Jewish Socialist Labour Party 'Poale Zion' have no right to speak on behalf of organised Jewish labour, either in this country or any other. Here in England they represent no one but themselves. They are a body as small in numbers as they are in influence on the Jewish labouring population. They have never been authorised by the Jewish Trade Unions to speak on their behalf, and, if anything, these Unions are indifferent or even hostile to Zionism.
2. The same thing applies to America, where the organised Jewish Labour and Socialist movement (which is very powerful numerically, financially and in the influence it exerts upon labour conditions) has repudiated Zionism as a solution of the Jewish question.
3. But after all it was in Russia, and in the old Russia of the Czar, that there mainly was a Jewish question, and there, even before the revolution, the organised Jewish Labour and Socialist movement 'the Bund' has repudiated Zionism root and branch. Indeed, the Zionist movement was always a petty bourgeois movement, a movement among the small middle classes.
4. It will be seen therefore that the organised Jewish Socialist and Labour movement is everywhere opposed to Zionism – and for a simple reason. It is because Zionism cannot solve the Jewish question, if the question be viewed from a working-class standpoint. The emancipation of the working class can only be effected by the workers themselves, and in the country where they work and have their being. Now, what the Jewish workers require is to be placed on a par of equality of citizenship and rights in the widest sense in the countries where they happen to reside, and where they do so in large masses, such as Russia, Romania, America, and elsewhere. They demand not only political and civic rights, but also the right, if they so desire, to use their own language in the schools, in courts of law and

other legislative and administrative institutions. To attain these objects Zionism is not necessary and is indeed harmful, inasmuch as if this movement were to obtain success among the Jewish masses it would tend to turn the attention of the workers from their economic and political struggles for the emancipation of their class into the paths of a petty and narrow nationalism and chauvinism.

5. Moreover, the experience of Belgium, Serbia, Greece and Ireland has shown how precarious is the existence and independence of the small states and nationalities, even where, as in the first three instances they were presumed to be sovereign. This experience is not such as would encourage the Jewish workers to try and establish a state of their own were this even feasible, which it is not. And it is not feasible because Palestine is not large enough to maintain the thirteen million Jews, and it is quite chimerical to imagine that these millions of Jews would or could break with the ties which bind them to the countries where they have lived and worked for generations and generations in order to emigrate to a country where they would find a civilisation and a climate which would be altogether uncongenial to their habits and the mode of living to which they have been used all their life. The Zionist movement is all the more impossible and ludicrous in Russia where the Jews, in common with all the rest of the nations resident therein, have at last found their emancipation from their common yoke of Czarism, and where the Jewish workers are eager to help in the building up of that great Republic.
6. Finally, on the grounds of the first principles of democracy, the Socialist movement must oppose the formation of a Jewish State in Palestine. In Palestine the Jews form an insignificant proportion of the population which mainly is Arabian, and which would bitterly and rightfully resent and fight against the robbery of their land. Let Palestine be free to determine its own fate and let it have its independence by all means, but it would be then an Arabian and not a Jewish State.

The Socialist movement will support, of course, the freedom of colonisation in and immigration into Palestine for the Jews, but this it supports not only for the Jews but for all nationalities, and not only in Palestine but in all countries.

LOOK BACK

The future for Palestinians and Israelis needs to be built on an honest reckoning with the past, says LEON ROSSELSON

I am looking at a cartoon by Austin which shows an Israeli soldier guarding a billboard on which is written 'Welcome to Israel'. An Arab wearing a keffiyah is looking at the billboard and asking: 'Why is it on wheels?'

The cartoon pinpoints a curious fact about the Jewish state: its borders have never been clearly defined. For the devout, it must be the Promised Land of Canaan – the whole of Palestine up to the River Jordan in the east and the Lebanese mountains in the north. Political Zionism, too, had expansionist dreams. The early Zionists envisaged a state which included not only the whole of Palestine but also Transjordan. In 1922, the British excluded Transjordan from the area available for Jewish settlement, which didn't stop Ben Gurion from coveting it.

Ever the political realist, he accepted the British partition plan of 1938 but only as a temporary measure. 'The acceptance of partition does not commit us to renounce Transjordan; one does not demand from anybody to give up his vision. We shall accept a state in the boundaries fixed today but the boundaries of Zionist aspirations are the concern of the Jewish people and no external factor will be able to limit them.' Two years earlier he had declared himself 'unwilling to abandon the great Jewish vision, the final vision'. This vision seems to have encompassed the Sinai, parts of Syria and southern Lebanon too. Israeli governments in the 1950s seriously considered expanding Israel's borders northwards to the Litani River (think of all that lovely water) and this may well have been an underlying motive for Israel's attacks on Lebanon in 1978 and 1982.

The UN Partition Plan of November 1947 gave Israel 55% of Palestine, although Jews formed only 30% of the population and owned only 7% of the land. Despite objections from right wing nationalists like Menachem Begin, Ben Gurion accepted the plan in the same spirit as he'd accepted the 1938 plan. Thus, one week after the partition resolution, he ordered settlements to be established in areas assigned to a Palestinian state. By the end of the fighting, Israel's borders had expanded to take in 78% of Palestine. The Six Day War enabled Israel to expand again, swallowing up the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, Sinai and the Golan Heights, since when it has regurgitated Gaza and Sinai.

The international consensus is that pre-1967 Israel defines its final borders. Israeli maps, however, have not shown the Green Line as the border of Israel since 1971, when Golda Meir declared: 'Israel's borders are determined by

where Jews live not by where there is a line on the map,' on which basis Israel could justifiably annex New York. Recently, Israel's Peace Now Minister of Education, Yuli Tamir, asked schools to reintroduce the Green Line as Israel's border on their maps and was met by a barrage of protests and the refusal of many schools to comply.

The problem the Jewish State faced – and is facing – is that, in absorbing more territory, it has absorbed more Arabs. Too many and the character of the Jewish State is under threat. This dilemma, as Benny Morris has pointed out, can be solved either by disenfranchising the indigenous population and imposing minority rule, as in apartheid South Africa, or by 'transferring' (ie expelling) them. Zionism, early on, chose the second option. Herzl himself spoke of trying to 'spirit the penniless population across the border'. Arthur Ruppin, head of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), wrote in 1920: 'Land is the most necessary thing for establishing our roots in Palestine. Since there are hardly any more arable unsettled lands, we are bound in each case of the purchase of land to remove the peasants who cultivate the land.' The process of dispossessing Palestinian farmers from their land continued through the first half of the 20th century.

The 1948 civil war and the war against the Arab states provided the opportunity for mass expulsions. These events were enacted in the shadow of the Holocaust, a catastrophe that implanted in the minds of the majority of Jews, even those who had previously been hostile to the Zionist project, the belief that only in their own state could the Jewish people be secure. The view that the Jews had to rely on themselves, not on a hostile world, for their survival would have been confirmed by the refusal of the British government to allow free entry into Palestine of Holocaust survivors and by the quota system imposed on Jewish refugees by the US government.

Perhaps only a victim's sense of righteousness can explain this extraordinary statement by Mapai politician Avraham Katznelson: 'There is nothing more moral from the viewpoint of universal human ethics than the emptying of the Jewish State of the Arabs and their transfer elsewhere... This requires the use of force.' In this context, the indigenous people were seen, in the main, as part of the hostile world, an obstacle to be cleared away. As JNF Director, Yosef Weitz, recorded in his diary: 'Is it not now time to be rid of them? Why continue to keep in our midst these thorns at a time when they pose a danger to us?'

The Palestinians, faced with the loss of half their state, asked, justifiably, why they were paying the price for European antisemitism and Hitler's genocidal policies. During the civil war in the early months of 1948, both sides committed atrocities. There was indiscriminate killing of civilians. On 5th January the Haganah blew up the Palestinian owned Semiramis Hotel, killing 26 men, women

IN ANGER

and children. On 1st February Palestinian forces planted a bomb at the offices of the Palestine Post in Jerusalem, killing 20 Jewish civilians. From April onwards, however, attacks on civilians by Zionist forces had a clear political purpose. This was the month when Tochnit Dalet, Plan D, which gave the green light for the Arab population to be 'expelled outside the border of the state', was put into operation; the same month that the Carmeli Brigade shelled Arab crowds in Haifa's market square, killing 400, mostly civilians, and panicking thousands into fleeing; the same month that Irgun and the Stern Gang committed the notorious massacre in Deir Yassin. Terrorism and massacres – a particularly gruesome one was perpetrated by the Palmach at Dawayima in October 1948 – were the indirect methods by which the Zionists precipitated the exodus of Palestinian Arabs from their land.

There were many direct expulsions, too. In most cases, all the stone houses in the villages were destroyed so that their expelled inhabitants would have nothing to return to. Harry Levin was an eye witness to the Palmach's demolition of the village of Qalunya on 11th April 1948: 'One after another, the solid stone buildings, some built in the elaborate city style, exploded and crashed.... Within sight of Jerusalem, I still heard the explosions rolling through the hills; and in between, somewhere in the lonely distance, still rose the half-hearted barking of the village dog.'

Perhaps the most dramatic expulsion occurred in July 1948 when 70,000 Palestinians were driven out of Lydda and Ramleh with nothing to eat or drink, on the orders of Ben Gurion. 'The inhabitants of Lydda must be expelled quickly and without attention to age,' said the order to the Yiftach Brigade signed by Lt Colonel Yitzhak Rabin. It was known as the Death March. Hundreds died. One who survived by drinking his own urine was a young medical student name George Habash. He vowed vengeance and afterwards founded the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the organisation that committed a number of terrorist acts and in 2001 assassinated Rehavam Ze'evi, Israel's racist Minister of Tourism.

There was some opposition to the policy of expulsion and expropriation. Aharon Cohen, Director of Mapam's Arab Department, wrote: 'A deliberate eviction of the Arabs is taking place... Others may rejoice – I, as a socialist, am ashamed and afraid.' Yosef Nahmani, Director of the JNF in Eastern Galilee, deplored the attacks on civilians in Tiberias and, when the city was occupied by Zionist forces and looting ensued, wrote in his diary: 'Shame covers my face and I would like to spit on the city and leave it.' The policy of Mapam, when it became part of Israel's provisional government, was to oppose the destruction of Arab villages not dictated by military necessity and to support the return of 'peace-minded' refugees after the war.

But these dissident voices were swept away by the political imperative of establishing a Jewish state with maximum territory, minimum Arabs. 'For the Arabs of the Land of Israel, there remains only one function: to flee,' as Ben Gurion put it. In all, 750,000 Palestinians became refugees in 1948. Some 400 villages were wiped off the map. That did not end the ethnic cleansing. Thousands of Arabs – Israeli citizens – were expelled from the Galilee in 1956. 'Thousands more when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza.'

And now the process is continuing in East Jerusalem and in the area between the Wall and the Green Line. There are now some five million Palestinian refugees. Ben Gurion said, 'The old will die, the young forget.' But they did not forget. In Deheishe refugee camp near Bethlehem, where half the inhabitants are children and teenagers, there are murals of the 46 villages, with their different traditional costumes, from which the Deheishe refugees fled or were driven out. The memories of their homes and homeland are kept alive strongly. Stories of families retaining the keys to their houses are common.

Under international law and sanctioned by UN Resolution 194, refugees from war have a right to return or to compensation. Israel has never accepted that right. In the years following the War of Independence, Israeli government policy was to kill refugees who tried to make their way back across the border. Realistically, five million refugees cannot return to Israel. But that doesn't mean that their rights should be abrogated. Any resolution of the conflict must also include a negotiated settlement of the refugee problem. For that to happen, Israel would have to stop denying its own history and accept its responsibility for the refugees. This would entail a major shift in the thinking of Israelis and Zionists.

It took hundreds of years for white settlers in Australia and the USA to come to terms with what they had done to the indigenous peoples. Shlomo Ben-Ami, Israel's Foreign Minister under Barak, explains this well in his book *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*: 'Israel, as a society, suppressed the memory of its war against the local Palestinians because it couldn't really come to terms with the fact that it expelled Arabs, committed atrocities against them, dispossessed them. This was like admitting that the noble Jewish dream of statehood was stained forever by a major injustice committed against the Palestinians and that the Jewish state was born in sin.'



David Ben Gurion, who said: '...the boundaries of Zionist aspirations are the concern of the Jewish people and no external factor will be able to limit them.'

Golda Meir, who said: 'Israel's borders are determined by where Jews live...'



WHITE SLAVERY:

JOHN EVERSLEY follows up the debate about turn of the 20th century white slavery, which Steve Cohen initiated in the last issue of Jewish Socialist.

At the end of the 1830s, not long after black slavery had been more or less abolished, white slavery changed its focus from girl child labour in factories to prostitution. The outrage at that time was not so much that girls and women were being coerced, but that the state was regulating prostitution as it had also done with black slavery. Later the term 'white slavery' came to refer to recruitment to prostitution by force or fraud. One example of white slavery from the first half of the 19th century was Ikey Solomons – Dickens' model for Fagin – who built a criminal network in 1820s that included brothels.

At the end of the 19th century 'white slavery' specifically referred to young Jewish women from Eastern Europe who went (often via Western Europe) to South America, South Africa and a number of other places. However, even in the 1880s, Annie Besant wrote a pamphlet in which she called conditions of the Match Girls 'white slavery in London'.

The significance of white slavery was probably not the numbers of women but its relationship to issues of intense concern to people both within the Jewish communities of Europe and the societies in which they lived.

Arthur Moro, speaking in 1910, said that in the previous six years there had been 23 cases of international trafficking, 31 suspected cases, 29 prevented and 44 missing girls gone away with men of bad character, 198 investigations and 222 cases of girls who have taken to immoral lives. It is difficult to find reliable statistics for the total number of prostitutes but Moro's figures are likely to be only a small proportion of the total number of prostitutes.

In terms of the global picture of forced movement of women for sexual exploitation, the Chinese and Japanese played the biggest role, but attention was focused on Jewish traders and women.

White slavery also generated a fierce debate about its causes. Campaigners identified three principal factors: the economic, social and political status of Jews in Eastern Europe, the role of religion and the position of women. These three issues were seen as the principal drivers of emigration from Eastern Europe of young women.

The Chief Rabbi, Hermann Adler said the pogroms that began in 1881 in Eastern Europe were directly responsible for sexual immorality: 'We cannot be surprised if ill-treatment and oppression "maketh a wise man mad" by defective education, persistent exclusion from honourable pursuits and consequent fear of starvation.'

The Austrian-born Jewish feminist Bertha Pappenheim agreed that economic and social conditions were important but she also blamed religious orthodoxy. 'They are women and girls

who lead ultra-orthodox lives [Sabbath, food laws, ritual commandments]...but are completely unprincipled in regard to morality.'

Some of the religious leaders argued that the movement away from religion was the cause of immorality. Other orthodox authorities denied any specific connection with Judaism. The most that the Chief Rabbi Adler would concede was that 'foreign rabbis' granting illegal divorces were a fruitful source of immorality.

Pappenheim argued that the destruction of family life was an even bigger problem than the desperation of the Jewish population of Russia and Galicia, with the lack of attention to the human rights of women and double standards of morality. 'For millennia Jews viewed the woman solely as sexual object...[and] never any value attached to mutual affection or the wife's spiritual inclusion in the husband's spiritual life...'

A persistent theme in the debates about what white slavery was and how to fight it was the degree to which prostitutes, pimps and traffickers were separate from or part of the wider Jewish community. The religious leaders and more conservative voices tended to argue that they were separate. The more radical voice of Bertha Pappenheim argued that the trade was much more woven through the fabric of business and religious life.

There were certainly both open and covert connections between the mainstream Jewish community and sexual exploitation. For example, in the late 18th and early 19th century, members of prominent families involved in charitable work openly kept courtesans and had children out of wedlock.

Israel Zangwill, speaking in 1910, criticised the orthodox rabbinate for abetting pimps by officiating at their weddings and burials. How such collaboration might be rationalised is perhaps explained by comments by the Chief Rabbi who said: 'The fact of there being a separate synagogue [in Argentina] for these unfortunate sinners is very extraordinary evidence in favour of orthodoxy ... we should be glad to know that they are not lost to all sense of religion ... we have the chance to appeal to their better nature.'

Some (non-Jewish) establishment figures thought that Jewish and immigrant prostitution should not be discouraged either in Europe or India because it protected the virtue of other women.

Pappenheim said that in some countries the police knew about it and did nothing. Her view was certainly borne out by the attitude of ER Henry, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner in 1902, who said: 'As there must always be prostitutes, it is perhaps less demoralising to have foreign than Englishwomen ... The foreigner is more amenable to control.'

THE CONTINUING STORY

There are several possible reasons why the campaign against white slavery was taken up. A harsh interpretation of the interventions against white slavery might be that its success was not to be measured in terms of prevention of prostitution or punishment of trafficking but in its impact on antisemitism. That was certainly a motivation for supporting restrictions on 'Aliens' within the Jewish community at the beginning of the 20th century.

Anti-alienism was largely directed against Jews from Eastern Europe. Arnold White, a leading campaigner described procuring for the white slave trade and living off the earnings of women as 'two of the regular trades of the Alien Jew'. Established members of the Jewish community feared that the arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe posed a threat to them. Their response was, on the one hand welfare and assimilation measures, and on the other hand support for exclusion and deportation of those who, as the Chief Rabbi put it, 'have the slightest taint of criminality ... Who are not merely aliens in respect to this country, but who are aliens from Judaism.'

From a Zionist perspective, Zangwill claimed, 'If we had a Jewish land persecution wouldn't happen ... in a Jewish land a few summary executions might get rid of these Jewish agents but we have a frontier as wide as the world.'

The campaign was also about the status of women. Some people saw it as an opportunity to improve the status of women. Others saw it as an excuse to maintain or reverse the status quo. Bertha Pappenheim said, 'The image of white slavery is used not only to debase the Jews but also to argue against the emancipation of women.'

A variety of provision was made in response to white slavery. Chancroft House, a home for Jewish prostitutes, was opened in 1885. Foreigners who had lived in England for less than one year were not admitted. This reflected a view shared by the Jewish Board of Guardians that welfare provision might actually be an incentive to immigration.

Another Home – Sarah Pyke House – was aimed at girls at risk rather than those already involved in prostitution. In Germany, likewise, Bertha Pappenheim started two homes – one for 'the fallen' and one for those 'at risk'.

The Jewish Industrial School for Girls was started both because a need for training for economic opportunities had been identified and because the community was concerned about the only (Christian) Industrial school willing to take them. The school was in turn worried that half of the girls were physically unfit for training.

Concern about the welfare of girls, including white slavery, meant that provision of Jewish girls' clubs predated some of the more famous provision for boys, such as the Brady Club or the Oxford and

St George's Club started by Basil Henriques.

There were many debates about how the Jewish community should campaign about white slavery, including how openly it should be addressed.

The Jewish World newspaper said that the 1910 conference ought not to have been held. The Sephardi Communal Rabbi said these were topics that it was preferable to discuss in camera, notwithstanding that they apply also to members of other faiths. On the other hand, Israel Zangwill was mindful of the need to be seen to be active: 'We have to prove that though Jews are connected with the traffic, we are equally set against it.' In this context Bertha Pappenheim stated: 'If we admit the existence of this traffic our enemies decry us; if we deny it they say we are trying to conceal it.'

Another issue was whether to campaign as a Jewish body or with other faiths. Israel Zangwill argued that it should not be a solely Jewish body. Pappenheim argued that Jewish organisations had much to learn from Christian ones, and that they could fight antisemitism through working with them. Specifically, she thought that Jewish women should learn from Christian women about campaigning and emancipation. The argument for working as a Jewish body was put forward by Claude Montefiore, who argued that, while they were working with citizens of other creeds, there was a 'special Jewish side' in gathering information, rescuing the girls and in issues of prevention such as education and divorce.

Pappenheim was also concerned that a central body would be dominated by men and would be more conservative. She had been asked by B'nai Brith in Germany to form a women's auxiliary. Bertha refused and instead, in 1904, set up the Jüdische Frauenbund (JFB). The JFB worked until the Nazis stopped it operating and eventually deported its staff to concentration camps.

Mark Twain did not claim that history repeats itself. He said it merely rhymes. Alexei Sayle said more recently that we are condemned to be ruled by people who do not know any history. There are no simple, incontrovertible lessons from the white slavery campaign but there are certainly elements that should make us think when parallel situations arise today.



Bertha Pappenheim, Jewish campaigner for women's rights

UNLOCKING

PRISON WRITINGS: THE ROOTS OF CIVILISATION
Abdullah Ocalan
Pluto Press, £25

Prison Writings is a suitably grandiose title for a book as politically and academically ambitious as this: 5,000 years of Middle Eastern political history, written by the leader of the Kurdish left-wing nationalist movement. Kurdish socialism should provide Jewish socialists with plenty of food for thought, quite apart from the deep historical connections between these peoples, the rich mediaeval Jewish culture of Kurdistan, and the biblical shrines that dot its landscape.

Jews and Kurds fared differently after the First World War and dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. While the Europeanised Jews were promised a national home, the more oriental Kurds were not. As a result, the two groups have been caught up in continual conflicts. The Kurdish part of Iraq has been effectively self-governing since 1991, but its freedom remains uncertain and threatened.

Middle Eastern archaeology emerged out of colonialism and flourished within nationalism. Prehistory is politically contentious, particularly in this turbulent region. While the meagre material remains of ancient human societies contain origins of violence, hierarchy, superstition and oppression, the paucity of hard evidence leaves them open for ideological interpretations of all kinds. In the Middle East prehistory is employed in territorial disputes, nationalist myths and propaganda, and forms a rich source of cultural and economic capital. In this context, perhaps it is not so surprising that the first book written by Abdullah Ocalan, founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), should be at heart a study of Mesopotamian prehistory. But it is a remarkable book, albeit an ultimately unconvincing one.

Firstly, the author did not have access to libraries, museum collections and archives, as he was and is held in solitary confinement on a maximum security prison island, of which he is the sole occupant. For 15 years until 1998, Ocalan coordinated the paramilitary activities of the PKK against the Turkish state, including bombings and suicide bombings, from his base in Syria. Following a brief period on the run in Europe, Russia and Africa, he was kidnapped in Kenya in 1999, tried for high treason in Turkey and sentenced to death, commuted to life imprisonment in 2002.

The second remarkable aspect of the book is its tone. It contains no crass Kurdish nationalistic mythologising, nor does it crudely equate ancient victims and oppressors with modern ones. Most interestingly, considering the circumstances of its creation, it is in many respects a retraction of previously held views, particularly about violent resistance. This also reflects the shift to a more moderate official PKK ideology following Ocalan's capture. In the very short bibliography, we find

Bakunin and Bookchin, Chomsky and Popper. The works of these and other theorists are the roots of Ocalan's dramatic shift in theory and tactics.

Thirdly, this unremarkable black hardback was not written primarily for publication, although that was the ultimate intent. It is based on Ocalan's court submission in his unsuccessful appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. Ocalan and his legal team recognised this to be a loophole through which his ideas could reach the wider world, and a second volume should be published shortly. As he points out, 'historic trials call for historical arguments'. An editorial team of six is briefly acknowledged at the end of the text, suggesting significant reworking of the text for publication.

So what does Ocalan have to say? The cover quote, from a renowned Marxist archaeologist, describes the book as 'the first truly postcolonial history of Mesopotamia'. This is a great quote but only a half-truth. Prison Writings begins and ends with a critical Marxist analysis of Middle Eastern history from the Neolithic revolution onwards. But the body of the book covers the rise and decline of slaveholding societies, Christian and Islamic feudalism, and the emergence of modernity, from a European as well as a Western Asian perspective.

Ocalan's interest in the origins of civilisation (or cultural complexity, a more politically neutral term he acknowledges then ignores) builds the foundation for his analysis of the relative strengths of Europe and the Middle East. His assessment is scathing: from the collapse of the early Mesopotamian city-states, the Middle East has lagged behind Europe in almost every respect. During the mediaeval period, while Europe stagnated in repressive violence and religion, the Middle East had a brief period of dominance in almost all the arts and sciences. This advantage was squandered, in Ocalan's view, by the return of reactionary tribalism within Islam, and the absence of a Renaissance or an Enlightenment in the Middle East, developments which he traces to Christianity, 'the greatest gift the Middle East gave to Europe'. In contrast to the rise of science and individual liberty in the West, 'the Middle East ... stubbornly resists any change worth mentioning. It is, so to speak, history itself which resists here,



THE PAST

history, society and culture as a whole.'

From the emergence of agriculture to the present, Ocalan traces the development of Middle Eastern and European civilisations, culminating in his radical and utopian vision of the future. One of the recurring themes, and the most conventionally postcolonial aspect of the book, is the idea of these two civilisations existing in a dialectical relationship. 'Democratic civilisation is another important thesis of European civilisation which has to be experienced in the context of enlightenment and a new beginning ... In performing the democratic process, both on the social and the political level, the Middle East can become an antithesis. The democratisation of society, either by reform or revolution, is the crucial issue.' The prime movers in this process, according to Ocalan, will be the women and young people of the Middle East: the former a neglected force for freedom and equality, the latter the greatest source of revolutionary consciousness.

Ocalan foresees a Middle Eastern Renaissance, Reformation or Enlightenment, leading to the emergence of a democratising 'third domain' of civil society alongside the state and capitalist society. It is difficult not to be dragged along by his optimism and one's own wishful thinking. This vision for the Middle East is startlingly optimistic, although it is introduced by a vicious attack on the cultures of the region that is far from post-colonial: 'Dogmatism and fatalism have become inseparable parts of life. Independent and creative thought are fast asleep. Theological dogma are sacred taboos and must be believed unquestioningly.' The role of this third domain will be to reach beyond and rebel against the restrictions of party politics, nations, ethnicity and culture: this is clearly defined as a replacement for the failed projects of armed rebellion by oppressed groups in the region. Ocalan suggests that 'if the Middle Eastern civilisation of nations historically close to each other can produce a civil society conforming to contemporary democratic criteria, then there might be hope for the region and for mankind.'

Turning to the specifics in the final pages of the book, he proposes a post-nationalist Israeli-Arab federation built on an initial Israeli-Palestinian union. Ocalan regards the apparently reforming and reformist Iranian Islam as a valuable antithesis to feudal Arab Islam, propelling the region towards democratisation. In this broad model Turkey offers the best social conditions for the rise of democratic civil society, but only in the context of a Middle East moving rapidly beyond nationalism to a regional federalism that would form, once again, an antithesis to European political and social models.

Where do the Kurds fit into this model? From their harsh history they have, allegedly, experienced the sharp end of nationalism and Islamism, and

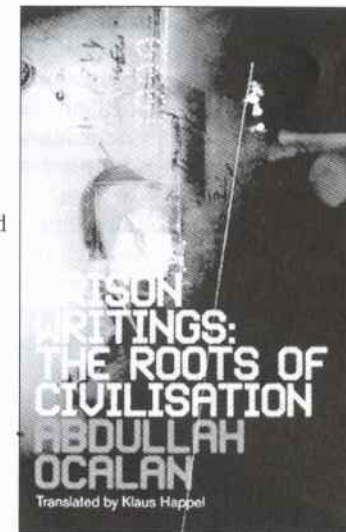
cannot see either as sources of liberation. Nonetheless, Ocalan goes too far when he claims that 'at present, the world is forcing Iraq to become democratic, Iran is probably aiming at a democratic Islamism, and Turkey is beginning to change.' Even from the restricted viewpoint of a solitary confinement cell, the future of the region cannot look that rosy.

Ocalan's credibility is further stretched by his argument that the Kurds 'have never been poisoned by nationalism', as well as by his earlier bemoaning of the 'dreadful tradition of violence in the Middle East', raising the question of what exactly he was up to in the mountains all those years. At the book's close, Ocalan places the stateless, much abused and divided Kurdish people at the forefront of the movement for a unified, democratic Middle East.

The unusual genesis of this book prompts the reader to ask: why it was published and who are its intended readers? Why now? Why in this form? Why Pluto Press? Why in English? I am probably reasonably representative of the targeted readership: already familiar with Ocalan, socialist and internationalist, although not SWP. Perhaps the best hope for keeping Ocalan in the public eye is to link his arguments with a mass movement such as the Stop the War campaign? Aside from the Marxist economic analysis, the emphasis in the book on democratising the Middle East might appeal to the neo-liberal right as well: Ocalan might become one of the client ethnic minority leaders 'we can do business with'.

Prison Writings is a brilliant but flawed book: a startling piece of scholarship, a beguiling manifesto, and a gripping and readable work of history. Ultimately it is essential reading for anyone whose view of Middle Eastern politics retains any spark of optimism for the peaceful coexistence of diverse ethnic groups. Ocalan's release from his barbaric prison conditions and return to active politics seems highly unlikely for the foreseeable future, but 20 years ago one might have said the same about Nelson Mandela, whose own paramilitary past has now largely been written out of history.

Gabriel Moshenska



BEYOND THE GREEN LINE

OVERCOMING ZIONISM: CREATING A SINGLE DEMOCRATIC STATE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Joel Kovel
Pluto Press,
£15.99

In the 40th year of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and annexation of east Jerusalem, many campaigners in Britain coalesce around the demand to end the occupation and create a viable Palestinian state on the land from which Israel withdraws. This may not address the events of 1948 but it provides a workable basis for advancing peace with justice.

The two-state solution, implicit in the UN Resolution of 1947, has dominated Palestine-oriented campaigning for the last two decades, superseding the demands for a single secular democratic state that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) postulated in the 1960s and '70s. This development smoothed the way for Palestinians to open a necessary dialogue with Israelis opposed to the occupation.

Far left groups here have held to the one-state solution, arguing that Israel's creation was an illegitimate act of settler colonialism that has to be reversed. But they have found it hard to win support for this beyond their own ranks.

Today, though, the principle and viability of the two state solution is once again questioned. As settlements grow and Israel further divides the Occupied Territories into cantons with its 'security wall' and Jewish-only roads, the possibility of contiguous Palestinian territory recedes. Meanwhile on the Palestinian street, the failure of two-statist road maps and initiatives has assisted the rise of the Islamist Hamas movement which, at least in rhetoric, focuses on the whole of Palestine. The evolution of apartheid South Africa, with which Israel is often compared, into a single, non-racial, unified state has strengthened one-staters.

Joel Kovel, a Brooklyn-born Jewish anti-Zionist, argues strongly for a single state solution. He regards Israel as an 'entirely illegitimate' state (as opposed to the 'relatively illegitimate' USA), formed and developed in bad conscience. Israel's internal logic leads it to greater and greater injustices against the Palestinian people and their rights to life and prosperity.

With occasional descent into avoidable hyperbole, he dismantles the myths and false claims perpetuated by Israel's founders. Using damning quotes, he shows what little distance there really was between Labour Zionism and Jabotinskyite fascists in term of assumptions and endgame plans with regard to the Palestinians inhabiting the land the Zionists coveted. He reveals skeletons in the cupboards of even the most revered bi-nationalists such as Martin Buber. Armed with a deed from the Jewish Agency, after Israel was declared, Buber successfully enforced his claim to a house that had once belonged to the family of the renowned Palestinian writer Edward Said. A previous court case in 1947 had found against Buber's claim.

Kovel carefully locates the place of the Zionist

movement in the strategies of competing imperial powers of the last 100 years but is on shakier ground when he tries to identify the internal Jewish imperatives towards Zionism. He is determined to show how Zionism harnessed deep impulses of Jewish tribalism going back more than two millennia towards being 'a people apart'. But this section – at the beginning of the book – falls well short of the materialist analysis he offers in later chapters. As he slips in and out of the mediaeval period he comes perilously close to accepting historical stereotypes of Jews' economic roles and being rather too understanding of the way societies treated them.

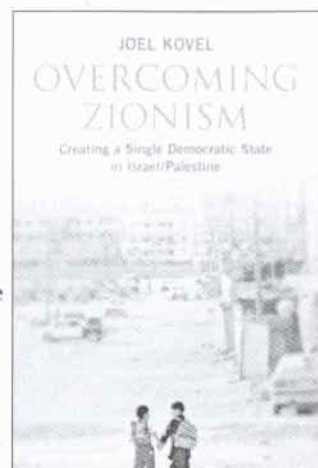
Kovel's best chapter addresses in detail aspects of the Israel/Palestine conflict that are too often ignored within the narrative of Zionism as an ideology and of Israel as invader and occupier – how the Israeli economy actually works and the environmental degradation that flows from the Zionist nature of the State of Israel.

Kovel contends that though a 'great deal of wealth passes through Israel', the country 'is scarcely productive in the essential sense of transforming nature into objects of utility'. Israel, he says 'has no resource base to speak of and its national pride as the transformer of the desert into a garden has succumbed to its ecological fecklessness'. He details the country's heavy reliance on US economic aid, its growing relationship with the new Russian oligarchs and the persistence of gangsterism.

The domination of the economy by high-tech American firms has left workers vulnerable to jolts such as the collapse of the dot.com bubble. In its short life, says Kovel, Israel has changed from being 'one of the most egalitarian countries in the world to the one with the greatest structural inequality of any industrialised nation.'

Referring to the environmental studies of Allon Tal, Kovel describes how all Israel's rivers are seriously polluted except for the Upper Jordan, how asthma rates have risen enormously as nitrous oxide emissions have quadrupled since 1980 and how Israel continues to have one of the highest incidences of breast cancer in the world.

The link between demographic imperatives and environmental dilemmas is typified by Israel's arrogation of the bulk of freshwater available. Rational approaches to ecological questions have



been undermined in the service of maintaining the occupation and literally destroying the grounds of Palestinian communal existence.

Various think tanks have addressed themselves to the economic viability of two states, but Kovel makes a powerful case for the Palestinian right of return to be a central feature of any just solution to the conflict, and by implication, to campaigning in the here and now. The attention he rightly pays to the Palestinian diaspora highlights a curious omission though – the Palestinians within Israel. As a growing minority more confidently asserting their presence and their challenge to discrimination, their position will be crucial in determining the internal political nature of the states in any serious two-state accommodation.

The single state of 'Palesreal' that Kovel

envisages will be secular, rooted in mutual respect and recognition and will safeguard human rights. But that would buck a regional trend towards a closer convergence of religion and politics. Disentangling religion and politics in any solution – one state, two states or more – will be extremely difficult. Unfortunately Kovel's analysis of political Islam is paper thin, seeing it purely as reflexive – a response to Western imperialism typified by the USA's total support of Israel – rather than locating any of its own internal dynamics of history, ideology, class and power.

Despite its weaknesses though, this book should play an important role in furthering debate on long-term solutions to this intractable conflict in addition to assisting campaigners in the present.

David Rosenberg

HUMAN CARGO

Occasionally, we glimpse the dark underside of Britain's flourishing economy – a lorry crammed with bodies at Dover; cockle-pickers sucked into the sand at

Morecambe Bay; trafficked women rescued from brothels in Birmingham – but for the most part, we avert our eyes. As the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act draws to a close, Rahila Gupta has written a graphic description and a compelling analysis of slavery in Britain today.

At the heart of the book are five personal stories. Four women and a man describe the situations which led them to flee or be taken from their homes, to embark on journeys with no clue of the suffering that would await them on their arrival in Britain.

Farhia Nur, 32, gives a vivid description of her childhood in Somalia. She talks of the female genital mutilation that blighted her life, and of the war and ethnic tensions which dispersed her family and left her helpless in the face of sexual violence. She was taken out of the country to end up in London where, as a 'failed asylum seeker' she may not work or claim benefits. Penniless and homeless, she had no choice but to work unofficially for long hours, and was vulnerable to both sexual and economic exploitation.

Liu Bao Ren, a Chinese man persecuted for his religious beliefs, made a tortuous and terrifying journey to Britain. Here he moved from place to place,

doing dangerous work for long hours on construction sites. His pay, when he received it, covered no more than the extortionate rent on a crowded, shared room.

Seventeen-year-old Natasha Bulova, from Russia, thought she was going to Spain but was deceived into coming to Britain. Threatened into working as a sex slave, she ended up working in massage parlours in London's suburbs, and was eventually rescued by the police, and found the courage to give evidence against her pimp.

Naomi is still a child, but she has a year-old child herself, as the result of multiple rape. Illiterate and living on the streets of Freetown, Sierra Leone, she was taken in by a Lebanese family, whose house she cleaned and whose children she looked after, for no reward save a roof over her head. She was brought to Britain from Africa, perhaps trafficked, as an unpaid domestic worker, before running away, only to fall into the hands of a man who raped her and offered her to other men.

Amber Lobepreet trained as a beautician in the Punjab before her marriage was arranged to a man who lived in Britain. Once in Britain, any pretence her husband had made of caring for her dropped away. Isolated, exploited and subjected to violence and humiliation, Amber discovered that her husband had another woman. The marriage had been a sham – possibly an attempt to

detach her husband from the 'other woman', but possibly a deliberate ploy to acquire the considerable dowry that her father had gone into debt to pay.

Rahila Gupta is a wonderful interviewer, who enables the reader to hear clearly the voices of these people who are just emerging from enslavement. And behind the interviews are an intelligent analysis, a thoroughgoing commitment to justice and human rights and a vision of how this could be achieved.

Gupta explores the issues from all angles and argues that slavery, exploitation and violence are being perpetuated by increasingly draconian asylum and immigration legislation. Controversially but utterly convincingly, she makes the case for dispensing with immigration controls altogether. 'Here is the paradox,' she says. 'The more restrictive the immigration laws, the more profitable it is for smuggling and trafficking rings and the more imaginative, dangerous and life-threatening are their attempts the circumvent the barriers.'

Underpinning this poisonous state of affairs she identifies a philosophy which 'harks back not just to chattel slavery but to feudal law'. In criminal law, she says, it is the act which is punishable, whereas in immigration law, like the law of slavery, it is the person who is declared 'illegal'.

Julia Bard

ENSLAVED: THE NEW BRITISH SLAVERY

Rahila Gupta
Portobello Books,
£12.99

YIDDISH IN BERLIN

ALL MY YOUNG YEARS: YIDDISH POETRY FROM WEIMAR GERMANY

A N Stencl, translated by Haike Beruriah Wiegand and Stephen Watts
Five Leaves Publications, £7.99

In the early 1920s there were 200,000 Jews in Berlin. They came from both the established German community and from further East – the so called Ostjuden. Yiddish was the mother tongue of those from Eastern Europe, and there was quite a flourishing Yiddish culture in Berlin. The traditional Jewish area was in the so-called Scheunenviertel, around Oranienburger Strasse and Grosse Hamburger Strasse.

At the same time, Berlin was seen as a great urban centre, a hub of modernism. It is the place and time of Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz (which is 10 minutes walk from the Scheunenviertel) and Walter Ruttmann's silent film Berlin – Die Symphonie der Großstadt (Berlin – Symphony of a Great City), (currently at Tate Modern) where one sees all the bustle of cosmopolitan life over the course of a day, with crowds and trains incessantly coming and going.

Stencl came to this Berlin from Czeladz in Poland, from a small hassidic community where his father was the rabbi. He had studied at a yeshiva but when he arrived in Germany he clearly wanted to leave this background behind him. Indeed, he first got into Germany having been offered the position of rabbi in a hassidic community in Dortmund. But he did not feel he was up to the position and fled across the border to Holland, where he spent time with young Zionists who were working with local farmers to get agricultural expertise before emigrating to Palestine. After two years he again crossed the German border and went straight to Berlin.

He lived in the city until 1936, at times as an illegal immigrant. In fact he was imprisoned in 1925 and threatened with deportation, although this did not take place. By the time he left Germany, members of the German Writers Association were expected to wear a swastika lapel badge. Through friends, he managed to obtain an exit visa and thus he came to Whitechapel, where he was to live until his death in what he called the shtetl d'Britain, and where he edited the Yiddish literary journal Loshn un

lebn until his death in 1983.

Stencl clearly had a love of German culture and respect for those Germans who fought the Nazis. In a later poem (in his book Whitechapel shtetl d'Britain) about the German anarchist Rudolf Rocker, he writes:

...kh'trakht troyrik in daytshe
dikhter un denker
un in Roker's tsivishn yidn zikh
bazetsn
s' zaynen di oysnams vos makhn
di gezetsn

(I think sadly of German poets and thinkers, and through Rocker's living amongst Jews; it is the exceptions which make the rules.)

All My Young Years is a selection from two books of poetry that Stencl published while living in Berlin: Un du bist Got (And You are God) and Fisherdorf (Fishing Village). The original Yiddish is side by side with an English translation by Haike Beruriah Wiegand and Stephen Watts.

In Un du bist Got Stencl addresses his poems to an elusive God, using the imagery and language of his Hassidic past. In Tantz ikh a dveykes-tants (I dance a God-crazed dance) he speaks of a 'khasidim-rod kegn shkhine hakadoshe' (A hassidic whirl dance towards the Shekhinah) but this is in a context of 'shoen fun umet...fun kaltn shtiln atseyves' (hours of melancholy ...of cold silent stillness).

It is the poetry of loneliness, of a man in a room who writes 'Hob ikh a broyt, a bet, a bukh tsu lezn, un vemens harts avektsushenken hob ikh nisht' (I have bread, a bed, a book to read, but someone to give away my heart to, I haven't). As the poem goes on, he feels the weight of experience and his heart is described as bleterdiker (more leafed through) and ongeshribener (more written out). There is much onomatopoeic language, as in Mes-lesn (Twenty four hours) when he imitates the 'glin glon' sound of a 'blinder turem in mitn shtot mit a glatn tsiferblat' (A blind tower in the centre of the city with its smooth clock face), which conjures up images of the sort produced by German expressionist painters such as Kirchner.

Dovid Bergelson, who frequented the same circle as Stencl, seems to inhabit a similar world in his short story Tsvishn emigrantn. In this story a young man finds that the room next to his in a Berlin boarding house is occupied by the Ukrainian who was responsible for inciting pogroms in the young man's home town following the 1917 revolution. He plots to kill this man but needs help to find a weapon. He turns to a leading Zionist who at first promises to help him, only to turn him over to a psychiatrist. In desperation the young man turns to the narrator. Having told him his story he says '...zent ir shoyn farantvortlekh tsuglaykh mit mir un nokh mer fun mir, vayl ir zayt a shrayber' (now you are as responsible as I and more so, because you are a writer). One also feels this sense of responsibility, of being part of a story, from Stencl's writing.

Fisherdorf is different in tone to Un du bist Got. Although it was published in 1933, the poems were written in 1926 following a stay in a fishing village on the Wolin peninsula. Here the onomatopoeic language describes nature, with many Slavic-derived Yiddish words, as when, in Dos shturem lid (Storm song) he compares the movement of the sea to the movement of a cat with grine oygn farzshmurete (green squinting eyes) But this is also a song of defiance as the sailors sing Ha ha ha, mir zaynen Keyn mayz nisht (We are not mice!) and of the women who are waiting mit vareme baykher, vi ketsishe fel un bronfn in baykhike groyse fesser (with warm bellies like cat's fur and with brandy sloshing round in big barrels) – shades of the sailors' song, perhaps, from Wagner's Flying Dutchman.

It is also a more sensual language than in the previous collection. For example, in Di balade fun der borevke-bobe (The ballad of the bilberry seller), he writes of an old woman, Yener, vos hot ir dem boykh gemakht hot zi ahingefirt vi a fule milkh-kan (The one who made her belly big led her there full as a frothing churn) and even now it still bursts out like

an aroysgorgldiker ibergeblibene shlung (a gargled left-over gulletful). You can almost feel the milk churning up. And in Nakht-tfile (Night prayer) he writes of two lovers, who like poppies Azoy veln mir zikh boygn shtil un anivesdik
Yeder farshlosn mit zikh
Yeder fartift in zikh...
Vayl a taylkhil fun eyn shtal
Iz gefaln in undzere beydne hertzer
(We will bow down quietly and humbly / Enclosed in our own selves / Engrossed in our own selves... / Because a small part of one beam of light / Has fallen into both of our hearts).

Is anything left of Stencl's Berlin? Stencl's haunt, the Romanische Café, on the corner of Tauntzienstrasse and Budapest Strasse is no more. Now they form either side of a pedestrian plaza in the heart of West Berlin. The bombed remnants of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche which faced the café (could that have been the dark tower of Stencl's poem?) are in the middle of the plaza, with its jagged original tower complemented by a geometric 1960s addition in concrete and blue glass. All around is '60s and '70s modernism.

And yet a more ongeshribener

place than Berlin (to use Stencl's word, although perhaps it should be written over rather than written out) it is difficult to find. You can buy maps of old Berlin, of literary Berlin, which show you where the Romanische Café was, and many other haunts of writers, or of Red Berlin, which will show you where Karl Marx lived when he was a student in Berlin and where Rosa Luxemburg was drowned in the Landwehr canal. There is even a map of the former East Berlin showing the many street and station names which have been changed since reunification. In the former Scheunenviertel there are gold tiles on the pavement giving the names of the former Jewish inhabitants of the houses who were deported in the 1940s.

Modern Berlin continues to attract new generations of migrants; both Jewish and non-Jewish. They can disappear into the bustle and anonymity of the big city, in the rebuilt Potsdamer Platz or the new Central Station, both next to the former No Mans Land between East and West, or they can take part in a range of Jewish groups, religious or non-religious. Or perhaps they can do both, as Stencl did.

Michael Heiser

ALL MY YOUNG YEARS

All my young years
Have left on the journey
towards you

Like white milestones they are lying
In the middle of the road –

With numbers writ large on them!

...

All passers-by
Who travel toward you
Knock their dusty feet
Against my white miles –

And with each knock
My young heart starts to quiver.

All my young years
Have gone out towards you,
All my remaining years
Will go weighed with heavy
stones –

On my final whitened one
A strange hand will write the
number –

In the middle of the road
Under my final white stone
My heart will quiver always
With every passer-by
Who journeys toward you.

RAGTIME

It is not often that provincial Jewry turns up in a book, but here it is in Music While You Work by Derrick Buttriss; or, rather, here are some wonderful cameos in the author's memories of the war and immediately post-war years, when he worked in assorted Jewish-owned Nottingham tailoring firms – Mark Gilmore (real name Goldberg), Levy's and Nathan's.

The best cameos are of his fellow shopfloor workers, including my late friend, Lionel Jacobs, one of several Communist Jewish tailors with whom Derrick worked. Lionel was one of many Jews who fought in the Spanish Civil War, moving to Nottingham after World War II. Buttriss well describes the rough and tumble of factory life: the debates about world politics and horse-racing, the good and bad points of the various factory owners.

At Nathan's the owner decides to take the firm's workers to Skegness for a slap-up meal and a day out. Derrick wonders what the Jews would find to do all day in Skeg (otherwise known as Nottingham-on-sea). I mentioned this to my own partner who immediately said 'bookies or cards'. It was the latter.

Mr Nathan, initially a socialist, became an ardent Conservative when he got on in business,

but his brother Morry, a carpenter, was a lifelong Communist. Other shopfloor workers mentioned were Harry Gold and Charlie Weinberg, East Enders from Whitechapel who had ended up here.

His 10 years in tailoring shops gave Derrick an interest in Jews, which surfaced a few years ago in the BBC radio play Leventhal's Blues, about a Jewish jazz player. But this book, the second volume of his autobiography of Nottingham working class life, finishes in 1950, with Derrick returning to the rag trade quarter, to Nathan's, having been turned down for National Service on health grounds: 'The Lace Market was like home to me.'

Music While You Work was launched at Lowdham Book Festival, Nottinghamshire's main literary event, together with Mary Essinger's book on her years in the Leicester rag trade, providing an interesting contrast between the lives of women and men shopfloor workers of the same era. Music While You Work is worth reading not only for the Jewish interest, but I'd say 'shoot the proofreader' if I didn't know that, as the one-man publisher was on holiday, Derrick said he'd do the proofreading, being good at that sort of thing. He isn't.

Ross Bradshaw

MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK

Derrick Buttriss
Shoestring Press, £8.95

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

JAMES CONNOLLY: A FULL LIFE

Donal Nevin
Gill & Macmillan,
£24.99

James Connolly is best known for his leading role in the 1916 Rising in Dublin. A thumping new biography shines light on many less well publicised aspects of his two-decade career as a professional revolutionary socialist. One of these is his election address to Jewish workers when standing for the Wood Quay ward of Dublin Corporation in 1902: '[C]ertainly the first occasion – possibly the only occasion – that a leaflet in Yiddish was produced for an Irish election,' according to the author.

Dublin's Jewish population numbered 2,169, many of them living in the ward, in an area later to be known as Little Jerusalem. Irish Socialist Republican Party (ISRP) minutes show that 7s 7d was paid 'a/c for the Jewish election literature'. It was drafted on Connolly's behalf by Boris Kahan, secretary of the Social Democratic Federation's East London Branch.

His opponent was PJ McCall – a publican and author of popular nationalist songs, who made a blatant appeal to his constituents' Catholicism. The Yiddish leaflet responded by denouncing him as the candidate of 'the bourgeoisie that arouses race hatred, incites one people against another and causes wars ... the cause of antisemitism; with its press it provokes hatred of the Jews ... The socialists are the only ones who stand always and everywhere against every national oppression. It is the Socialists who went out into the streets of Paris against the wild brand of antisemites at the time of the Dreyfus case.'

Advocating a socialist programme, it declaimed: 'Jewish workers! No matter how small your numbers are, you can achieve much. Do your duty and work earnestly hand in hand with your Irish brothers. Canvass for votes, vote yourselves and persuade others to vote for Socialist candidate James Connolly.'

Donal Nevin reckons it 'likely that many of the 437 votes he received were cast by Jewish immigrants as a result of this leaflet'.

But the ISRP paper Workers Republic, reported a bitter campaign. 'It is no exaggeration to say that no candidate had to stand the brunt of a more unscrupulous attack than our comrade Connolly ... Connolly was stated to be an Orangeman, a Freethinker, a Jew and a renegade Catholic; his children were going to a Protestant school, they were going to a Catholic school ... he was born in Belfast, in Derry, in Glasgow, in Dundee, in Italy and in England. He was a scab printer, a scab painter, he was only an ignorant labourer, he wasn't a labourer at all, but a journalist, he was a confirmed drunkard and a bigoted teetotaler.'

Of course Connolly himself was an 'outsider' – an Edinburgh-born socialist, married to a Protestant. And the Yiddish leaflet was no

opportunistic pose, as his political history shows.

Emigrating to the USA, he learned to speak fluent Italian so he could address workers from Newark's 50,000 Italian immigrants at street meetings. The Irish Socialist Federation (ISF) he helped found in New York

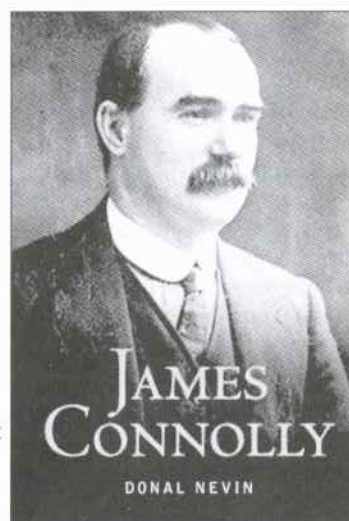
called on Irish workers to 'co-operate with the workers of all other races, colours and nationalities in the emancipation of Labour'.

And in the ISF paper, The Harp, he pointed out (referring to anti-Irish discrimination in 1830-40s America) that the Irish had 'in their day of weakness in this country to suffer all the insults, abuse and ignominy now poured so freely upon the Italian, the Polish, the Hungarian, the Slav and the Jew'. He called on the Irish to be the first to protest against 'this senseless vilification and discrimination, instead of being an actual agent therein, as he too often is today'.

Such views were far from mainstream. The De Leonite leadership of the Socialist Labour Party, which Connolly joined, attacked him for his advocacy of the self-organisation of immigrant workers. And the seminal 1909 steel workers' strike in Pittsburgh, which Connolly was involved in as an organiser of the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) was attacked by AFL union general secretary Frank Morrison as caused by 'ignorant foreign labour aliens who do not speak our language or understand our institutions'. Connolly himself was scapegoated as being part of a 'Jesuit plot' by the De Leonites before eventually leaving their party.

Connolly's own Catholicism has long been the subject of controversy – with some suggesting his socialism was compromised. Against this it is argued that his orientation to communities identifying themselves on the basis of religion, language or nationality was consistent with his overriding objective of working class unity. From any perspective there is much to learn from this pioneer in a terrain of great contemporary significance – as his address to the workers of Little Jerusalem shows.

Piers Mostyn



LISTED LAUREATE

Congratulations to poet Michael Rosen on becoming Children's Laureate, a well-earned recognition if ever there was one. And congratulations to the BBC for modesty about their own part in his career. Recalling that Mike had joined them after he graduated from Oxford, BBC News did not go into the reason he left. McCarthyism, UK-style has always been more polite and gentlemanly than the brash American version.

In 1972, the Beeb's Head of Staff Training told Mike sadly that no department wanted to take him on. 'We think it would be better if you went freelance.' A nice way of saying he had got the sack. It later emerged that two departments, Arts Features and Further Education, had wanted to employ the bright young fellow, but were prevented from doing so because his left-wing views were considered a 'security problem'. John Laird, who was in charge of Graduate Trainees, had a call from the chairman of a board: 'You'll be glad to know we've appointed Rosen.' Then the man called again, embarrassed, and said it had been 'blocked'. Mike Rosen has had other sorrows to overcome. Seems you can't keep a good man down. But some people in authority certainly try.

RED RAMBLERS

Where do flies go in winter? Through Denton to Hyde, says Mancunian schoolyard wit. I expect Benny Rothman and his pals, jailed for the mass trespass on Kinder Scout, went through Denton and Hyde a few times. In April, then Environment Minister David Miliband no less, joined Benny's son Harry and grandchildren at the naming of a railway engine 'Benny Rothman – The Manchester Rambler' before joining Mike Harding in New Mills to celebrate the trespass, which is credited with leading to the creation of National Parks.

Back in the 1930s names like Rothman and left-wing politics were enough to give magistrates and law enforcers a fit. In 1939 the Chief Constable of Hyde received a letter marked 'Secret', about a couple called Miller who had settled at Oak Cottage. M15 were keeping an eye on them. So was an Inspector Robinson of Special Branch. Jimmy Miller, from Salford, was an out-of-work motor mechanic, but Mrs Miller, I'm told, had got a job as

'Auntie Muriel' on BBC Children's Hour. Jimmy too obtained occasional work with Northern Region, till both of them were banned from the air at the urging of the security services. Later Jimmy Miller became better known as folksinger Ewan MacColl, and Joan Miller under her maiden name Joan Littlewood, theatre director.

Where do files go in winter? The secret service documents are now in Ashton Under Lyne central library. Derek Pattinson, who has written about them in Northern Voices, No 7, quotes Inspector Robinson reporting that at weekends 'a number of young men who have the appearance of communist Jews are known to visit Oak Cottage. It is thought they come from Manchester.' I'm sure he was right. But if they can tell us just by our appearance, who needs Neturei Karta for photo ops at demonstrations?

PÉERAGE TO PORRIDGE?

It's 15 years since I wrote in this diary about a columnist who had scorned notions like 'date rape', saying if women were 'overpowered and forced to have sex' it was 'normal'. She took exception to the government trying to ban dangerous dogs. And she told the TUC it had no business opposing antisemitism: Jews didn't need unions – if we encountered problems at work we could set up on our own.

Barbara Amiel didn't set up her own business, she married the boss, Conrad Black, whose enterprising way with pension funds had led Ontario premier to call him 'the most symbolic representative of bloated capitalism at its worst'. (Pit Bulls and Press Barons, Dybbuks Diary, JS27, September 1992)

They were a lovely couple. Now generous Lord Black is facing jail, convicted of fraud and corruption. Seems a US court was not impressed by his claim that a \$42,000 party for Barbara was for business, or that Hollinger paid for \$570,000 private jet trips because Arab terrorists were out to get him as a friend of Israel. Didn't they know how he rid the Jerusalem Post of liberals and trade unionists?

The next 10 years could provide a great sequel to Porridge. Pity Ronnie Barker is no longer with us. I'm sure he could have done a Canadian accent. Maybe we could do it as reality TV, with La Amiel on the visitors' bus.