

JEWISH SOCIALIST

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HOW DO WE BUILD COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE?

■ Health struggles in Gaza ■ Edelman's lifelong battles ■ Jews in Harbin

■ Israel's role in western policing ■ The Bund's inspiring women

EDITORIAL

After George Floyd's horrific murder at the hands of police in Minneapolis in May this year, the Jewish Socialists' Group issued a statement incorporating the powerful words of one of our sister organisations in America, the Boston Jewish Workers' Circle. They said: "We are full of grief and outrage over the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade and all black lives lost to police brutality and white supremacy. As a multiracial Jewish community committed to racial justice and a better world for all, we mourn together, we protest together, and we recommit ourselves to work together for racial justice within ourselves, our communities, and our country."

The solidarity protests that mushroomed here in Britain through Black Lives Matter (BLM) compelled us to ask what *our* communities were doing to challenge not just acts of hate that periodically target Jews, the LGBT community and others, but also the daily structural racism that blights the lives of Black and other minority communities. The Board of Deputies indicated support for BLM concerns but then gave a platform to Tory Home Secretary Priti Patel, who used it to attack Travellers. Liz Fekete and Janet Darley tackle the questions around community responses head-on in this issue (p 5).

One political casualty of the Floyd murder was left-wing Shadow Cabinet member Rebecca Long-Bailey, hastily sacked by Labour's new leader, Keir Starmer. She had retweeted a newspaper interview with her constituent Maxine Peake, a well-known actress and activist in progressive causes, not least antifascism. Peake regularly speaks at annual memorial events commemorating the International Brigades. In one sentence Peake said that American

police learned the "knee on the neck" technique from Israeli state forces. She knew that tactic was widely used against Palestinians and that thousands of American police have been trained by Israeli counterparts, but there was no evidence that Minneapolis police learned this tactic from Israel. America's use of violent restraint techniques against Black citizens long preceded Israeli training.

Long-Bailey was accused of spreading a "Jewish conspiracy" allegation. She hadn't. Nor had Peake. Ironically their accusers made the common mistake of antisemites: they conflated Jews in general with the Israeli state. And the Israeli state is far from innocent when it comes to exporting Homeland Security "pacification" and surveillance methods and systems. Jeff Halper, an Israeli activist for justice for Palestinians and a recognised authority on such exports reveals Israel's true role (p 14).

Marek Edelman, who died in 2009, fought for justice in a very different context. He was second-in-command in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, but his struggles for freedom and democracy continued in Poland after the war. This autumn marks the 40th anniversary of Poland's independent trade union movement, Solidarnosc. David Rosenberg (p23) tells the lesser-known story of Edelman's revived activism especially in the 1970s and '80s through the Workers' Defence Committee and Solidarnosc.

This year we sadly lost another Jewish fighter for justice, Denis Goldberg from South Africa, whose activism against the apartheid government resulted in a long prison sentence. Like Edelman, Goldberg never stopped fighting for freedom and justice. Andrew Feinstein, who served as a Jewish ANC MP, remembers Goldberg's life (p34).

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Cover image: A protest sign on Third and Fairfax, Los Angeles. Photo by Sa Winfield.

Homes sweet homes

Tower Hamlets Council, led by Mayor John Biggs, has honoured the memory of my uncle, Max Levitas, by naming a new block of council housing Levitas House. It stands in Jubilee Street, Stepney, minutes from where Max lived for over 50 years in council flats in Sidney Street. In the later years of his life Max was best known as an antifascist campaigner and a veteran of the 1936 Battle of Cable Street. But he was committed all his life to improving the lives of ordinary people, and providing them with decent housing was a central part of this.

That concern was rooted in personal experience. Max (below) was born in



Dublin in 1915 to Lithuanian Jews, newly arrived in Ireland. Despite the Easter Rising and the Civil War, the family was settled and had no intention of moving. But they were subtenants, and when the official tenant died they were evicted. Max was 11 years old. For nearly a year the family of six lived in one semi-basement room. Then, leaving extended family, friends and schools, they left Dublin and spent four years in the notorious slums of the Gorbals in Glasgow before moving to London in

1931. Their first London lodgings were so small that Max and his brother had to sleep at an aunt's house some streets away. In the 1980s, Max's youngest sister, born in Glasgow, described the succession of dreadful housing conditions they experienced in Whitechapel, including places where, as a young girl, she was afraid to go to the communal toilet alone. Eventually the family moved to Brady Mansions, which was marginally better. It was here that Max, aged 23, organised a rent strike in 1938 – adamant that unpaid rents must be collected and put into a fund for safekeeping so that tenants could not afterwards be evicted for arrears.

During the war Max worked as a fire watcher throughout the Blitz, seeing the destruction of homes and lives. Then in 1945 he was elected as a Communist councillor in Stepney, serving for a total of 17 years. In 1946 and 1947 he wrote many letters on behalf of constituents detailing their housing problems: overcrowding, leaking roofs, water running down walls, bugs, damp, broken toilets, access only to a tap in the yard for water. Notices were served on landlords to remedy faults, but this was not always effective. In the early months Max received at least one reply which said nothing could be done as the council was only rehousing people who had been bombed out. Eventually this eased. In 1947 Max's parents were rehoused in a ground floor council flat in Shadwell Gardens because his mother could no longer climb the stairs in Brady Mansions. For the first time in her life, aged 58, she had a fixed bath. Max himself remained



with his wife and son in Brady Mansions until he was rehoused along with many other tenants in the 1960s in the new flats in Sidney Street, a move that transformed their lives too.

Max, like so many others at the time, believed that council housing was the proper way to provide decent living conditions for ordinary working people. It was not until the 1980s that the Thatcher governments redefined council housing as social housing, a residual provision for the poor, while promoting home ownership through the Right to Buy legislation. This forced councils to sell at large discounts. The greatest iniquity, however, was that it became illegal for councils to use the proceeds of sales to build new council housing. That, Max believed, was the primary reason for the housing crisis in London in recent decades. He remained committed to the principle of council housing and was rightly contemptuous of the idea of "affordable housing" defined as 80% of market rents, when this was plainly unaffordable for so many people. Ironically, the last battle of Max's life was with Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), who manage the borough's housing stock. Despite Max's reluctance, his son had exercised their right to buy, but predeceased Max. In 2014 Max was presented with an estimated bill of £25,000 for communal repair, and became a key player in the Leaseholders Action Group. By then "Florie's Law" meant that all such bills should be capped at £15,000. THH tried to argue that this did not apply because their estimates had been sent out earlier; the issue was not finally resolved until 2018. It caused unnecessary worry in Max's last years; but he relished a fight, and loved the new, young comrades he made through this and other struggles.

Levitas House. Max would be delighted and proud to have such a memorial. He would be more deeply pleased, though, that 77 families will now have the chance of decent housing and a better life.

Ruth Levitas

Battles for a better world

Inspirational stories of 100 communists fill the pages of *Red Lives*, published as part of the Communist Party of Britain's centenary commemorations this year.

These brief biographies are shot through with struggles that changed communities: the Battle of Cable Street, Kinder Trespass, the Spanish Civil War, the Great Miners' Strike, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the fight for women's suffrage, for pensioners' rights.

Dave Goodman (1915-2001) was a lifelong activist. He went to Spain in 1938, fought on the front line, was captured and survived the concentration camp at San Pedro de Cardena. Back home in Middlesbrough he continued his work with the Young Communist League. As a mature student, in 1969, he graduated in economics, becoming a

lecturer and author. Only a year before he died, he hijacked a bus with friends, all furious at the New Labour government's treatment of pensioners.

Rosa Rosen (1930-1983) was born in Hackney. Her mother had come from the Ukraine aged two, whilst her father had escaped Tsarist police and joined the American army, coming to London in the First World War. In the next global conflict, young Rosa would knit for the Red Army. Her skills in maths led to her taking care of the party's finances, eschewing the limelight.

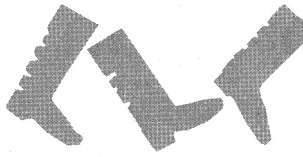
Every page here reveals a life dedicated to the welfare of others.

Lynne Walsh

Red Lives is published by Manifesto Press (£9.99). More information at www.communistparty.org.uk

Campaigning for a constitution

CHANGE
THE
WORLD



Zulat is a new activist think tank in Israel which hopes to become an influential body for advocacy and policy on equality and human rights and act as a bridge between politics and civil society.

Its goal is to promote a Bill of Rights and a codified constitution for Israel by advancing a series of Basic Laws on human and social rights. It acknowledges that this seems a distant vision given the Israeli political climate and the impact of the coronavirus

pandemic. In the first instance it is seeking to put issues concerning rights and equality back on the agenda. Its president and founder is Zahava Gal-on, formerly a Knesset member of the liberal-left party, Meretz.

In June this year Zulat published its first research report, *Whitewashing Apartheid: How Netanyahu manipulated language to hide the consequences of unilateral annexation*, written by Adi Granot, whose grandfather

was the Israeli ambassador in South Africa from 1994-96, just after the fall of the apartheid regime. Her report charts how the notion of annexation shifted from the extreme edges of the messianic right to the political platform of the major mainstream parties in Israel.

In August Zulat published a policy paper proposing legislative initiatives to protect journalists under attack.

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Protests in Israel

Israel has been rocked by a series of weekly protests over the summer articulating diverse demands – against Netanyahu's corruption, rising prices and unemployment, and the Israeli government's handling of the Covid crisis. Activists who regularly turn out on the streets against occupation and threats of annexation have been receiving an increasingly positive reception from many of the protesters who are angry but less committed to radical politics.

Police have responded with water cannon and other kinds of repressive tools more commonly reserved for use against Palestinian-led protests. The Joint List, a coalition of parties mainly supported by Palestinians within Israel, which includes the Communist Party, have been present on the demonstrations but the largest segments are a diverse group of Israeli-Jewish citizens. The Palestinian leader of the Joint List, Ayman Odeh, has urged Palestinian citizens to join the protests.



Shining a light on the occupation

In July, Na'amod – British Jews Against the Occupation, projected slogans at three symbolic locations to demand action on the Israeli government's plans to annex parts of the West Bank and to protest its ongoing occupation. The projections at the Foreign Office, the Board of Deputies HQ and

the Jewish National Fund (JNF) building were part of Na'amod's #ActionsNotWords campaign which demands that British Jewish institutions take action to oppose annexation. The slogans they projected were: "British Jews demand freedom and equality for Palestinians."

"British Jews stop donating to pro-Occupation JNF. #Actions Not Words." "British Jews demand moral leadership. Board of Deputies: stand against annexation." "The occupation is a moral crisis. British Jews demand #Actions Not Words." <https://naamod.org.uk/>

Meanwhile in the West Bank...

27th July Settlers set fire to a mosque in Birah, in the Ramallah District. They spray on the outer wall of the mosque: Siege on the Arabs, not on the Jews! The Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people!

28th July Near Jericho, in the occupied Jordan Valley, a group of settlers spray poison on the pastures where Ahmad al-Zawahra's cattle graze. Over 60 of his livestock are found dead.

30th July In the middle of the night, Israeli soldiers storm the home of Mahmoud Nawajaa and his wife and three children. He is the General Co-ordinator of the Palestinian BDS National Committee. He is handcuffed and blindfolded and taken, illegally, to Jalameh interrogation centre

without access to lawyers.

3rd August Israeli soldiers hand out military orders for the demolition of 36 homes, water wells and other structures.

5th August A 15-year-old Palestinian boy in an Israeli prison tests positive for the coronavirus.

6th August At dawn Israeli soldiers abduct 23 Palestinian civilians, including children, from several parts of the occupied West Bank.

7th August Dalya Samoudi, a 23-year-old mother of three, is shot by Israeli soldiers during an army raid on Jenin's al-Jabriyath neighbourhood. She was preparing to breastfeed her baby and went to close the window to block out the tear gas when she was hit by a bullet to the chest. She died

shortly after arriving at the hospital.

10th August Israeli soldiers demolish four Palestinian family homes and a 250 cubic-metre water reservoir serving the entire village of Farasin in the northern West Bank. Another three family homes are demolished in south Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and the Khirbit Beit Iskaria villages. Israeli settlers attack 30-year-old Mustafa al-Masri while he is working his own land to the north of Huwwara. He is left with bruises and fractures and requires hospital care. Israeli soldiers uproot over 100 olive grove saplings in a 2.5-acre Palestinian orchard near Wad Rahhal village, south of Bethlehem.

Compiled by Leon Rosselson from a range of Palestinian and Israeli human rights media. Full report: However bad you think it is, <https://medium.com/@rosselson>

UNITY AND UNIVERSALISM REBUILDING COMMON STRUGGLES

LIZ FEKETE, director of the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), and **RABBI JANET DARLEY** both spoke at the Jewish Socialists' Group's first Annual Meeting by Zoom this year in a fascinating session looking at the challenges within antiracist politics in 2020 and the role Jewish people can play



Too much of the focus in antiracist discussion today is on prejudice, interpersonal relations and “hate crimes”, with hate divorced from the wider processes that foster racism. Even when we finally come to discuss institutional racism, too often it is misdiagnosed – seen almost as a continuation of prejudice and unconscious bias rather than a structural issue in our society that then legitimises prejudice. The issue that we discuss far too seldom in our movements today is the nature of state racism. Back in the 1970s and ’80s, tackling state racism was in our antiracist DNA. Then, we talked about state racism in terms of discriminatory immigration laws and police practices, such as stop and search.

In trying to understand where the turn in our movement came about, I realised that part of the problem went back to Macpherson’s definition of institutional racism in the Stephen Lawrence Report. At the time, and for very good reason, we saw Macpherson’s recognition of institutional racism as a watershed moment in the history of race relations. The UK was the first country in Europe to recognise the phenomenon of institutional racism. This was a victory for so many antiracist and anti-fascist campaigns, particularly around the death of Black and Brown people in police custody, or on the streets at the hands of racists and the far right, with racist deaths compounded by the police response, as we saw

in the Stephen Lawrence case.

With hindsight, we can recognise that Macpherson’s definition of institutional racism had quite a limited scope. Macpherson defined institutional racism as “The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping.”

This definition was useful in terms of forcing institutions such as the police to change, as well as, thanks to the Race Relations Amendment Act, placing a positive duty on local authorities and public bodies to collect data and combat discrimination. But MacPherson’s definition did not address popular racism in the media, for instance (although he did highlight racial stereotyping) and his wider findings failed to consider whether police operations per se were racist.

So that definition, important as it was in providing the first step for necessary institutional change, particularly in terms of the evolution of anti-discrimination laws, did not go nearly far enough. It led us to take our eye off the ball when it came to state racism. It also meant that antiracism was being channelled into managerial goals and

LIZ FEKETE focused on the links between state racism, hate crime and resistance.

Photo: Evelyn Simak

ANTIRACISM

mechanical change in ways that divorced the antiracist fight from its historical roots in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism. Our fight was becoming disentangled from a more transformative struggle to fundamentally change our political culture and the brutal nature of state power.

From there on, too, the reduction of racism to attitudes, to prejudice, to unconscious bias and to interpersonal racism, became more prevalent. The intimate links between structural racism, state racism and popular culture were being obscured.

The orthodoxy today – looking at racism as prejudice or hate – flattens and personalises racism, and opens the door to very subjective interpretations. But campaigning against structural racism, including state racism, demands a more rigorous, less subjective approach. We can only talk about state racism when we can identify discriminatory practices enshrined in the law that operates with the overt backing of government.

It would be hard to argue that state racism today – much of which comes out of Hostile Environment policies, or the War on Terror, or the way Black youth are criminalised through educational exclusion and police harassment – is targeted at the Jewish community with the overt backing of government. But just because I cannot detect any evidence of state antisemitism in the UK today, that doesn't mean that Jewish communities in other European contexts are not targeted by state racism.

My friend Rafal Pankowski in the Never Again Association in Warsaw identifies state antisemitism directed towards the Jewish community in both Poland and Hungary. In Hungary the law relating to NGOs receiving foreign funding came after an antisemitic campaign focused on George Soros – the antisemitic narrative against Soros has the overt backing of the Hungarian government. The Polish history law that prohibits criticism of Polish complicity in the Holocaust is another example of state targeted antisemitism against the Jewish community. If we are looking at antisemitism in the UK today we should be more critical of the way the Conservative Party, our government and our state are complicit in antisemitism in Poland and Hungary by supporting these overtly antisemitic governments.

How can we begin to build a unified antiracist struggle today where different communities' experiences have become more particular even as they are derived from the same racist roots? How do we have a struggle that doesn't disappear one community's oppression at the expense of another's? In our fights against antisemitism and Islamophobia, for instance, we have been in danger of disappearing the experiences of Black working-class communities who face a race and class experience of police oppression. But until the advent of Black Lives Matter, that particular history of racist oppression has been disappeared and we have done far too little to expose the brutality that

Black communities have faced at the hands of the police and the alarming criminalisation (and incarceration) of young black men.

On IRR News on our website, we maintain a regular digest of the most important developments of racism and resistance in terms of asylum, migrant rights, discrimination, policing, and the far right and so on. Just putting stories together over the last few months, on deaths in custody, stop and search, and the use of Tasers, it's absolutely clear that there is a serious escalation of police racism, mostly aimed at multicultural working class neighbourhoods. The policing in black communities has always been derived from the colonial tradition of policing where black communities tend to be subjected to a kind of militarised response, through the use of specialist squads, SPG in the old days, and through mobile violence reduction units today. And obviously the pandemic and the policing of lockdown has handed over so much power to the police in Europe, and indeed globally, in contexts where police have a reputation for harassing and persecuting ethnic minorities. In the European context, too, so much terrible stuff is happening to the Roma communities, Gypsies and Travellers and migrant workers, particularly undocumented workers, in France and Italy.

So when people talk about decolonialising the universities, I remind them about the need to decolonialise the police. This is very urgent because the police colonial tradition kills people.

I explained earlier that Macpherson did not explore the links between state racism and popular racism. This is an area where we can begin to think about how we unite in a broad universal antiracist struggle that doesn't disappear antisemitism even as it makes visible other racisms.

State racism operates in the UK primarily through the Hostile Environment and colonial policing but there is a bifurcated race policy that keeps state racism, the Hostile Environment and militarised policing in place through a divide and rule approach. This bifurcated race policy operates in two ways: firstly by redefining racism as bigotry, hate and prejudice, and therefore disappearing all racisms that derive from the actions of the state; secondly by building in a system of structural denial of racism. In this bifurcated race policy antisemitism is seen as a racism that the Conservative government is concerned about, but at the same time there is structural denial of other forms of racism. This is not good in all sorts of ways, not least in terms of the government's responsibility to maintain good race relations.

We see this institutionalised denial of structural racism in the way that Trevor Phillips was brought in to the Public Health England inquiry, or Munira Mirza or Tony Sewell to shore up the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities. There is now a pattern where the government appoints people to head commissions and inquiries on racism against

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BME communities who have a track record of denying institutional racism – while at the same time they do not deny that BME communities have certain feelings and perceptions and grievances. But perceptions and grievances are easy to dismiss (they can also be used to prove that BME people have developed a victim mentality which leaves them incapable of pulling themselves up by their bootstraps). Once again we return to racism as something entirely subjective and therefore, in terms of communities labelled “unaspirational”, easy to dismiss.

I want to conclude by talking about where there is hope, where there is possibility for progress and how we can build on this. We need to build unity, and this is a challenge. I think the lesson is: we need to be seen in places where we're not expected to be seen. It is quite threatening for those in power when there is a visible presence of young Jewish people on a Black Lives Matter movement protest – or, for instance, as we have seen in the US when young Jews opposed Trump in ways that were rather brave, making it clear they will not be part of the oppression of Black and Latino communities. It is a visual riposte to bifurcated race policies intent on pitching us against each other.

Sadly, as ever, it is the horrible invasive nature of racism that can unite us. When racism is targeted at one community, it normally spills out towards another. So much of popular racism is organised around xeno-racism (racism directed against people perceived as “foreign”). This kind of othering always spills over. We really saw xeno-racism come into being around the war on refugees and migrants. We see the same principles in play when it comes to Muslims, Gypsies and Travellers. While this is not understood by communal leaders (who tend to emphasise the exceptional nature of the racism in the community from which they derive experiences) it is well understood by ordinary people at a community level who always come together under attack. We've seen this in the way that Jewish and Muslim communities have supported each other when mosques or synagogues, are attacked. And in this way, we also see that antisemitism is still very central to a common fight against the far right which again gains legitimacy from state racism, the overt backing of governments for racist laws.

But what is the nature of this antiracism we want to build – is it punitive or is it transformative, does it educate or does it seek to shame and blame? We should not see institutional racism as an amalgamation of individual prejudices. The relationship is actually the other way round, and it is the state and the laws of the land and the popular culture which educate *for* racism. People are not naturally born prejudiced, naturally born hating.

We are educated into hostility and racism. One of the problems we have in the antiracist movement is that we have lost the educational aspect of antiracism. There is too much focus on penalisation and law and order, too much emphasis on punishment, humiliation and shaming (not least on social media) in place of patient and dedicated educational and community-based work.

It may be out of fashion to look at state race policies, but if we do look at the state's race policies it is clear that race relations is seen as something to be managed via communal authorities and that is true across the board. And we have seen in recent years that it is the communal authorities who are most punitive, almost delighting in an inhumane “cancel culture”. The kinds of critiques that the Jewish Socialists' Group has mounted against



communal authority are also being mounted in the Asian community. We are also part of a much broader fight against communal appropriation of antiracism and for a struggle that transcends the limited politics of identity. We are in a fight for universal values so that we can come together in a broad fight against racism, in all its structured avatars, and by so doing, undermine the state and communal basis of how racism and antiracism are managed.

Although I might have argued that state racism is not directed towards Jews in the UK context today, I am deeply concerned that the government's bifurcated race policy, embraced by Labour and shored up by communal authorities, will leave ordinary people in communities exposed to interracial tensions as well as the racism that kills. There are so many opportunities to build wider communities of resistance. This is already happening in the USA. We urgently need to go back to an approach based on a universal antiracism fight if we are to stop antisemitism, racism and antiracism being used as footballs kicked around by politicians, journalists and other disreputable people in a very manipulative and malevolent way.

ANTIRACISM

JANET DARLEY looks at the engagement of the Jewish community in supporting refugees and with antiracist movements

The Jewish community in general has shown some strong involvement in championing and supporting refugees and asylum seekers, both as organisations within the community and as individuals. This has not just been hands-on support, but campaigning to get better laws. However, the engagement in general antiracism movements has been less robust.

There has certainly been a generalised push, spread and fed by the *Jewish Chronicle*, that there was only one way to fight antisemitism, and that fighting antisemitism as part of larger racist issues was just not acceptable.

I spoke at a vigil called by an antiracist group last December after an outbreak of antisemitic graffiti, and throughout my speech I was being called a racist and a fascist and an antisemite by a group of Jews out there in their *kippot*. Clearly I was the wrong type of antifascist for them, and it was the wrong sort of involvement in which to speak against antisemitism. So it's a serious problem.

Since 1976, the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE) has worked to engage the Jewish community in taking action on justice for refugees and asylum seekers.

Rabbi Danny Rich, then Senior Rabbi of Liberal Judaism, co-chaired Refugee Welcome for several years beginning in 2015. That year, when the Refugees Welcome movement began in earnest, a number of synagogues were involved, attending demonstrations and rallies to convince the government to commit to resettle refugees. And they participated in letter writing campaigns to MPs. At a large rally in October 2015, Liberal Judaism's youth movement turned out in force. After the government agreed to resettle refugees, synagogue members became involved in local Refugee Welcome groups as members of synagogues that belonged to Citizens UK.

Of the three founders of the charity Help Refugees (now called Choose Love), two are Jewish. Refugees at Home, which organises hosts who will take refugees into their homes was also started by a Jewish woman. They have all cited Jewish values as being behind their decisions, and at least two of the three are active synagogue members.

Liberal, Reform and Masorti Rabbis have signed a number of Faith Leaders' letters on child refugees; most recently, around 30 rabbis were part of a group of 250 faith leaders writing to call for continuation of a proper family reunification programme after the UK leaves the EU. A number of rabbis have visited refugee camps in France and Greece. Though most of the rabbinic involvement has come from the more progressive movements, some Orthodox rabbis have participated as well.

Synagogue members have also been involved in the Community Sponsorship programme. South London Liberal Synagogue, the synagogue I served from 2008-2016, successfully sponsored a Syrian refugee family under the Abraham's Tent project, and they live in a flat inside the synagogue building.

A group of people from Wessex Liberal Synagogue bought a house and resettled a family. The Kingston Community Refugee Sponsorship (KCRS) group is chaired by a member of Kingston Liberal Synagogue and the synagogue is an institutional member of KCRS.

Several synagogues provide drop-in centres for refugees and asylum seekers. Major examples are the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, West London Synagogue and New North London Synagogue.

In the case of child refugees, the Jewish community has been very good reminding people about the Kindertransport and trying to use that as a campaigning vehicle. There has been good support from the Jewish community through movements, individuals and congregations, even from the *Jewish Chronicle*, and that has been about changing policy.

In terms of the more general antiracist movement, there has been longstanding involvement of JCORE and the charity René Cassin, as well as examples of solidarity with local Muslim communities. Finchley Reform Synagogue loaned space in its premises to the Bravanese community when their mosque was destroyed. South London Liberal Synagogue has had very close relationships with nearby mosques, and sharing Iftar meals with them has become quite a common way for synagogues to participate.

René Cassin have produced campaigns concerning the possible repeal of the Human Rights Act. They provide materials and speakers every year around a Human Rights Shabbat, which have been taken up by many Liberal and Reform congregations. René Cassin have recently been rolling out to interested synagogues a very strong campaign supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller lives, seeking to change attitudes and get people to understand that the state is seriously constraining Travellers' lives and completely brutalising them as they move them on. But I'm not convinced we have been very good at getting everyone involved in that battle.

Recently Liberal Judaism and Reform Judaism



have both made strong statements supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. The Board of Deputies has also issued a supportive statement. Recently, several Board of Deputies officers met with Marsha de Cordova, Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, to discuss various issues, including how the Jewish and Black communities

Jewish Council for Racial Equality campaigners

could work together to fight intolerance and bigotry.

There are plans from individual congregations as well as movements to look at how communities treat Black and minority ethnic community members but I am not sure how effective this has been in terms of getting the bigger picture out there, and really focusing on what the Black Lives Matter movement is all about. There is, though, at least some recognition within congregations and the movements about white privilege, and concern over policing and the degree to which fascist attitudes are surfacing in society.

An impromptu Black Lives Matter solidarity rally, organised by young Jews, was held in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Around 150 people, including members of Yachad and the Jewish Labour Movement attended. During the afternoon Senior Masorti Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg and Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism Laura Janner-Klausner were among those who came and showed their support for the protest.

In June some Jews attended the 10,000-strong Black Lives Matter march in Brighton. I could hear a couple of voices shouting in Yiddish about the police and saw some signs whose words and symbols indicated those carrying them were Jewish.

I have not seen anything here, though, like the support shown by the Jewish community in the States, where the structures of Jews and Judaism are significantly different. In America there is no Chief Rabbi and no over-arching group. So organisations such as T'ruah (formerly Rabbis for Human Rights) and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) have been out in force in New York City and other cities across the country for months.

The momentum has not decreased. On 28th August a full page advert appeared in the *New York Times* signed by 600 Jewish groups, including mainstream umbrella organisations such as Union for Reform Judaism, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Reconstructing Judaism, National Council of Jewish Women, American Jewish World Service, plus smaller organisations, individual synagogues and local Jewish Welfare Boards.

As an American I keep one finger in the pot there – I am a T'ruah rabbi and I also pay dues to JFREJ. I am not very satisfied with the communal organisations here but that does not mean there aren't efforts to change them. There are ebbs and flows, a lot of movement forward and back. I was rabbi of South London Liberal synagogue in Streatham, and its congregation is composed of anything but what many people think Jews look like.

Somebody from the Community Security Trust (CST) talked to me once at a funeral and said that CST hates to go down there because: "We can't tell the difference between your congregants and the people on the street." I answered: "Oh, that's a good thing." He didn't think so.

These problems are there, but the idea that these congregations are beginning to look at their own treatment of Jews of colour does move us a little bit towards trying to address the extent to which racism does exist within Jewish communities.

I do hope that things will continue to move forward, not necessarily from those who purport to be representative, but from members of the Jewish community themselves. There is change going on and a lot of potential.

Der fremder in der fremd

by Irena Klepfisz

Gedenkst? Do you remember
when you were a stranger
among strangers

a fremder on papirn
a stranger without papers?

Gedenkst di frages?

those endless questions

Ver zayt ir? Fun vanen kumt ir?
who are you? where are you from?
why are you here and not there?

ver zaynen geven ayere shkheynim?
who were your neighbors? where was the school?
what work did you do? what can you do here
that you couldn't do there?

*Nokh amol for the third fourth
fifth time*
Ver zayt ir? Fun vanen kumt ir?
who are you? where are you from?
why are you here and not there?

Ver iz der man? ver iz di froy?
who is this man? who is this woman?
Un di papirn? and their papers?

un dos kind? and this child?
did you find it here? or bring it from there?
do you have a passport? for him? for her?
farn kind that one with the dark hair?

*Nokh amol for the tenth eleventh
twelfth time*
Ver zayt ir? Fun vanen kumt ir?
who are you? where are you from?
why are you here and not there?

who do you know here? who did you know there?
where will you sleep here? how did you sleep there?
un ayere khaloyms:
what do you dream of here? what did you dream of
there?
where will you work here? what work did you do
there?
and why can't you just work there?

vu iz di vize di grine karte der pasport
visa? green card? passport?
photo? from here and from there? and why did you
cut your hair?

un dos kind? and why did you bring
this child here and not leave it there?

*Nokh amol for the eighteenth nineteenth
twentieth time*
Ver zayt ir? Fun vanen kumt ir?
farvos zayt ir do? un nisht geblibn dortn?
why are you here? and why didn't you just stay there?



Irena Klepfisz, poet,
author, activist and
Yiddishist

MEMORY

COLLECTIVE MEMORIES

Accusations of antisemitism against the internationally renowned historian and philosopher, Achille Mbembe raise fundamental questions about the culture of memory and freedom of expression, argues MICHAEL ROTHBERG

Germany is haunted by the spectre of comparison. This spectre represents an unintended consequence of one of postwar German society's most laudable achievements: the development over the course of several decades of a culture of memory premised on taking responsibility for the Nazi genocide of European Jews. As Holocaust memory became a linchpin of Germany's official public culture in the post-unification period – with the opening of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe a concrete symbol of that centrality – the Holocaust also began to occupy a quasi-sacred place as a unique event in the nation's memorial landscape. Defining the Holocaust as unique – in official memory culture if not in scholarship – removes it from the field of ordinary historical understanding, which necessarily relies on comparison and relative commensurability between different events. This sacralisation of the Holocaust's uniqueness is not unique to Germany, but it has come to take a particular – and particularly extreme – form in the Federal Republic in recent years. Mainstream German public discourse assumes that comparing the Holocaust to other events minimises this German-initiated crime and thus undermines the seriousness of German claims to responsibility, an assumption that has led to a determined policing of both public and scholarly expression.

The insistence on the Holocaust's uniqueness in the German commemorative landscape has resulted in haunting spectres that cluster around two autonomous but frequently linked hot-button issues: the question of how to relate the Holocaust to other histories of violence, especially the history and aftermath of European colonialism; and the question of what constitutes a legitimate critique of the State of Israel, a state whose self-conception is, like Germany's, also closely tied to the events of the Holocaust.

These two haunting spectres have returned in the most recent intellectual-political scandal to emerge out of Germany: the accusations of antisemitism and Holocaust "relativisation" against the South Africa-based, Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe. A world-renowned scholar of colonialism and its legacies, Mbembe was already well known in Germany before this recent affair; some of his books have been rapidly translated into German and he has received a number of awards, accolades, and distinguished visiting positions in the German academy. The accusations against Mbembe, initiated by Lorenz Deutsch, an FDP politician from North Rhine-Westphalia, and given greater visibility by Felix Klein, Germany's Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and for the Fight against Antisemitism, have left Mbembe's reputation in Germany in tatters, although it seems unlikely that they will have the same effect beyond the Federal Republic. What does this affair teach us

about the current status of German public culture?

The German establishment's accusations against Mbembe derive from passages in his essay "The Society of Enmity," which appears in German in the book *Politik der Feindschaft* [Politics of Enmity] (2017). The first passage concerns a comparison (but not an equation, as Deutsch claims) between South African apartheid and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. In Germany, it is simply taken for granted that such a comparison is intrinsically antisemitic. Without interrogating this assumption – as I would, along with dozens of former Knesset members and many other Israeli citizens and Jews around the world who have spoken out about what they see as apartheid-like policies in the occupied territories – there are no grounds for discussion. I turn instead to the second passage, which involves a juxtaposition between apartheid and the Nazi genocide: "The apartheid system in South Africa and the destruction of Jews in Europe – the latter, though, in an extreme fashion and within a quite different setting – constituted two emblematic manifestations of [a] phantasy of separation" (see "The Society of Enmity," p25). I find neither equation nor "relativisation" in this passage, as Mbembe's critics claim. Instead, Mbembe clearly describes the Holocaust as both "extreme" and as the product of a different historical context from the one that produced apartheid. Mbembe's claim is also less a comparison than a speculative claim about the underlying conditions that make racist systems possible. His focus is on their common construction of an enemy and the concomitant desires and fantasies of separation and destruction that accompany that construction.

This construction, along with these desires and fantasies, is what Mbembe means by the "society of enmity." One can contest this approach as an explanation of the Holocaust (or apartheid), but in fact much scholarship on the Nazi genocide investigates just this: the ideological construction of the "Jew" as an enemy of the *Volksgemeinschaft* who must be eliminated.

The Mbembe case reveals significant fault lines in German society. The rapidity with which Mbembe has become a persona non grata in some official circles reveals that a powerful consensus remains in Germany concerning the incommensurability of the Holocaust. It also suggests that that consensus about the commemoration of Jewish suffering under the Nazis can be collapsed into an uncritical defence of Israel and to the censure of perspectives sympathetic to the Palestinians.

At the same time, numerous intellectuals – both within Germany and beyond, both Jewish and non-Jewish – have come to Mbembe's defence. The defence of Mbembe from such prominent German scholars as Aleida Assmann and Micha Brumlik suggests that the ruling consensus in Germany has

THE NOW-FAMILIAR FORM OF HOLOCAUST MEMORY THAT CIRCULATES GLOBALLY ITSELF EMERGED OUT OF THE EARLIER ERA OF DECOLONISATION AND OUT OF DIALOGUE WITH OTHER HISTORIES THAT NOW SEEM TO BE COMPETITIVELY PITTED AGAINST IT.

IN CONFLICT

become open to contestation. Today's Germany is caught between two models of cultural memory: a dominant model of competitive memory and an emergent model of what I have called "multidirectional memory."

In the model of competitive memory, collective memories are seen as crowding each other out of the public sphere. Understanding collective memories according to the logic of the zero-sum game, this model derives from the fear that bringing memory of the Holocaust into contact with other memories of violence – through comparisons with colonialism, apartheid, or occupation – will lead to the diminution, dilution, and even denial of the Holocaust. Those concerned with the memories of slavery and colonialism often articulate a similar fear: that an over-emphasis on the Holocaust is depriving other histories of visibility. But does public memory work like this? And, to address German fears directly, must Holocaust comparisons lead to relativisation and the evacuation of responsibility?

My theory of multidirectional memory suggests that – even when memory cultures are subject to impassioned, even angry, conflict – memory does not obey the logic of the zero-sum game. Rather, all memory cultures develop dialogically – through borrowing, appropriation, juxtaposition, and echoing of other histories and other traditions of memory. The result of memory conflict is not less memory but more, even if the field of public memory remains unequal. Part of what we see in the Mbembe affair is the well-known fact that as Holocaust memory became globalised it came to serve as a platform for the articulation of other memories of violence – especially those touching on slavery and colonialism. But the now familiar form of Holocaust memory that circulates globally, itself emerged out of the earlier era of decolonisation and out of dialogue with other histories that now seem to be competitively pitted against it.

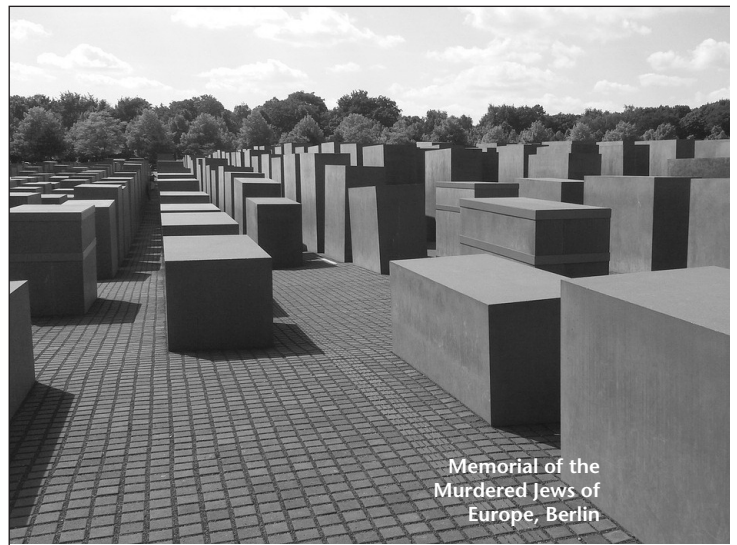
Mbembe's writings grow out of a multidirectional tradition that has, for the past 70 years, reflected on the relationship between the Holocaust and the racist violence that emerged from centuries of the enslavement, colonisation, and segregation of African and African diaspora peoples by Europeans and their descendants.

This tradition includes Aimé Césaire's polemical *Discourse on Colonialism*, in which he described Nazi brutality as a "crime against the white man" that "applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the 'coolies' of India, and the 'niggers' of Africa." It also includes the writings of the African American intellectual W E B Du Bois, who visited the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto and wrote movingly about how it had transformed his understanding of racism. The visit, Du Bois wrote from the midst of Jim Crow America, led him to realise that "the problem of slavery, emancipation, and caste in the United States was no longer ... a separate and unique thing as I had so long conceived it." Revising his own understanding of race does not, however, lead Du Bois to erase all differences between diverse forms of

racism; rather, he remarks that "nothing in my wildest imagination was equal to what I saw in Warsaw in 1949". Neither "separate and unique" nor "equal" – this is the multidirectional tradition of thinking comparatively about racist violence that one finds across the era of decolonisation and that lives on in thinkers such as Mbembe.

The theory of multidirectional memory does not presuppose that all articulations of public memory are equally valid; we certainly need an ethics of comparison to distinguish the valences of multidirectional articulations. Some comparisons deserve to be taken seriously; some do not. Some comparisons lead to greater solidarity among victims; some lead to increased conflict. Some comparisons may turn into forms of facile equation, but comparison usually involves distinctions of genre and scale. In this context, the theory of multidirectional memory suggests, above all, that the fear of comparison that currently reigns in Germany could itself be productively rethought. Instead of seeing every juxtaposition of the Holocaust with colonialism or apartheid as a threat to Germans' responsibility-based identity, Germans might instead reflect on the broader histories and responsibilities that come into view when we pause to take multidirectional comparisons seriously. While engagement with the Holocaust is and should remain a touchstone of German identity, there is also a pressing need to engage with the legacies of German and European colonialism and with Germany's implication in the structural racism and economic inequality of the present. Because of how closely linked the aftermath of the Nazi genocide is to the occupation of Palestine, Germans would also do well to reflect on their implication in that ongoing injustice. Instead of targeting Mbembe because of the uncomfortable issues he raises, all of us who are invested in coming to terms with injustices past and present might turn to his writings as a source of insight.

Writing in the 1960s, the Austrian-Belgian Auschwitz survivor Jean Améry argued that the proper attitude of post-Holocaust Germans was that of "self-mistrust" (*Selbstmisstrauen*). I believe Améry's caution is even more crucial today, precisely because Germany has accomplished so much in the realm of "working through the past" (*Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*). It seems to me that, instead of positioning itself as the arbiter of antisemitism and the unquestioning defender of Israeli policy, Germany might return to the practice of "self-mistrust": it might welcome the spectres of comparison and view them through a multidirectional lens.



Memorial of the
Murdered Jews of
Europe, Berlin

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PALESTINE

ANNEXATION:

LEV TAYLOR, a trainee rabbi, dared to raise the topic of Israel/Palestine with his congregation, as he explored a hopeful vision in the politics of pessimism

In 1982, Rabbi David Goldberg gave a sermon so controversial that half the congregation at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue stormed out. The other half stuck around for the rest of it just to make sure they disagreed.

I have no way of knowing whether this really happened, but it is certainly plausible. It is believable mostly because, even though I haven't yet mentioned the word, you already know which topic would elicit such a reaction.

Israel. Of course it is Israel – a topic so contentious that friends and families have refused to speak to each other over it. As a result, although I do have strong views on the matter, I had managed to go three years without preaching on it. When I finally did, it was because recent events in Israeli politics seemed likely to fundamentally change the way that diaspora Jewry will engage with the country. Every major Jewish communal body released a statement. I felt it would be a cowardly dereliction of duty if I did not comment.

I told my congregation that if they were surprised by the gravity of what I said, it was not because they had missed anything. There was no new president or prime minister, no new war, no withdrawal, no peace treaty, no assassination. What had happened was really the result of bureaucratic decision-making at the end of another stalemate election. But the result is that the fabled two-state solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is now impossible.

Previously, sitting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that if he won the next general election, he would annex the Jordan Valley. In the last year there have been three elections, each resulting in impossibly hung parliaments, but it looks like Bibi has now secured the majority to pursue his agenda.

As such, he will go through with his plan for annexation, supported by the smaller right-wing

parties in the Knesset. That means the entire Jordan Valley will become formally part of Israel. There will still be isolated enclaves of Palestinian towns in the West Bank and Gaza, but what remains of Palestinian territory will never form a viable state.

For most Palestinians, this won't mean much of a change to their daily lives. For some time now West Bank Palestinians have lived under Israeli rule. Although able to elect representatives to the Palestinian Authority, Israel has maintained control over the military, borders and economy. Israeli control will become tighter and more far-reaching, but annexation will only formalise a policy that has been in place since at least 2005.

Nor will it make a difference to most Israelis. With official backing from Donald Trump and the United States, an international military backlash is unlikely. It is already the case that few Israelis live east of Jerusalem. For those who do live in settlements, their private security will probably be supplemented by state army support.

There will, however, be a shift in Israel's relationship with its Jewish diaspora, especially among progressives. Most Jews in Britain do consider themselves connected to Israel, but want a just peace, even if it means giving up land or power. For decades, diaspora Jewish support for Israel has been contingent on the possibility of a peaceful solution that involved a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

With Israel's proposed annexation, a Palestinian state will now become formally impossible. I suspect that the two-state solution has not been truly viable for some time. But if the door were closed before, it is now being locked.

In response to these unfolding events, Rabbi Lea Muhlstein of the Liberal Zionist group Artzeinu released a statement insisting that the two-state solution was still possible. I am afraid I do not see how. Most efforts to defend the viability of the two-state solution seem more concerned with reassuring diaspora Jewry than with grappling with the conditions on the ground.

Diaspora Jewry is, however, not reassured, and the British community has seen considerable fallout. The President of the Board of Deputies, Marie van der Zyl, urged communal unity as representatives from StandWithUs, Habonim Dror and LJY-Netzer wrote to express their opposition.

Even in unlikely quarters, people are lining up to attack Bibi's decision. Sir Mick Davis, former Treasurer of the Conservative Party, has urged against annexation, saying that it would run contrary to Jewish values.

I think that is right, and the values that would be contravened are given in precisely this *parashah*. Moses tells the Israelites: "You shall have one standard for stranger and citizen alike." (Lev 24:22) Both right and responsibility, privilege and punishment, must be the same for all those living under the same rule. Annexation will create a situation in which a people is formally and irrevocably governed by a party it did not elect and could not deselect. It will formalise a tiered class

Palestinians in the Jordan Valley – in the frame for annexation



DOES IT MEAN THE DEATH OF DEMOCRACY?

PALESTINE

system, where Jewish Israelis have full rights, Palestinian citizens of Israel have fewer and West Bank Palestinians have none, while all live in the same space under the same rule. This is unjustifiable.

Most of the attacks against Bibi's plans seemed to have focused on belated efforts to salvage the two-state solution. I think that option is already politically defunct. But that does not mean progressives must give up entirely on any hope of a just solution in the Middle East.

One possibility which has so far been advocated only from the political fringes is of enfranchising the Palestinians. It is, strangely, a position that unites some settlers and Israel's radical left, but has been considered outside of acceptable political discourse among mainstream diaspora Jewry until recently.

If Israel is to be a single state from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, let it be a democratic one, where everyone who lives there has full voting rights and representation. The Palestinians should be able to set the political direction of the country just as much as Israelis, if it is indeed to be one country.

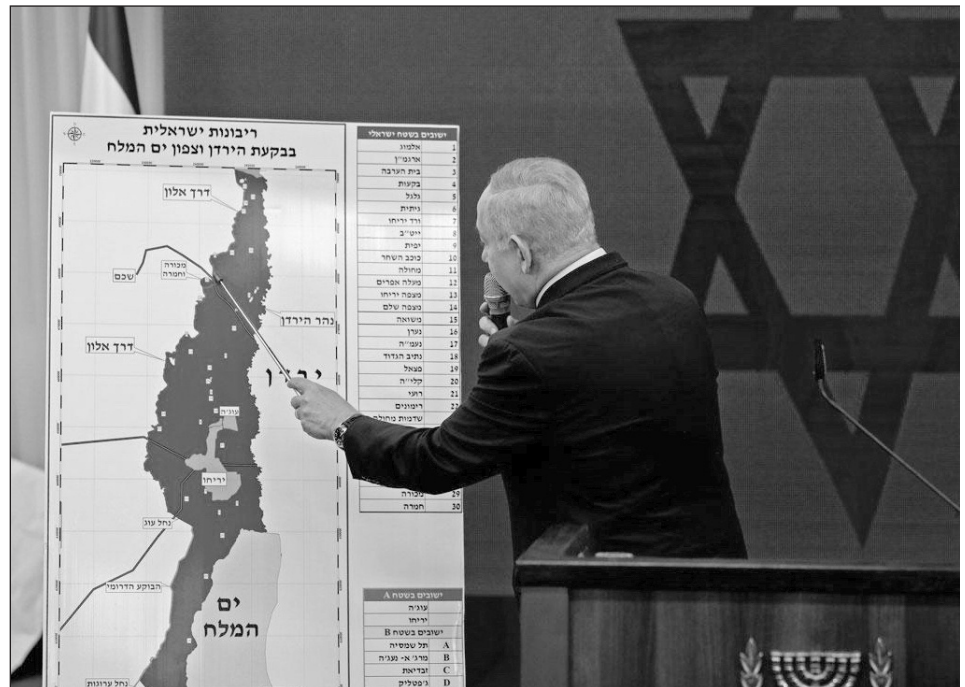
The main reason that this has remained a fringe view is that it would certainly mean an end to a Jewish political majority. The Palestinians living in the region almost outnumber the Israelis and could thus theoretically outvote them. As such, Israel would cease to be a Jewish state, at least in an ethnic sense.

In that sense, a single democratic state could not be considered within the spectrum of Zionist opinion. But I am less concerned by the certainty of an ethnic Jewish majority than I am by the moral standing of the Jewish people.

If Israel is indeed willing to implement policies tantamount to occupation, segregation and apartheid, and the diaspora Jewish community does indeed continue to meet such policies with indifference and even support, what will be left of Judaism? Who are Jews if we refuse our God-given task of being a light unto the nations? What are we if we do not meet but exceed the ethical standards our tradition has taught us?

For years, progressive Zionists have faced a tension between being progressives and being Zionists. Many have managed to hold nuanced aspirations that balanced their desire for peace with their desire for security; their commitment to other Jews with their commitment to all humanity; their belief that Israel could be both Jewish and democratic. That tightrope has now fallen under the weight of the two poles it was balancing, and most Jews will have to choose one or the other. Politically, they will either be progressives or they will be Zionists.

Given a choice between a Jewish state and Jewish ethics, I will certainly choose the latter. But even then, I do not think that abandoning the idea of Jewish ethnic majority means sacrificing concern for Israelis' ability to live and thrive where they are now. I believe it is fully possible for Israel to maintain its cultural autonomy and distinctly Jewish character without clinging to an ethnically-based majority or to political supremacy.



The third largest grouping in the Israeli Knesset is the Joint List – a coalition of Palestinian and Jewish leftists. They are non-Zionists who hope for joint political power between Israelis and Palestinians. Their leader is Ayman Odeh, a lawyer from Haifa. He has now become the de facto opposition leader as Gantz goes into coalition with Bibi. In 2015, in his maiden speech before the Israeli Parliament, Odeh shared his vision for the country:

The year is 2025, the 10-year plan to combat racism and inequality has borne fruit. Hundreds of thousands of Arab employees have been integrated into the private sector, the high-tech economy and the public service.

The social gaps between Arab and Jewish citizens have been reduced remarkably and the economy has been prosperous for the benefit of all residents. Jews are learning Arabic, Arabs are diligently honing their Hebrew skills. Jewish and Arab students are being introduced to the great thinkers and philosophers of both peoples.

His vision has become my vision. That aspiration for a just, peaceful and shared country chimes more with my idea of what would constitute a Jewish state than one based on racial ideas of citizenship or orthodox ideas of laws.

My hope is that, as we all wrestle with the tensions that will be drawn out over the coming months and years, others will be able to support that dream. Of course, many will not. Despite the calls for unity, I think this is more a time for diversity. A collapse in political consensus need not mean the diaspora Jewish community falling out, but could mean a flourishing of new ideas and renewed conversations. We now have a true opportunity to intellectually engage each other about what Israel's future will be and how we will relate to it.

If nothing else, I hope at the very least that fewer than half of you will storm out in anger.

Netanyahu announcing the annexation plan

WHAT DO THE ISRAELIS

In the bitter aftermath of the George Floyd killing, and claims about IDF exporting training, author and activist JEFF HALPER unravels connections between the police and the military

Let's begin with the question "why?" Why are the Israelis so involved in police training and the restructuring of police forces in the Global North?

Since the mid-1970s the capitalist world-system has taken a dramatic and repressive turn. The rise of neoliberalism has seen the majority of the world's resources – some 65-70% per year – funnelled to the G7 countries, impoverishing the rest. Oxfam says that 80% of the world's population lives on less than US\$10 a day, and 50% on less than US\$2 a day.

While the transnational capitalist class (the 1%) accumulate obscene fortunes, the vast majority of people – working class and middle class alike are losing their job security and financial security. Young people are being excluded from the market of "real" jobs before they even begin. Working people are becoming the precariat, the working poor. They are at the mercy of a job market that demands "flexibility". They have no job security and no assurance of job mobility, and the unions struggle to protect them; at the same time, they lack community and family support, a state-insured safety net or savings on which they can draw. They have no future and are pissed off about it.

Such inequalities undermine the stability of the system. As social unrest grows, neoliberal capitalism must be increasingly enforced. The "nice" consumer face of capitalism is increasingly displaced by the need to secure an unstable capitalism.

All this generates a preoccupation with "security". Police forces are capitalism's domestic enforcers but law enforcement in the Global North is still constrained by principles and laws harking back to earlier days. The most relevant for us is the separation of the police (internal security) from the military (external security) in Western states, a wall erected in the Westphalian system devised in 1648.

In the US, the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 strictly separates domestic law enforcement from the deployment of the military. The UK went a step further. As modern police forces began emerging in the 19th century, British policing developed the concept of local level "policing by consent", which is why the UK, unlike most countries, does not have a national police force. How, then, with these restrictions, can police become effective enforcers of an increasingly repressive and unstable neoliberal system?

The answer lies in securitisation, a fancy term covering homeland security, The War On... (terror, drugs, crime, gangs,

illegal immigration, unions, radicals etc). This bridging of policing and the use of military force to enforce social order is what is behind the rise of the Security State in the Global North. There is a circular "security" logic to the Security State.

Although kernels of this have long existed, the use of military force in internal situations has been used primarily under a "state of exception", a time when legal protections are reduced or suspended to give the police a free hand in repressing whatever "crisis" the ruling classes feel must be repressed. Threats to "security" create a unity between the ruling classes and the rest of the population – indeed, the precariat are often the most right-wing and patriotic – making it possible to impose a permanent state of emergency. The US has its Patriot Act. In 2005, the British government passed the Military Aid to the Civil Power Act (MACP), which provides military assistance to police when they feel the need for specialist capabilities or equipment in situations beyond their capacity to maintain order. In 2014, Parliament passed the Civil Contingencies Bill, labelled the "British Patriot Act", and in 2015 the Home Command was established as the Ministry of Defence's operational headquarters responsible for "resilience" operations in support of the civil authorities. Then there's the Prevent programme to deal with "extremism".

Israel still operates under the British Emergency Regulations of 1945.

The "why" of Israel's involvement in all this goes beyond police training. Of all the countries of the Global North, Israel is the closest to the Security State that Trump,

Johnson, the European right wing and certainly the ruling classes crave as their only hope of quelling the inequities and anger spawned by neoliberalism. Israel, after all, has been a Security State since its founding in 1948 – although its roots as a highly-militarised society go back to the start of the 20th century. As a settler colony embroiled in a bitter struggle to pacify and displace the colonised Palestinians, Israel has always merged policing and the military, internal and external. It is a master, also, of *hasbara*, of convincing its own people and others of its benign, peace-loving nature, threatened by criminal "terrorists". Both of those attributes – the needed structures of a Security State and the ability to effectively blame the victim – are precisely what the besieged neoliberals need.

I draw attention to what I term "securocratic wars against the people," the overlapping of military wars abroad and militarised policing wars at home. There are clearly connections between high-intensity wars (Vietnam, Iraq), civil wars (Spain, Northern Ireland), counter-insurgency – this would include guerilla wars – and "homeland security", including counter-terrorism measures, but also involving the so-called wars on drugs and crime. The last connection is with policing of different sorts, armed and unarmed, and with prison systems.

All this brings us to the "what." What is Israel actually exporting to the Global North? In the context of exporting a model of a Security State, Israel is helping Western police forces restructure as paramilitary organisations. The "Israelisation" of the American police began in the wake of the debilitating effects of neoliberalism, starting in the Reagan administration but already creating huge social and income disparities in the Bush and Clinton years. They began calling for "law and order," domestic "Wars on" ... and a need to control and pacify an ever-growing precariat. By 9/11 the US had also lost the Soviet Union and communism as an external/internal threat that could be exploited to justify repressive, anti-democratic policies at home. While the threat of "terrorists" had become a minor issue in Clinton's time, it was not tied strongly to the domestic arena. That tie-in, the immediate source of police "Israelisation," came with 9/11. The Patriot Act levelled the walls between the military, domestic security agencies and the police, giving rise to a new paramilitary "homeland security".

Since Western governments had been



TEACH WESTERN POLICE FORCES?

hamstrung by the police/military barrier, their police forces looked around for models of restructuring. Israel's structure of militarised policing, a ready-made model unlike that of any other Western country, addressed their needs precisely. The Ministry of Internal Security, under which Israeli policing falls, integrates a wide range of military and paramilitary police forces and security agencies, all under a regime of "permanent emergency". Policing in Israel was never primarily civilian; it always concerned itself more with "security". The shift from security against Palestinians to security against anything threatening neoliberal stability is a merely technical one.

The Israeli police are very upfront about this. Their official website defines their role as "prevention of acts of terror, dismantling of explosive devices and deployment in terrorist incidents", only then moving on to routine police matters like maintaining law and order, fighting crime and traffic control. "High intensity policing" and "low intensity warfare" come together in what police and military analysts now call a common securocratic "battlespace". The Warrior Cop is on the rise. Cathy Lanier, Chief of the Washington DC police, who once said "No experience in my life has had more of an impact on doing my job than going to Israel," authorised checkpoints in the troubled Washington DC neighbourhood of Trinidad to monitor and control street violence and the illegal narcotics trade.

Then we come to the issue of Israeli training of US, UK and other Global North police. Beginning in 2002, shortly after 9/11, a spate of training programmes emerged. The American Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), an organisation which holds that there is no difference between the national security interests of the US and Israel, inaugurated its Law Enforcement Exchange Program (LEEP). It partners with the Israel National Police, the Israel Ministry of Internal Security, and the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet), and is supported by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major County Sheriff's Association, Major City Chiefs Association and the Police Executive Research Forum, to bring to Israel for "education" police chiefs, sheriffs, senior law enforcement executives, state homeland security directors, state police commissioners and federal law enforcement leadership. More than 9,500 law enforcement officers have participated in 12 conferences thus far.

"The knowledge gleaned from observation and training during the LEEP trip," said Colonel Joseph R (Rick) Fuentes, Superintendent of the New Jersey State

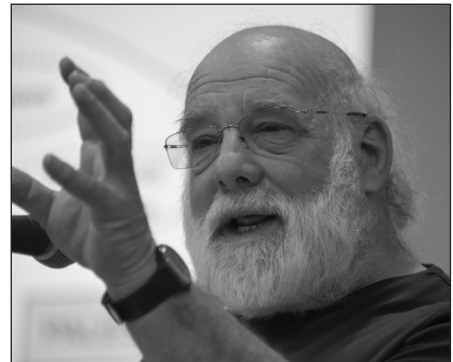
Police, on the JINSA website, "prompted significant changes to the organisational structure of the New Jersey State Police and brought about the creation of the Homeland Security Branch."

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) hosts an Advanced Training School twice a year in Washington DC. This has trained more than 1,000 US law enforcement professionals, representing 245 federal, state and local agencies. The ADL also runs a National Counter-Terrorism Seminar (NCTS) in Israel, bringing law enforcement officers from across the US to Israel for a week of intensive counter-terrorism training, as well as connecting American law enforcement officials with the Israel National Police, the IDF and Israel's intelligence and security services.

And the Israeli Weapons Industry (IWI), the Israeli Uzi manufacturer, runs a police academy in Paulden, Arizona, open to the public as well as police. Another major Israeli police training centre is the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE), located in a black box of a building at Georgia State University in Atlanta (check out their video, Community Policing in a Time of Polarization and Anti-Semitism, via <https://gilee.gsu.edu/media/videos/>).

Since a preoccupation with security generates paranoia throughout the society, lowering civilian/terrorist/criminal distinctions, Israeli police approach their work as an extension of "counter-terrorism". Citizens become "people of concern", potentially threats to public order rather than civilians to be protected. Still, the "violence" in Israeli policing is more controlled, as it is in combat. Israel police, unlike Americans, do not move as suddenly from detaining to shooting. Rather, they react only through control of the situation. This means isolating and locking down the site of the attack, issuing alerts to those in the immediate vicinity and then, if necessary, aggressively dealing with the perpetrators. Since Israel lacks the niceties of reading to suspects their rights before engaging with them, emphasis is placed on the safety of the public and of the officers, not on that of the suspect. This allows Israeli police to shift rapidly from control of the situation to engagement, but avoids much of the collateral damage to person and property we witnessed, for example, in the Breonna Taylor situation in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Israeli practice of "Strike first and with lethality", passed on to the London Metropolitan Police, was most famously evident in the death of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes, shot dead on his way to work in a tube carriage. The counterterrorism protocols that had been followed – Operation Kratos



Jeff Halper is an Israeli anthropologist, the head of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICHD), a founding member of the One Democratic State Campaign, and the author of *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification* (London: Pluto, 2015). His forthcoming book, *Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine: Zionism, Settler Colonialism and the Case for a Democratic State*, will be published by Pluto in January 2021.

– called for shooting suspected suicide bombers in the head without warning. It had been developed together with the Israeli (and Sri Lankan) police.

"Israelisation" takes place in the realm of police weaponry, surveillance and technologies of repression as well. Even though US and European companies have the capability of producing military weapons, the civilian/military separation has placed constraints on them in developing military-style police arms. This opens a huge market for Israel in custom-made military weapons for law enforcement. The IWI has opened a manufacturing plant in Middletown, Pennsylvania, where it produces, for example, a pistol-sized Uzi submachine gun for police. That plant produces a wide variety of militarised weapons for law enforcement, including lines of Galil and Tavor assault rifles and a tactical rifle called the Zion-15 (take a look at the IWI US website). Israel is also the world's leader in drones, producing 60% of the global market. Drones are becoming staples of US police departments, but here, too, the "wall" poses a challenge: drones are commonly used for surveillance, but weaponised drones are still forbidden to US police.

"Israelisation" does not include violent techniques of restraint. American police forces in particular have been violent since long before Israel was even established (though Israel does train American and other foreign militaries in techniques of "enhanced interrogation" – torture – which are illegal in Western countries). But what it does train Western police in is actually more far-reaching than violent tactics of apprehending individuals.

PALESTINE

GAZA: THE BATTLE FOR HEALTH

COLIN GREEN reports on the state of the Palestinian medical sector before and during the Covid-19 pandemic

Even before the pandemic wreaked such havoc across the world, Palestine's health sector faced a unique combination of challenges. Other societies coping with different permutations of military conflict, illegal occupation, illegal siege, coastal piracy, major natural disasters and severe economic deprivation – such as Tibet, Kashmir, Syria, Iraq, Somalia or Yemen – share many of the sad consequences and are often even worse placed to cope with additional challenges such as this pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 has already vastly worsened the situation in the West Bank and is almost certain to do so in Gaza very shortly. I have been closely involved in the education and training of health professionals in the West Bank and Gaza since 1985, and have been privileged to observe the Palestinians' incredible will to succeed and to actually improve the clinical service they provide by orders of magnitude in that time. Because of enforced separation, Gaza and the West Bank are rather different regarding some aspects of health so I will look at them separately.

Firstly it's important to describe the situation in Gaza before the first two Covid-19 cases from outside brought the infection across the Rafah border control in March. Gaza has been illegally besieged by Israel for nearly 13 years, and has suffered immense hardship and economic destruction in that time. The imprisoned two million population live in the most overcrowded area in the world, with a population density of 5,200 per sq km. The poverty rate in 2018 was 53% and the unemployment rate was 42% – and as high as 60% in young people.

Health care is provided though the Ministry of Health (MoH), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA), not for profit NGOs and the private sector. There are 13 governmental hospitals and 142 primary health care centres (of which 50 are MoH, 22 UNWRA, and 70 run by NGOs). As commonly accepted health indicators, the maternal mortality rate was 19.1/100,000, and the infant mortality rate was 4.2/1000 births.

Quite apart from the massive military assaults on Gaza during Operation Cast Lead in 2008, Operation Pillar of Defence in 2012, Operation Protective Edge in 2014 and ongoing during the Great March of Return starting in March 2018, the impact of the siege provides background noise to the rest of this sorry saga.

Here are just a few of the negatives. Electrical supplies are unpredictable and function for only about four hours per day, so power can collapse in the middle of a difficult surgical operation and fuel shortages for emergency generators make management difficult. Staff salaries are poor and frequently delayed. Work overload is tremendous, especially during Israeli assaults. Shortages of drugs and medical disposables are ongoing. The shortage of equipment and spare parts is, likewise,

a constant problem. And closed borders restricting transfer of seriously ill patients to the West Bank for treatment, for example for cancer therapy in Augusta Victoria Hospital, often results in unnecessary deaths.

To analyse just one of these, the shortage of drugs and disposables varies, but in September 2018, 245 (47%) out of 516 essential drugs reached zero stock levels and 253 (30%) of essential disposables were also completely out of stock. Perhaps worst of all, in spite of Gaza having two medical schools and five nursing schools, there is a gross shortage of staff, especially of young specialists in neurosurgery, limb reconstruction, burns and plastic reconstructive surgery. Often there are no funds to pay them even if they are available. As examples of staff shortage in Gaza, whereas one nurse per bed would be normal in an Israeli surgical suite, only 0.16 per bed is the norm in Gaza.

So much for the backdrop. In addition to the major assaults already mentioned, there are daily (though unreported in the west) missile, mortar, sniper and shell attacks followed by tank, bulldozer and infantry attacks into Gaza to prevent farmers working their land within three kilometres of the border. The deliberate destruction of their crops just before harvest and attacks on any fishing boats near to the three-mile imposed limit create food insecurity. This is designed to destroy the Palestinian will to resist and undermine the family and psychosocial fabric in Gaza. Mental ill-health, particularly amongst children, has become a major problem, and existing services are stretched beyond their limits. Domestic violence is sadly accelerating.

In the Cast Lead assault, white phosphorus shells were used as incendiary munitions and the Burns Unit in Al Shifa hospital was inundated on the very first day with hundreds of cases. The assault was used to test out other new weapons, and these caused serious, often lethal, injuries never before seen by experienced surgeons. The increase in birth defects in infants since Cast Lead is strongly suggestive that teratogenic metals, dangerous nano-particles and radioactive dust contaminated the soil and vegetation after these munitions, including depleted uranium-tipped shells, had exploded. In other more recent assaults, white phosphorus has not been used, but since 2018 new neurotoxic gases have been delivered by drones on to peaceful marchers. Ambulances and health workers attending wounded civilians have been targeted by Israeli snipers and many killed.

The same compassionate soldiers have deliberately aimed 5.56-calibre high velocity bullets at the knees of children so that they will be maimed for life and a huge burden on the health system of an already desperate service. Whereas many thousands of civilians were killed in the three main

assaults, thus creating “martyrs” and stiffening resolve among the Gazan population to back the Hamas government, the Israeli military strategy since March 2018 has changed so that drones and snipers are causing as many injuries as possible. This strategy can be clearly identified in the official numbers from March 2018 to 30th November 2019: 35,600 demonstrators injured, 7,996 with live ammunition (80% to lower limbs), 16,622 or 60% requiring hospitalisation, 30% needing complicated lower limb reconstruction over many years, 131 needing amputation and 172 permanently disabled, 20% of whom were children. To add insult to injury, the lesions are frequently badly infected and need long term antibiotic treatment and this in turn is leading to serious antibiotic resistance.

As if all these accumulated challenges were not bad enough, two men entered Gaza through the Egyptian border at Rafah on the 21st March, 2020 infected with Covid-19. They were immediately quarantined and recovered, but from that point of infection the coronavirus has slowly spread through a closely packed population. Today the numbers infected are 2,613 (mostly in Gaza City); 815 have recovered and the death toll is currently 17. In the absence of social distancing, lack of testing facilities and virtual absence of face masks in crowded streets, it is amazing that so few cases have been recorded in six months. The lack of ventilators and respirators has seemingly had little impact on the good recovery rate. Perhaps the main reason for this is the lack of an airport, seaport and the closure of the land borders with Israel and Egypt and immediate quarantining for 21 days of all entering Gaza. It was interesting to see what happened to the nearly 2,000 people who were allowed in from Egypt when the border opened for three days from 15th August. They were released from enforced quarantine after three weeks but the infection rate rose dramatically in September.

So much for Gaza. What about the West Bank including East Jerusalem? First, it is worth comparing the demographics and the health systems before the pandemic took its toll. The population was roughly three million, excluding the 660,000 Israeli settlers who might live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem but often travelled to work each day inside the Green Line to Israel. The proportion of the population aged under 15 was about 38%, but only 3.6% were over 65. Travel outside by air or through Jordan was restricted but possible after visa and permit delays. Although the Apartheid Wall and frequent military checkpoints constrained movement, it was quite porous and it is estimated that about 150,000 Palestinians worked inside Israel either legally or illegally for their only source of income. Literacy was about 98% in those over 15s, and the culture and levels of scholarship are the highest in the Arab World.

The health system is better resourced than in Gaza, though facing its own financial problems. The quality of nurses is good and the doctors graduating from the four medical schools (60% of them women) are well up to international standards in theoretical knowledge even if lacking the best clinical skills through lack of bedside teaching in their final clinical years. There are 69 registered hospitals of which 27 are run by the MoH. They all

struggle financially but many provide a reasonable clinical service in spite of their many difficulties. The crucial statistic to bear in mind indicates that there was already 101.5% bed occupancy before the Covid-19 assault. There are also 732 primary health centres of which 468 are run by the MoH but these are ill-equipped to cope with any critical care, and provide the most basic service.

The Covid-19 story in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is tragic. Surrounded by neighbouring countries where it was running riot, the Palestinian Authority ordered lockdown early in March. They maintained that quite successfully until the economic toll was unbearable, added to all their other financial ills, and it was partially lifted at the



end of May. The return of one infected Palestinian to Hebron triggered an outbreak, and the city became the epicentre for a rapid spread all over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. As we go to press at the end of September 2020, the official recorded figures (possibly understated) show that 47,830 people have been infected, 23,374 have recovered so far and 322 patients have died. This is not diminishing. Of particular interest, most Covid-19 cases have been relatively young in the 18-59 age group, and a tiny number over 65 have been infected.

It should be self-evident that Palestine needs urgent help if Covid-19 is not to be a huge catastrophe, another Naqba. They urgently need personal protective equipment, medicines such as dexamethasone, respirators and rigorous training in critical care of infected patients. It surely is in Israel's own interests to help, not hinder, their fellow sufferers, and diminish the risks to their own population who are already badly damaged by the pandemic.



LYNNE WALSH talks to klezmer violinist Ilana Cravitz about her life before and after lockdown

The lockdown period has had some strange and wonderful effects on culture, for performers and audiences alike.

There has been a myriad of online theatre, music, exhibitions, dance, and virtual visits to museums. Many of us have been able to watch plays from the National Theatre in London or opera at the New York Met, and all from the comfort of our sofas.

But then there's that yearning for live music. It's a siren call, and there's no denying it. Whether it's a symphony in a grand concert hall or a jamming session in the pub, the joy of being in a space with skilled musicians, giving their all – well, it can't quite be replicated.

My current daydream has me dancing *freylekhs* whilst the London Klezmer Quartet plays, with Ilana Cravitz calling. Ideally, this superbly talented foursome would give us *A Gleyzele Jas* – and yes, it means "To the Tavern", though who needs booze when this lot are around? They deliver a high on life vibe. Sheer joy emanates from Ilana on violin, alongside clarinetist Susi Evans, accordionist Carol Isaacs and Indra Buraczewska on double bass.

Not that Ilana has been silent during the

Covid-19 crisis; far from it. A self-isolating summer was enlivened by the London International Klezmer Experience (LIKE) 2020 Zoom festival, with some 30 performers. It had a global reach, and despite the workload and responsibility of curating and managing the event, Ilana says the benefits far exceeded expectations.

It really struck me, the further possibilities of the genre. Despite the limitations of being online, I can bring together people from anywhere in world, without all the usual expense.

I got incredibly moving things in the feedback from people. One woman said: "I'm looking after my dad, but I can still be part of this community," and another woman, with a disability, said: "This is the first time I could be in the room with everybody."

There were workshops, too, as part of the mission to get more participation in the world of klezmer: "I've also had a couple of 'Ilana's Virtual Klezmer Café' events, and I ran two Virtual Klezmer Jams."

One of Ilana's pieces of work in lockdown is an illustrated – visually and musically – lecture on the life and work of musicologist Moishe Beregovski (1892-1961). He had gathered more than 1,000 field recordings of Jewish musicians from 1910 to 1950, transcribing these tunes and others in five volumes entitled *Jewish Musical Folklore*.

It's a fascinating hour, and she quotes Beregovski's aim, "to present the klezmer as representative of the toiling Jewish masses, rather than as a parasite working for the Jewish oligarchy and the Hasidic courts."

Pinning down definitions of klezmer can be tricky. The Jewish Music Institute's definition reveals invention and reinvention: "Early bands (had) sometimes two or more violins as the lead instruments, with one or more 'sekund fiddles', a *tsimbl* (hammered dulcimer), flute and bass. By the 19th century the ensemble had expanded to include the brass instruments that Jewish conscripts had played in Tsarist army bands, but it was still led by the prima violin."

Then, few musicians had formal training. They were in demand, though, performing at weddings and other celebrations. Says the Institute: "They played at the courts of Hasidic rebbes and provided entertainment also for non-Jews, especially the rural aristocracy. They even appeared at the court of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph."

With repertoires including Yiddish folk songs, semi-liturgical music and some classical pieces, klezmer bands were part of the large-scale Ashkenazi migration to

America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries; the music became influenced by jazz big bands and the clarinet came to dominate.

There is a defiance in the movement, too, of course. Dedicated musicologists such as Ilana are determined that this old musical tradition should not die with the deaths of so many musicians. The devastation of the Holocaust eroded so much culture, yet the aural nature of many traditions helped them survive and thrive.

Ilana's passion for the provenance of klezmer and her commitment to the often precarious life of a musician, may seem at odds with the attitude of the young woman who gained a BSc in Biological Sciences and Chemistry from the University of East Anglia. "Part of that decision was, well, if I do music where will *that* get me in life? But of course university is about so much more, and it did stand me in good stead. I co-ordinated Friends of the Earth in Norwich, got into the work on recycling, all the campaigning, and I worked in Amsterdam, for two years."

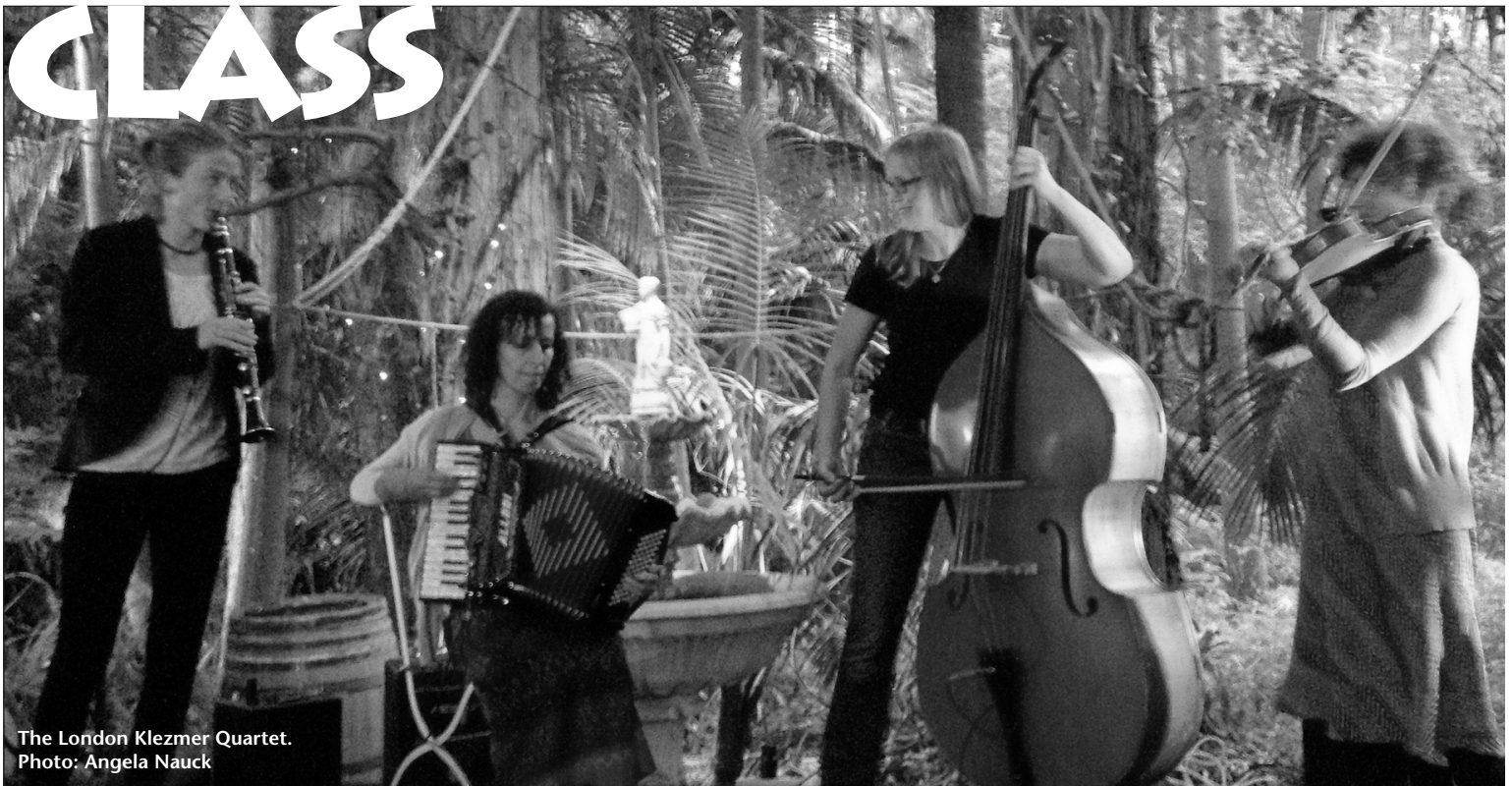
A career working for campaigning charities followed. Music was an enjoyable side dish rather than a main course. "I joined various (music) groups – had a quartet that played for weddings. I was a good amateur! I had no career plan, but I developed a skill set as I went along. Also, I'd take time between jobs. Then I felt the time came to take music more seriously and I got into Royal College of Music (RCM) to do post-grad."

Ilana, who wears her own credentials



Top left: Ilana Cravitz.
Photo: Savannah Photography
Above: Klezmer Fiddlers.
Montage: Georgia Lowe Design.

CLASS



The London Klezmer Quartet.
Photo: Angela Nauck

lightly, became an Associate of the RCM, going on to teach and inspire countless others. Music had been part of her life from an early age. "When I was at primary school, there was a violin teacher, and my best friend wanted to learn, so I went along. Then I went to a big inner-city comp – I had a fantastic comprehensive education. That was in the days of ILEA (the Labour-controlled Inner London Education Authority), and a music course was invented."

Part of ILEA's groundbreaking work, before its abolition in 1990, was to pave the way for greater diversity for youngsters interested in music. Reggae, jazz and steel pan traditions were on the curriculum. For Ilana, this brought proximity to the hugely talented violinist Stephen Hussey, founder of the Urban Soul Orchestra.

"At university, I heard Monica Huggett playing baroque violin. I got one and started learning about historical performance. Then I moved to the viola da gamba – that was another music journey."

A position with the EU Baroque Orchestra followed. "That was the transition between music college and the profession. I toured with them to South Africa, Palestine and Cyprus."

Although there wasn't a klezmer scene in the UK, the Jewish Music Institute announced a raft of millennium bursaries. "It was an exciting project. I studied with a few people. We had an ensemble bringing together baroque string playing with the cimbalom; it's a very dreamy sound."

After co-founding the London Klezmer Quarter in 2009, Ilana toured the world, including Europe, Brazil, New Zealand and six sell-out tours of Australia. "I put a lot of

energy into that, and by then I had a reputation as a teacher. I ran jam sessions and I looked after the website, the mailing list – you're doing it all. But then, you do have control – with agencies you're not always top of their list!"

When the Covid-19 lockdown started, Ilana was in Finland. "I'd already decided to have a bit of a change. I was doing a course on Finnish folk music. It was like a career break – a sabbatical I'd granted myself! I came home and spent a couple of weeks staring into space. I had a touch of the virus, or jetlag, or both. I looked at all the things I'd been thinking about doing. I thought I might go back into the voluntary sector, but there were no jobs. I started looking at piles of old music – the ideas I'd had."

Planning gigs became impossible. "I didn't realise how much I had in the diary. I was crossing out all the time because even for March 2021, tickets have to sell in September. At home in London, Ilana had to draw on her experience. "As self-employed musicians, you can't really wait for the phone to ring; you have to make things happen. I was thinking that the Jewish fiddle community isn't really a community, because we're on different continents. But in lockdown – so what? We're all at home!"

For Beregovski's Musical Treasures, 35 fiddlers were assigned a few tunes from the archive and every *nign* (Jewish song without words) they played is now available on YouTube. "It was so interesting to have each person talking about their work, too, to get to know a bit more about them. We were playing pieces that had never been sung, and someone would say: 'Oh, I know that tune!'"

"Well, it's quite possible that some are sung today in Hasidic communities. A tune could have been sung last week in Brooklyn or Stamford Hill – or recorded in the street in 1927."

For Ilana, lockdown has taken life down a different road but it's a journey she's enjoying: "The online jams and individual themed workshops I've organised have attracted people from around the world – Hjörtur from Iceland, Petra from Germany, Marty from the US and even Sam from Australia when the timing's right. You can't actually play together because of the slight time delay online, so one person is heard and the rest play along on mute, hearing that person and themselves only."

"But jamming has been an unexpected benefit of lockdown. Previously, we wouldn't have considered this way to get together and share tunes in a one-off wider community experience."

It's clear that these unusual times have helped independent musicians become even more entrepreneurial. Technology has undoubtedly helped, but at the heart of the experience is the skill, dedication and passion of performers. There will be 'real life' gigs, and the diary shows that the quartet should be in Yorkshire in April 2021, with another performance booked for the beautiful Welsh town of Dolgellau in March.

Ilana says of the klezmer sound: "The idea is to lift your spirits, to lift you from the everyday, and of course the fiddle is the voice of the Jewish soul." So, my daydream may come true. I'll request *A Gleyzele Jas*, and dance to this wonderful living tradition. Next year, in Dolgellau!

Find out more about Ilana Cravitz, her work and future events at ilanacravitz.com/

MEMORIES OF JEWISH LIFE IN CHINA

MIKE HEISER discovers the history of a once diverse community of Jews in the city of Harbin, that was at its height 100 years ago

Harbin in January is a bustling city of around six million people. Daily life is unencumbered by temperatures cold enough to enable the rivers to freeze and for an ice sculpture festival. It is the capital of the Chinese province of Heilongjiang, within the area known historically as Manchuria. Until the end of the 19th century it was a small fishing village. Then the Russian Empire obtained a concession to build a railway through Chinese territory, which shortened the journey to Vladivostok on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Harbin quickly became a railway boomtown with a population that included many Russians, and there are still a lot of buildings of Russian appearance.

Many Russian and Ukrainian Jews moved there after the pogroms of the early 1900s, establishing a Jewish community in the city. By 1908 there were 8,000 Jews in Harbin, and the community reached its apogee in the 1920s, when there were around 20,000. Walking around the middle of the city you can see buildings that are recognisably Jewish, such as old synagogues and schools.

The New Synagogue has been restored as a museum of Jewish life in Harbin and it tells a fascinating story of tradesmen and manufacturers, bankers and shopkeepers, community and political activists. To gather from the exhibits, Revisionist Zionism was strong. For example, the family of the ex-Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, came from Harbin. Among the exhibits are pictures of flag-waving activists of Betar, the revisionist Zionist youth movement – an interesting image to come across in the People's Republic.

Jewish communists are also prominent, among them Israel Epstein, who was born in Warsaw in 1915 and emigrated with his family to Tianjin in 1917. Epstein was an early sympathiser of the Chinese Communist Party, as a journalist in 1930s from the time when they were a guerilla army, through the war with the Japanese in the 1940s. After a period living in the United States, he returned to China to become the editor of the



English language paper *China Reconstructs*, later *China Today*. There are pictures of him in uniform, and meeting both Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping (though not in the period when he was imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution).

Harbin had a Jewish press, mostly in Russian. However I was most interested in the one Yiddish paper, *Der Vayter Mizrekh* (the Far East), which was published in Harbin from 1921 to 1922 and was sympathetic to the Bund. Many of its writers had been active in the Bund in Russia and Poland before emigrating, including Israel Epstein's father, Lazar Epstein. However the New Synagogue exhibits have no reference to *Der Vayter Mizrekh*. I had a few days to spare in Harbin (my wife Raquel was doing an acupuncture course there) and I thought it might be possible to track down an archive. I even went to the Heilongjiang provincial library to see if I could find one, but I had no luck.

Lazar Epstein managed to emigrate to America in 1937 and was active in the Bund there until his death. A paper about him and his father by Jonathan Goldstein cites an article that Lazar wrote in 1931 for the English language *Peking and Tientsin Times*, where he lamented the Russian Jewish community's lack of involvement in Chinese life. He contrasted this to Jewish immigration to Western countries, where, by the second generation, Jews would speak the language of their new countries, contribute to the local culture and create a new and specific Jewish culture in their

Above right: Jewish and Chinese girls playing in the street, 1922.

Below: Jewish-owned businesses in Harbin's main street in the 1930s.



adopted homelands. In China, he said, they lived on “cultural scraps from Europe”. He asked: “Does China lose by this lack of cultural intercourse? Probably not, but the permanent Jewish resident here [in China] does. He has no local intellectual background and has sunk no roots into the soil where he will probably spend all his days and his children theirs.”

Certainly, it appears that *Der Vayter Mizrekh* was primarily focused on Russia rather than China. It carried articles about the pogroms which happened during the Russian civil war. However its sympathies lay with the Mensheviks and the Bund (in line with the New York *Forverts*, then the largest Yiddish newspaper in the world), so it would have been interesting to see how it covered the momentous events of the early 1920s when the Bund had been prohibited from operating as an independent party in the Soviet Union and the civil war was still raging.

The Jewish community in Harbin declined as quickly as it had grown. Harbin was occupied by the Japanese in 1931 when Japan invaded North-East China and set up the puppet state of Manchukuo. Many Jews left in the 1930s, first to go

to Shanghai and then to the United States, Australia, Canada, Brazil and other destinations. Sizeable numbers later immigrated to Israel.

Shanghai, which we visited later in our trip, has its own Jewish history from colonial times and particularly in the 1930s, when it was one of the few places in the world that allowed Jews fleeing from Nazi Germany to settle, even though the city was under Japanese occupation. This was thanks to a policy that allowed stateless refugees to settle and to obtain visas via diplomats in Austria and Lithuania. The Japanese later set up a ghetto in Shanghai, in the district of Hongkou, and forced Jews to move there. They lived in in very difficult conditions but despite Nazi pressure, and unlike the ghettos of Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe, they were never deported to the death camps and hence survived the war. Today an old synagogue, the Ohel Moshe, has been turned into a museum of Jewish refugee experience with memorabilia that include suitcases and signs.

Most of the Jews left Shanghai after the war. There are few living in China today but at least in Harbin and Shanghai there are many museums, memorials and memories.

TO BE LIKE ESTHER RISKIND...

Tsukunft – the youth movement of the Jewish Workers’ Bund in interwar Poland – inspired its members with stories of women comrades who were outstanding speakers or who fell in the struggle for social change.

Magdalena Kozłowska describes these women’s lives and wider efforts by Bundist women to fight for equality

The three women most frequently lauded by the Bund as role models were Nadejda Grinfeld, Anna Lifshits and Esther Riskind.

Nadejda Grinfeld joined the Bund in Kishiniev in 1903. During the 1905-1907 Revolution she headed the Bundist self-defence group in Odessa. In 1917 she was a popular speaker at mass meetings in Russia, and sat as a parliamentary deputy in the Republic of Moldavia.

Anna Lifshits, born in 1881 in the village of Kelmè (now Lithuania), was remembered mostly for her activity in the 1905 Revolution, when she was perhaps the most revered speaker at the mass gatherings.

Esther Riskind was born in Lyady (Vitebsk Region, now Belarus) into a Hasidic family, and ran away from home to avoid an arranged marriage. As a young woman she became a political activist and was involved in Bundist work in Kharkov (now Kharkiv, Ukraine), Bialystok, Lodz and Warsaw. In the summer of 1905, during a Bundist rally in Bialystok, anarchists threw a bomb at the police. The police opened fire and two Bundist women were killed – 25-year-old Riskind and 21-year-old Gitl Zakheim. Due to the tragic nature of their



Bundist women in Minsk, around 1910



Left to right: Gittel Zakheim and Esther Riskind

deaths, both Riskind and Zakheim were remembered and commemorated alongside the movement's most eminent leaders.

What we know about their lives are fragments of their presence. Their biographies were tailored by the movement's activists to serve propaganda goals among their members, but between the lines we



Left: Anna Lifshits
Right: Sarah Szweber

can see courageous women breaking taboos and following their own path. Their life choices – which involved abandoning the religious life, seeking an education and focusing on activism – were inspiring examples for modern women. Despite the slogans of socialist equality, though,

some of their male friends in the party romanticised their trajectory and were enchanted mostly by their physical appearance. Perhaps this is why, later on in her career, Anna Lifshits devoted herself to promoting sexual ethics.

In interwar Poland there was a female activist who tried to make a difference in socialist circles with regard to women's struggles through her work as a journalist. Her name was Sofia Dubnow-Erich. A poet, political activist, critic and translator, she was born in 1885 in Mstislavl, the eldest child of the well-known Jewish historian Simon Dubnow.

She joined the Bund and married Henryk Erlich, one of the leaders of the party. In 1918 they both moved to Warsaw. There Dubnow-Erich worked to make a difference in people's lives. She was a contributor to the Bund's daily Yiddish newspaper, *Folksdaytung*, a Polish-language cultural journal, *Nowe Pismo* (New Journal), as well as *Yungt Veker*, which was devoted to younger readers.

In the pages of *Nowe Pismo* she clearly described herself as a politically committed author, perceiving the role of an intellectual as having a commitment to society. In her contributions she stressed the importance of sexual education and reproductive rights, issues which, in Poland at that time, were at the centre of a heated debate on abortion.

She believed that it was a duty for socialists to teach about maternity, sexual relations and equal rights to sexual pleasure, and

that this was essential to improving people's lives. "It is a great time for our social activists to get rid of the superstition that dealing with sexual matters exaggerates the role of gender in human life; the opposite is true, it is the persistent silence on these matters that distorts the perspective," she wrote in 1932.

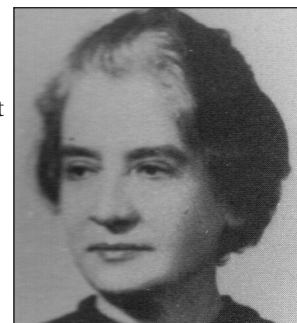
In her opinion the "progressive circles" of that time in Poland were too parochial. According to Dubnow-Erich, issues related to the body in general were insufficiently addressed by socialists in interwar Poland. In one of her editorials, she wrote, "Of course, the coexistence of two people is first and foremost a personal matter of theirs: however, how many general questions pile up around this purely intimate matter! Reproductive rights, protection of a working woman during pregnancy, breastfeeding and menstruation periods, sexual awareness of children and adolescents, principles of modern eugenics, erotic equality for women – these are just a handful of the issues that people must urgently deal with in fighting for a new social order." Undoubtedly, her uncompromising position and conviction about the need to raise issues relating to sexuality distinguished her from the male socialist activists of the time.

Another woman who fought actively for a greater focus on women's issues in the interwar Bund was Sarah Szweber.

Szweber was born Pesl Katelianska in Brest, probably in 1875. Around 1900 she joined the Bund, an illegal organisation at that time. In 1905 she was one of the leaders of the Polish Jews' protests against the Tsarist regime. After World War I she moved to Warsaw where she became an active trade unionist and devoted her whole life to working as an organiser and later

General Secretary of the garment workers' union. Just like Dubnow-Erich she understood that what divided working women of different nationalities was irrelevant and believed that women should be fighting together for a better tomorrow through socialism.

These were not the only women who tried to make an impact on the Jewish socialist movement in interwar Poland. Despite the existence of many other strong female personalities (Dina Blond, Bela Shapiro, Estera Alter-Iwinska to name just a few), the leaders of both the Bund and its youth movement Tsukunft were nearly all men. The party did not offer an adequate platform to stress women's issues. The time for Jewish women socialists as leaders of the movement was still to come.



Sofia Dubnow-Erich and Henryk Erlich

ALWAYS WITH THE OPPRESSED

On 19th April 1948, five years after the first shots were fired in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, a stunning monument depicting the fighters was unveiled in front of thousands of people amid the ruins of the former ghetto area. Designed by Nathan Rapoport, a Warsaw-born Jew who fled to Russia during the war, it utilised granite that the Nazis had commissioned for constructing their own victory monument.

Ghetto commemorations were soon locked into Warsaw's calendar. They had a particularly high profile in the 1980s, as survivor numbers dwindled and General Wojciech Jaruzelski's regime struggled to maintain legitimacy against the challenge from Solidarnosc, the independent trade union movement.

Israeli dignitaries were welcome guests. Polish-Israeli relations had reached an all-time low in 1968, when a power struggle within the ruling Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) descended into a vicious campaign of denunciation of opponents as "Zionists", "foreign agents," a "fifth column". This spilled over into open antisemitism, with Jewish members labelled as "conspiratorial", "cosmopolitan" and "anti-Polish".

Yiddish cultural institutions with no connection to Zionism at all were suddenly shut down. Many Jewish party officials, academics, and professionals were hounded from their jobs. Thousands of Jews left Poland, including 20 Spanish Civil War veterans. Yet Israeli and Polish diplomats gradually mended their fences and attended later commemorations together.

Despite the trauma of 1968, Marek Edelman, the last surviving member in Poland of the Ghetto Fighters' command group, stayed on, even as his wife, Alina Margolis – a paediatrician and later co-founder of the NGO Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) – resettled in France along with their children. He was the living embodiment of an incredible three-week guerrilla struggle waged in 1943 by a few hundred poorly armed, starving and brutalised young people.

The youngest fighter was just 13, the oldest 40. Most, like Edelman, were in their 20s. Armoured Nazi forces entered the ghetto on 19th April 1943 to burn it to the ground, deport its remaining inhabitants and provide Hitler with a Jew-free Warsaw for his birthday. Instead, they were met with a hail of bullets.

Edelman was an anti-Zionist, Jewish socialist and a proud member of *Tsukunft*, the Jewish Workers' Bund youth organisation. The Bund had a troubled relationship with Bolshevism that began well before Edelman was born in 1919, in Homyl', Belarus. At the second congress of the Russian Social Democrats in 1903, Lenin clashed fiercely with the Bund.

The future Soviet leader rejected their demand for autonomy to agitate in Yiddish among Jewish workers as "separatist". At that same congress, delegates split into Bolshevik (majority) and Menshevik (minority) factions. The Bundists generally sided with the Mensheviks.

Edelman's father, a member of the Socialist

Revolutionaries (SRs), died in 1924. His mother's SR brothers had been killed by Bolsheviks during the early years of the Soviet Union. She worked as a hospital secretary after the family moved to Warsaw and was very active there in the Bund's women's movement until her death in 1934.

In the late 1930s, Edelman guided a 50-strong section of the Socialist Children's Union (SKIF), the Bund's children's organisation, in Warsaw's impoverished Praga district. Among these children were some of the future Ghetto Fighters.

In those years the Bund massively increased its political reach, not least because its militia, aided by Polish Socialist Party (PPS) friends, defended Jews against street-based antisemitic forces. Only one Zionist faction, Po'aley Tsiyon Left, assisted them. Most Zionists focused instead on a future Jewish state in Palestine. As Edelman stated later, the Bund ... *did not wait for the Messiah, nor did they plan to leave for Palestine. They believed that Poland was their country, and they fought for a just, socialist Poland in which ... minorities' rights would be guaranteed.*

The Bund's 1937 manifesto called for a socialist workers' and peasants' government. It declared itself to be:

Against capitalism. Against fascism in all its forms. Against antisemitism, against all manner of human hatred, against one's own and foreign nationalism. For a free and democratic Poland.

The Bund's main rivals in recruiting Jewish workers were not the Zionists, who were concentrated more among middle-class Jews, but the Communists, who mounted both ideological and physical attacks on Bundists.

In the Warsaw Ghetto, constructed 14 months after the Nazi invasion of 1939, Bundists, Communists, and left-Zionists had to overcome deep mutual distrust to create a unified Jewish Combat Organization. In July 1942 the Nazis began deporting thousands of Jews daily. A clandestine collaboration between a Bundist hidden outside the ghetto and a Polish railway worker confirmed the destination: a death camp at Treblinka. When the Bund revealed this in underground newspapers, older readers were disbelieving, but young activists understood and prepared resistance.

In 1945 Edelman recorded the resisters' experience in Polish. It was translated a year later into Yiddish and then into English as *The Ghetto Fights*. There was no Hebrew edition until 2001. A particularly moving passage describes the roll call on 1st May 1943:

The entire world, we knew, was celebrating May Day ... but never yet had the



Marek Edelman in the 1940s

Forty years ago the independent trade union movement Solidarnosc emerged to challenge Poland's authoritarian regime. In its ranks was the Warsaw Ghetto fighter Marek Edelman, continuing his fight for freedom, democracy and social justice. **DAVID ROSENBERG** tracks the dramatic changes in Poland against key moments in Edelman's life

POLAND

Internationale been sung in conditions so different, so tragic, in a place where an entire nation had been and was still perishing. The words and the song echoed from the charred ruins ... an indication that socialist youth was still fighting in the ghetto ... even in the face of death they were not abandoning their ideals.

Edelman should have been a treasured guest at commemorations of the Ghetto Uprising. But he boycotted them – especially the high-profile 40th and 45th anniversaries in 1983 and in 1988 – and encouraged others to follow suit. When the Polish government asked him to join a commemoration committee in 1983, he retorted:

Don't use me to cover your shame. Forty years ago we did not fight merely to survive – we fought for life in dignity and freedom ... words and gestures have become nothing but lies.

To participate, he concluded, “would betray the spirit of our struggle”.

He was no less forgiving of Israeli politicians who frequently invoked the Holocaust to dismiss Palestinian demands for justice. Israel's leading Holocaust historians quashed attempts by Israeli universities to award Edelman honorary degrees.

Israeli schoolchildren were fed false narratives of the uprising, elevating the role of Zionist youth, concealing the Bund's role, and placing Israel's War of Independence on a continuum with the Ghetto Uprising. Edelman regarded both Poland's and Israel's rulers as usurpers and abusers of an uprising fought for human dignity, “not for a territory, nor for a national identity”.

He rattled the authorities by encouraging and co-organising alternative ceremonies. His closest collaborators were Solidarnosc dissidents with whom he first worked in the KOR (*Komitet Obrony Robotników*, Workers' Defence Committee) in 1976.

Two days before 1983's official ceremony, around a thousand Solidarnosc supporters gathered in Warsaw. They intended to lay a wreath at the Umschlagplatz (deportation point) and march to Mila 18, where many of the Ghetto

Fighters, including their commander, Mordecai Anielewicz, had committed mass suicide in a bunker rather than surrender.

Hundreds of police, with a water cannon ready, blocked the marchers. The police instructed them to disperse but they regrouped by the Rapoport Memorial and read a message from Marek Edelman: “It was my burning desire and duty to be with you today, but unfortunately the security forces made that impossible.” Edelman had been confined to Lodz, his home city. Police again dispersed the crowd.

Edelman's experiences before and during the uprising, his later engagement with dissident campaigns, and his activities and statements in his twilight years, form a prism through which we can examine Poland's seismic changes and evaluate

what was gained and lost, and what remains.

In May 1943, when the Nazis thought they had crushed the resistance, Edelman was leading 40 fighters through the city's sewers. They emerged beyond the ghetto 48 hours later, rifles in hand, and were taken to hiding places. The Nazis used the Polish Blue Police to hunt down hidden Jews, but Edelman evaded them and fought in the failed Warsaw rising of August 1944. He survived, but by the war's end, 90% of Poland's 3.3 million Jews were dead.

After liberation, under a provisional pro-Soviet government, hope briefly flickered that a multi-party socialist regime might take shape. When 130,000 Polish Jews who had survived the war in the Soviet Union returned during 1946, Bundist survivors hoped that they might rebuild their independent political space.

They fought a losing battle. Nationalist hostility towards the Provisional Government was shot through with ferocious antisemitism. In July 1946, pogromists in Kielce killed 46 Jews and provoked a further mass exodus. Zionist organisations feverishly encouraged evacuation to Palestine. Bundist refugees outside Poland no longer sought to return.

Edelman married Alina, who had been a nurse in the ghetto. In October 1946 they travelled around Europe and met leftists in Belgium, France, Italy and Sweden. In France Edelman met the veteran socialist leader, Léon Blum, who said of the genocide: “The Germans did not do it, the people did it.” This remark left a deep impression on Edelman. As he reflected later: “I realized that any man [was] ... capable of committing such terrible things.”

It reinforced his determination to stay and fight for social justice within Poland. As ties between the Bund's remnant in Poland and an emerging World Bund Committee centred on America and Western Europe became strained, Edelman rejected overtures by American Bundists encouraging him to emigrate.

The Bund's pre-war PPS allies largely fell into line behind the Communist forces of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR). The PPR-dominated Democratic Bloc took 80.1% of the vote in the febrile atmosphere of the 1947 elections, and consolidated a one-party state led by the newly constituted PZPR, the product of a shotgun marriage between the PPR and the PPS. The party's Stalinist leaders would also betray the idealism of many of its own members.

More Jews emigrated. Under pressure, the Bund dissolved itself in 1949. Some members joined the ruling party as individuals. Edelman and his closest *Tsukunft* comrades did not. Nor did they help to dissolve the Bund.

They maintained their internationalist, democratic socialist ideals and perspectives, but lacked the means to pursue them. They organised cooperatives, assisted Jewish cultural initiatives, and got on with their lives. Alina encouraged Edelman to study medicine. He became a highly respected cardiologist who suffered demotion and redundancy during the 1968 antisemitic outbreak, but was later redeployed, going on to develop life-saving treatments in 1970s Poland.

In 1956, an outbreak of working-class protests against the regime was suppressed but a period of temporary liberalisation followed under the leadership of Władysław Gomułka. Some of



Above: Detail of the Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Fighters designed by Natan Rapoport. Right Commemorative stamps to honour Victor Alter and Henryk Erlich, victims of Stalin.

Edelman's Bund comrades took advantage of renewed possibilities for emigration. In 1963, Edelman was permitted to travel to America. His visit included talks with trade-union activists, a reunion with Bundists from the ghetto, and a meeting with Martin Luther King Jr.

The 1960s New Left that emerged in the West had echoes in Poland. Adam Michnik, a son of Jewish Communists, founded *Komandosi*, a student group supporting unofficial strikers detained by the authorities, and made links with left-wing Catholics. Michnik's former scout leader, Jacek Kuron, a dissident party member whose family had strong pre-war ties to the PPS, and Karol Modzelewski, the son of a former government minister, wrote an "Open Letter to the Party".

The letter advocated the transformation of the Polish system into a "workers' democracy", and greater press and cultural freedom. In response, the regime imprisoned Kuron and Modzelewski for three years in 1965.

In 1976, Edelman returned publicly to political life, working alongside Kuron, Michnik, and Modzelewski in KOR, the forerunner of Solidarność. Other KOR figures included Aniela

Steinsbergowa, a former PPS member and one of the first female lawyers in Poland; the historian Jan Lipski; the actress Halina Mikołajska; and Bronisław Geremek, who had resigned from the PZPR in 1968 in protest at antisemitism and the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

KOR organised legal and financial aid for workers and their families who had been persecuted after labour unrest. They researched workers' living standards, and published pamphlets and books outside official networks, along with an underground newspaper, *Robotnik* (Worker). Through a Flying University (a tactic pioneered by Polish student radicals in Tsarist times), KOR organised lectures on topics that could not be publicly debated.

Its members faced constant police surveillance and random arrests. As a doctor, Edelman supported 20 KOR members who went on a seven-day hunger strike in October 1979 in solidarity with Czech dissidents on trial.

Solidarność itself was formed in September 1980 on the back of a strike at the Lenin Shipyard at Gdansk. In an echo of 1968, soon afterwards the PZPR newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* attacked two named Solidarity advisors, Geremek and Michnik, accusing them of harbouring "Zionist" sympathies.

At Solidarność's first National Congress in 1981, the chair praised a Polish Home Army veteran. That veteran himself interrupted to declare that someone of much greater stature was present: the Lodz regional delegate, Marek Edelman. The congress spontaneously rose in ovation.

Jaruzelski introduced martial law in December

1981 to suppress Solidarność, and imprisoned thousands of activists. Four decades after the Nazis had confined Edelman within the ghetto walls, Poland's Communist government imprisoned him. After an international outcry, Edelman was released within days but he refused to sign a declaration that he would refrain from political activity. He remained under house arrest, obliged to report regularly to the police.

Edelman's most profound political challenge to that government again centred on ghetto commemoration. In 1988, the government offered him Poland's highest medal, the Cross of Valour, to lure him to attend the 45th anniversary ceremony. Edelman said no.

Visitors from Israel, France and America attended the official ceremony. Two days earlier, however, thousands of people carrying Solidarność banners had gathered illegally at Rapoport's memorial and marched to the Umschlagplatz. The police felt powerless to intervene. Edelman stated defiantly that commemoration "must not only take place under the banner of the state. Society has a right to express its honour for the Ghetto Uprising."

The deeper political wound, though, had already

been inflicted at noon that day, in Warsaw's Jewish cemetery on Okopowa Street. Three thousand gathered there as Edelman unveiled a red granite stone commemorating the 1930s Bund leaders, Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter, whom Edelman had

revered from the days of his youth. Champions of libertarian, democratic socialism, they were murdered in 1942 on Stalin's orders.

Erlich and Alter had condemned the Moscow show trials and protested against the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. After the Nazi invasion of Poland, the Bund evacuated leaders from Warsaw who would have been individually targeted. They headed towards the Soviet zone. However, Erlich and Alter were arrested by Soviet forces and imprisoned in Kuybyshev for two years.

They were interrogated and tortured by the NKVD secret police, then suddenly released in September 1941, having been assured that their arrest was a "mistake". They were accommodated in a local hotel and instructed to work on establishing a Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. After submitting their strategy and work plans, they were summoned to a meeting in early December and never seen again.

Fifteen months later, it emerged that they had been ludicrously accused of espionage for the Nazis and sentenced to death. Alter was shot; Erlich committed suicide. The unveiling in Okopowa confronted Poland's leaders with the crimes of Stalin against Poland's most beloved Jewish socialists.

A Citizens' Committee of 46 well-known figures, including Michnik, Kuron, Lipski, and Edelman, issued the callout to both events. At Okopowa, the



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Right: Fellow post-war activists Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron
Below: Marek Edelman's grave in Okopowa Cemetery, Warsaw

Solidarnosc factory worker Zbigniew Bujak stated: "We need to find our connection to history ... Erlich and Alter are my past." Edelman declared that the ideals of Alter and Erlich lived on through KOR and Solidarnosc, "fighting for a free and independent Poland in which all working people will be equal".

The event closed with the Bund's hymn sung in Yiddish. Solidarnosc distributed an unofficial 170zł stamp with portraits of Alter and Erlich, named in Yiddish, and a Polish inscription: "Bund leaders, members of the 2nd Socialist International, shot in December 1941 in the Soviet Union."

In 1989, Edelman participated in the Round Table Talks that would fully legalise independent trade unions, introduce the political office of president, and enable the formation of a senate. Solidarnosc won a landslide victory in elections later that year.

The reopening of political space revealed competing tendencies within Solidarnosc, from those who promoted social enterprises and co-operatives to those advocating completely free markets. Edelman was concerned about the growing influence of the Catholic church, recalling its role in prewar Poland. For him it remained "a hierarchical institution that hates freedom". When he witnessed Gdansk churchgoers enthusiastically embracing free trade unions, he argued that this owed more to the spirit of KOR in Gdansk than the church.

In 1990, Adam Michnik acknowledged that "the fall of Communism opened a Pandora's box, from which all demons escaped, among them antisemitism." The far-right agitators who plague Poland today, such as Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (National Rebirth of Poland or NOP), were born in that freer political atmosphere of the late 1980s and '90s. In March 2000, supporters of NOP in Lodz daubed swastikas and "Jews Out" on a synagogue and on Edelman's home.

In the 1990s, however, Edelman relished opportunities to renew his practical work for human rights in accordance with his oft-stated philosophy: "Always with the oppressed, never with oppressors." He and Kuron protested against the treatment of Czech Roma to their country's new president, the former dissident Václav Havel. During the Yugoslav wars, Edelman accompanied an aid convoy to Bosnians in besieged Sarajevo.

The 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising fell in 1993. Edelman had no reason to boycott an official commemoration led by his Solidarnosc colleague, Lech Wałęsa, now President of Poland. The Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, was also invited. But Rabin refused to share a platform with "the anti-Zionist Jew, Marek Edelman".

Wałęsa, taken aback, reached for a diplomatic solution. Before the platform speeches, Wałęsa, Edelman, and Edelman's grandchild approached the memorial, arms linked, and laid a wreath.



Rabin and Edelman did not "share a platform".

During the visit, the Israeli left-wing parliamentarian Shulamit Aloni persuaded Rabin to meet Edelman privately. Edelman broke the ice, saying that he knew Rabin's uncle had been a Bundist. As the meeting concluded, Edelman instructed Rabin to make a just peace with the Palestinians.

Edelman had met Palestinian students in Poland and later corresponded with Dr Mustafa Barghouti, director of the Palestinian Medical Relief Society about forming a joint Palestinian-Israeli civil society grouping, committed to non-violence, that could pressure political leaders towards such a just peace.

Edelman died peacefully in 2009. His public funeral began where so many powerful political episodes had been played out, by the Rapoport Memorial. His coffin was draped in a red banner with Yiddish writing, "Bund Jewish Socialist Union," according to his instructions.

He was buried in Okopowa cemetery, close to the graves of pre-war Bundists, the symbolic graves of ghetto fighters, and the memorial to Erlich and Alter. Michnik said that Edelman was "respected, admired and loved. He had the courage of a Polish mounted soldier and the sarcasm and melancholy of a Jew."

In today's Poland, where the ultranationalist Law

and Justice Party (PiS) is creating "LGBT-free zones", stamping on women's rights, outlawing recognition of Polish complicity in the Holocaust, and allowing far-right groups to spread hate, local anti-racist and anti-fascist groups, and an NGO, Open Republic, have come together to establish a new cycle of alternative ghetto commemorations.

I attended the 2019 ceremony with other Jewish socialists from London. As we walked from the Rapoport Memorial to the Umschlagplatz, the symbolic presence of Edelman, the Bund and Yiddish language was startling. Students from a humanist school named after

Jacek Kuron, who died in 2004, performed Yiddish Bundist songs.

Young anti-fascists held Spanish Civil War banners with Yiddish and Polish text. Bundist slogans in Yiddish, Polish, and English were emblazoned on T-shirts, placards and banners, including "Mir veln zey iberlebn!" (We will outlive them!). And so we must. In 2020, the inheritors of the ghetto resisters' spirit are still fighting.



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The Jam and the Jewish Free School

REVIEWS

Ruth Lukom writes:

Comedian Ian Stone's autobiography describes his schooldays through the prism of his worship for The Jam. He was 14 in 1977 when the band started performing, and followed them with a disciple-like devotion until they split in 1982.

School. That place where you simultaneously try to disappear while desperately wanting to be popular. He went to the Jewish Free School (JFS). His description of the corridors and inept teaching is particularly entertaining. Less easy to read, and more painful, is the bullying he got for his Jewish looks. Now get this. I got bullied for being Jewish and having a big Jewish nose but I went to a mixed north London comprehensive. Parents fought tooth and nail to get their kids into JFS. Why?

Stone hears The Jam one night on the John Peel show, and the driving music and lyrics provide a narrative that resonates for him. And it's a lifebelt. His home life was particularly miserable with parents who detested each other, culminating in his mother's attempted suicide. The Jam are Mods and Stone loves their look, with the sharp suits. Punk had the ripped clothes and safety pins – that was for the middle classes says Stone, "We tried to dress up not down." Meanwhile Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren thought Nazi emblems were anti-establishment while gangs of skinheads at football grounds and gigs were Sieg Heiling.

Ian Stone is evangelical for The Jam. I get that. We clung to anything that was alien to the drabness and nonsense of school life. David Bowie was my Jam. I too can recite lyrics from entire albums. A line like "And if the homework gets you down then we'll throw it on the fire and take the car downtown" tells you there is hope and a life beyond. Ian is five years younger than me. By the time I was aware of The Jam, I'd left school. I respected the tightness of the band and Paul Weller's distinctive vocals but for me they were for the boys – sorry – lads. Both football, punk and post-punk involved sticky beer, swaying angry crowds and spit. (I did adore "The Bitterest Pill", though. Not mentioned at all in the book.).

Later in the '80s I found my political home. I

worked for a print co-op and we produced printed material for Red Wedge – an initiative to counter the cruelty, growing disaffection and despair that Thatcherism was producing in young people. Sponsored by Kinnock's Labour Party and the GLC, it was fronted by Billy Bragg and Paul Weller. This book isn't just a rock star hagiography. The Jam were something of a rarity. Paul Weller's dad introduced them and looked after their young devoted followers, like Ian and his friends. The band often came out after the show and chatted to them.

Also running through the book is Ian's devotion to Arsenal. He followed them round the country. The violence and thuggery and near-death experiences read like an Andy McNab novel. I was indifferent to football in the '70s. I remember once being taken on a date to a midweek match between Arsenal and Middlesbrough. I think it ended nil-nil, as did the relationship.

Mike Gerber writes:

I first became aware of The Jam during the punk/new wave era, when I was working on an adventure playground in Camden.

We had a big booming juke box and some of the "kids" – actually streetwise West End teenagers – were the new mods, and frequently keyed in Jam tunes on the machine. And sometime in the early '80s I caught the Jam putting in a surprise appearance during the intermission at a Gang Of Four gig at the Rainbow in Finsbury Park.

None of the Jam songs had quite the impact on me of the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the UK" and "God Save the Queen". But I've come to realise – and Stone's autobiography has driven this home to me – that most punk songs, while sincere and capturing the Zeitgeist, are a

bit posey compared with The Jam songs, the best of them often angry working-class epistles penned by singer and rhythm guitarist Paul Weller, whose lyrics articulated the frustrations and experiences of British young people like Stone, whose book spares little of what it was like to grow up in a blue collar dysfunctional Jewish family in West Hendon in London.

**TO BE
SOMEONE**
by Ian Stone
Unbound,
£16.99 Hbk

Reviewed by
RUTH LUKOM
and **MIKE
GERBER**



Smiling for the camera:
Ian, his mum, his sister
and his grandfather

REVIEWS

Each chapter in Stone's book is preceded by a snapshot of what it was like to live in Britain in the '70s, much of it pretty grim, with the upsurge of neo-Nazi activity, football violence, three-day weeks, energy shortages, casual racist depictions of black and Asian characters on telly, and seemingly endless strikes culminating in the "rubbish on the streets" industrial action, media coverage of which helped leverage Thatcher into power in 1979. But many things – housing, education, the health service, job security, pension rights – were actually better in the '70s than they are today.

Ruth picks up the thread of Stone's autobiography. Public services may have been better resourced, as Mike points out, but they weren't yet attuned to the desperate home life this young boy had to manage on his own without any support. We can play "Then and Now" endlessly. Do we think the narrowness of Gove's National Curriculum today, together with the factory production line that teachers are compelled to produce with SATs and Ofsted's is worse than the indifference to the bullying and racism in schools in the 1970s? And bullying now is 24/7 with smartphones. Would today's school league tables tolerate those odd theatrical eccentric teachers that stood in front of us and brought learning alive by constantly going off topic?

Some things remain the same. The song "The

Eton Rifles" is about working-class boys being beaten up by cadets from Eton. David Cameron – a member of the cadet corps – said it was one of his favourite songs. Stone writes: "Asked about it, Paul said that Cameron couldn't have been listening to the song and more pointedly 'It wasn't intended as a fucking jolly drinking song for the cadet corps'." Cameron loftily asserted his right to be a feisty rebel: "I don't see why the left should be the only ones allowed to listen to protest songs." And Stone agrees: "I guess arms dealers could listen to 'Masters of War' by Bob Dylan if they fancied it."

Last August we had the A-levels debacle. Well of course privately educated pupils should have their A-level grades raised relative to the state school ones. What would be the point of paying for it otherwise? The resulting disparities that reverberate throughout our neighbourhoods, social structures and professions are not their concern. But don't expect to join in with our music too.

The book takes us to a satisfying conclusion. Ian Stone – shy and self-conscious about his appearance – eventually does something that would give the rest of us nightmares. He stands in front of sometimes hostile and drunk people and tells them jokes that make them laugh. He is now happy with his life and his family, and has come to terms with who he was then and who he is now. That is to be someone.

Tracking the disappeared

THE MISSING: THE TRUE STORY OF MY FAMILY IN WORLD WAR II

By Michael
Rosen

Walker Books,
£8.99 Hbk

The Missing is the true story of the experiences of Michael Rosen's family who faced persecution from the Nazi regime in France and Poland during World War II. Rosen's narrative follows the numerous paths that he had to search in order to uncover the truth of his relatives' fate.

He starts the book with an account of his own childhood, growing up in a flat above a bakery in north London shortly after the end of World War II. He says that there were not many signs of war where he lived, however, people still seemed to remember "The War", as they refer to it, albeit without mentioning the events that had taken place scarcely two years earlier. Rosen recalls his routine visits to Bubbe and Zeyde, his grandparents on his mother's side; the sweet interactions he had with Zeyde while eating the bagels provide an amusing detail early in the book. He

becomes interested in the disappearances of his great uncles and aunts, four of whom lived in Poland and two in France. When he starts to inquire about what happened to his relatives, he is dissatisfied when he is not provided with answers. Rosen wonders whether his relatives who, like him were Jewish, shared the fate of the millions of people who were murdered by the Nazis in the camps that he sees on TV.

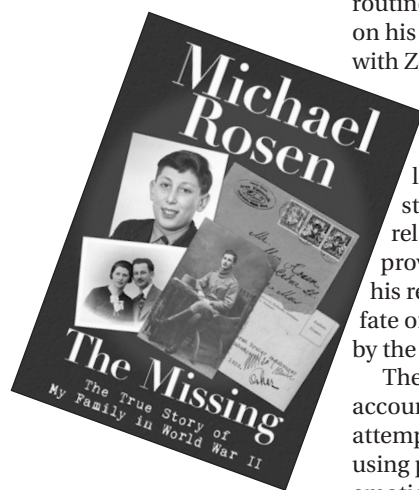
There's a change of tone after Rosen's brief account of his childhood, as he describes his attempts to find out what happened to his relatives, using poetry to express the frightened and angry emotions of those in similar positions of risk to his relatives. He hits many dead ends and follows false

leads in trying to discover what happened to his great uncles and aunts and, losing hope, he is outraged that the Nazis might have won by destroying almost all the evidence of concentration camps, of the rounding up of Jews and of the people who did not support their regime. However, after searching for years, Rosen was able to say what happened to his relatives as a result of the Nazi genocide of millions during World War II.

Reading *The Missing* was an eye-opening experience for me, and I found it to be a great introduction to some of the atrocities of the Holocaust. As a 14-year-old, I could quite easily deal with the content of the book as it cleverly uses poetry to express the emotions of those who suffered due to the events of this genocide. It does not talk much about the methods of killing and other distressing details that this topic entails. I liked the way the book was written when, describing the feelings of those suffering at the hands of the Nazis, Rosen puts himself in their shoes to convey their emotions convincingly.

In relation to whether the book is suitable for the targeted age group of 10+, I don't think a 10-year-old could read some sections of the book as there would be too much that they didn't yet understand about the Nazis and the Holocaust. Moreover, the description of Convoy 62, I believe would be slightly too distressing for that age. However, I think someone entering secondary school aged around 11 or 12 could read the book with enough understanding and maturity that the book requires.

Joseph Glaser (aged 14)



A timeless text

REVIEWS

What is it about Abram Leon's *The Jewish Question* that turned it into an almost biblical text for some Trotskyists? And why have Pathfinder decided to publish a new edition of it just now?

His thesis is that, "a scientific study of Jewish history" can reveal both why the Jews have survived for millennia and why they have been consistently persecuted. He is searching not just for an explanation but for a "solution of the Jewish question."

Abram Leon was born Abram Wajnsztock in 1918 in Warsaw. The family moved to Belgium when he was 10 and, after spending his teens in Hashomer Hatzair, the socialist Zionist youth movement, he became a leading member of the Trotskyist Fourth International. He published *The Jewish Question* in 1942. Two years later, at the age of 26, he was murdered in Auschwitz.

It is partly this tragedy, the needless, incomprehensible obliteration of a brilliant individual, that has placed his thought beyond question in certain parts of the left. This book is his legacy but as you read it, you wonder what significance it would have had if he had survived and returned to the manuscript after the war.

His thesis is that, throughout their history, the Jews have occupied a particular economic role, as merchants and it is that economic role which has determined the character of their religion, not the other way round. As a Marxist for whom "the history of society is the history of class struggle", he explains the longevity of Jewish life despite living under unrelenting pressure, discrimination and persecution, by defining Jews as a "people class". And this is where his ideas start to run aground. He argues that the Jews who were not merchants or traders, those for whom the religion had not evolved in such a way as to support their economic role, dissolved into the surrounding society, saying: "The law of assimilation might be formulated as follows: Wherever the Jews cease being a class, they lose, more or less rapidly, their ethnic, religious, and linguistic characteristics; they become assimilated." This despite the obvious fact that the majority of Jews in his lifetime, particularly in the country of his birth, were proletarian, assertive, politicised members of a huge and vibrant community with their own language, literature, schools and institutions, religious and secular.

What Abram is missing is the conception of ethnic or communal identity – of a community which, despite having no identification with a particular country or geographical area, can still understand itself and function as a nation or a people, living as a minority amongst a state majority, and alongside other minorities. This notion of peoplehood is not defined by majoritarianism and national borders, or by homogeneity or by a singular economic role, but includes class conflict between its members as

well as with the wider society.

Throughout a long and detailed historical overview going back to pre-Christian eras, he seems at times to struggle to sustain the notion of the Jews being an economic class. He grapples with the recurrent question (usually raised by non-Jews, rarely by Jews) of whether Jews are a race, pointing to the diversity amongst Jews and saying: "The Jewish race is a myth ... [i]t is not so much the anthropological characteristics of the Jews which distinguish them from other peoples as their physiological, pathological, and, above all, psychological characteristics. It is primarily the economic and social function of Judaism throughout history which explains this phenomenon." He says that all the "heterogeneous racial elements" that Jews have absorbed "have been subjected to special conditions in which the Jews lived, which, in the long run, ended up with the creation of the so-called 'Jewish type'."

The book has moments of brilliance alongside the simplistic quest for a single key to the "secret" of Jewish survival, and this, combined with the context in which it was written, gives it historical significance. The editors of this new edition could and should have taken the opportunity to juxtapose it with some of the wonderful scholarship in modern Jewish history and philosophical thought there has been in the aftermath of the Nazi genocide. Instead, they have framed it, before and after, with turgid blocks of hagiography, containing no critical ideas.

It does not seem to have been produced at this critical moment in response to the rising tide of racism, including antisemitism, or the gains of actual or incipient fascist politics. The book has been published by Pathfinder, the outlet of the American Socialist Workers Party (not the same as the SWP in Britain) which seems to prefer multiplying by splitting rather than recruiting. In this case, instead of taking the opportunity to address the dangerous instrumentalisation of antisemitism to attack the left, the introduction joins forces with the right to attack the BDS movement and claims that "In the UK we've seen the deepening anti-Jewish evolution of the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn."

At times, reading this new edition makes you feel as though time has stood still. The didactic male tone took me back to the short time I spent in the Trotskyist movement in the early 1970s. It is as though Leon's text is set in stone, immutable and beyond question. Just another orthodoxy.

Julia Bard

THE JEWISH QUESTION: A MARXIST INTERPRETATION

by Abram Leon
Pathfinder, £15

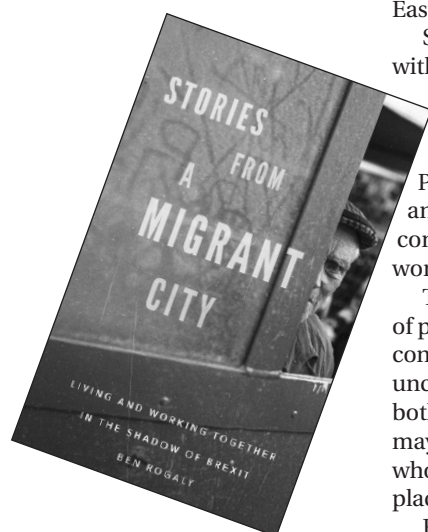


REVIEWS

A sense of place

STORIES FROM A MIGRANT CITY: LIVING AND WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SHADOW OF BREXIT

by Ben Rogaly
Manchester
University Press,
£19.99



The result of the 2016 EU referendum has been seen as the expression of two worldviews. On the one hand there are “anywheres” who live in London and other metropolitan cities but could live anywhere. These are contrasted with the “somewheres”, who identify strongly with their “place” but are unhappy with the pace and extent of cultural change, including the growing ethnic diversity of Britain, the legacy of multicultural politics and mass immigration. In the referendum, the “somewheres” revolted against the “anywheres”.

Ben Rogaly takes issue with this by showing that Peterborough, which voted 61% to 39% to leave the EU and might be seen as a “somewhere” place, is actually cosmopolitan, the destination of many migrations, internal and international.

Firstly, he argues that “immigrant” and “migrant” are part of the same conceptual framework. This encompasses people who came to Peterborough from London during the 1970s New Town expansion, those who came from Poland or Italy to work in the brickworks in the 1940s and ’50s, those from Pakistan or the Caribbean, and the most recent migrants from Eastern Europe who have settled in the city.

Secondly he contests the idea that being at home with “racialised difference” is characteristic of a so-called cosmopolitan elite, out of touch with working class life. He tells stories of people from different ethnic backgrounds in Peterborough and how they co-exist in factories and community organisations, giving the lie to the contentious idea that there is a homogenous white working class with a single viewpoint.

Thirdly, Rogaly counterposes to a static concept of place Doreen Massey’s view of place as a relational concept, historical and geographical. This can uncover, for example, the histories of the inhabitants both in a particular location and in other places they may still relate to. Massey asked two questions: “To whom does this place belong?” and “What does this place stand for?”

Finally, Rogaly describes how changes in the workplace have foregrounded what he calls “racialised capitalism”. This was the case for Pakistanis working in food factories in the 1960s and particularly applied to Eastern Europeans in the factories and warehouses of the 2000s. Here, the demands of work, targets and sanctions have become increasingly more stringent and different workplaces are divided on national lines, with management playing on these national divisions.

The book spoke to me because I am a native of Peterborough. My parents moved there in the 1950s and my father worked for Perkins Engines, then Peterborough’s largest employer. I moved away in 1980 and have since lived in London but I started my working life working in community relations in Peterborough, and recognise the areas Rogaly describes. Rogaly’s description of the use of racialised epithets in the 1970s reflects my experience at school in that period. I can remember being bullied with both antisemitism and being called “Paki”, an example, perhaps, of transposed racism.

Brexit is the elephant in the room. Rogaly’s

fieldwork lasted from 2011 to 2018. Nigel Farage cited Peterborough as a place where there was no integration, with neighbourhoods taken over by particular groups, implying that this was why Peterborough voted so strongly for Brexit.

Rogaly at times seems to be contextualising rather than disproving this. Quoting Massey again, he says there is “common anger” among people moved from place to place and those nostalgic for how their locality used to be. In spite of the highly polarised debate around the Brexit referendum, this shared adversity is, says Rogaly, the basis for an alliance of the dispossessed in urban citizenship struggles.

This could – but may not – be the case. Peterborough has a vibrant community life with a range of artistic and cultural practices. These include a Polish cinema club, an arts project producing writing from local people of different backgrounds, such as an Asian cookbook and an account of a Polish Holocaust survivor who came to live in Peterborough in the late 1940s and hid her Jewish origin for 40 years.

At the same time, to quote Les Back, “racisms coexist side by side with ‘spaces of urban conviviality’ and everyday multicultural”. Some aspects of local life appear to have prefigured Brexit. One was a campaign against a migrant centre leading to its closure in 2011, led by a residents association claiming to speak in the name of so-called “indigenous people”.

But saying that the exclusionary and the cross-cultural can exist side by side does not explain why one set of discourses was more powerful in the Brexit referendum and why Peterborough voted so strongly to leave. This requires more consideration of how politics, local and national, shaped the debate. It would need to show how far different parties have adapted to changing places or have exploited “common anger” in the service of exclusionary politics, and the relative power of a more inclusive discourse. It would also have been interesting to see more about how different ethnic groups have got involved in different political parties, and indeed how the arguments for and against leaving the EU played out in different communities and political parties, both nationally and locally.

This might involve discussion of the place of UKIP and later the Brexit Party in mobilising anti-foreigner discourses and the effect this had on other parties, including how the Conservative Party moved from Cameron/Osborne campaigning to remain, to Johnson supporting Brexit. The Conservatives took Peterborough from Labour at the 2019 General Election, only months after Labour had retained it in a by-election. A local businessman and sometime secret millionaire, Mike Greene, stood for the Brexit Party in both elections. In the by-election he was narrowly beaten into second place with 29% of the vote; in the General Election he only won 4.4%.

Rogaly does show how the “anywheres” versus “somewheres” thesis falls short of reality when considered against the rich fabric of life in Peterborough. But urban geography can only go some of the way to explaining the Brexit votes, which is ultimately a political phenomenon. **Mike Heiser**

Telling stories to open a crack in the wall

REVIEWS

This is a story about Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian, and Rami Elhanan, an Israeli, whose daughters have been killed, who say “Enough” and join together in storytelling and activism. Bassam’s 10-year-old daughter, Abir, was shot in the back of the head by an Israeli soldier in January 2007. She had gone to the shop in Anata during a school break to buy sweets. Rami’s daughter, Smadar, aged 13, was killed in Jerusalem in a suicide bombing in September 1997.

The book is written in 1,001 sections, with Bassam and Rami’s more complete narratives at 500 (drawing from their talks) and a powerful short author’s summary in the centre. Within this frame is held the telling of Abir and Smadar’s killings and their aftermath (including the terrible delays/barriers to the ambulance journey to gain appropriate treatment for Abir).

Colum’s narrative is intercut with sparks, fragments, threads of other contextual materials “spinning out in all directions”, but he always returns to the lives and deaths of the two girls, and Bassam and Rami’s determination to keep telling their stories. They do this painfully, every day, “to open a crack in the wall”, inspiring some whole groups (like Narrative 4 of which the author was a part) or maybe just shifting one person’s consciousness among more sceptical/hostile audiences. Bassam says, “I will keep on putting a tiny crack in it until the day I die.”

The book’s title provoked controversy: *Apeirogon* is defined as “a shape with a countably infinite number of sides”. Some critics berated the author for implying that the conflict has many sides, for muddying the Israeli state’s structural oppression of Palestine, or implying symmetry in the conflict through showing intimately and equally both families’ stories and their wider histories. I do not share this sense either from the author or protagonists themselves.

For the author, the title *Apeirogon* signifies that we are all involved, complicit and intimately connected. Bassam and Rami and their families try to practice equality in their friendship and activism but know that deep internalised and external inequalities make this difficult, though not impossible, for Israelis to practise this solidarity. Rami goes twice a week from the Jerusalem suburbs to Beit Sahour, an area forbidden to Israeli citizens.

I do not see any false symmetry implied here. Their activism is passionately against the Occupation, against segregation, oppression, injustice – for liberation and equality. Bassam says, “There was no symmetry between the jailor and the jailed – destroy the jail. The occupation ... had to

end. Nothing else would be possible until that happened.” The author, too, as part of the Narrative 4 group, is committed to storytelling as part of activism for social change.

Colum McCann was on a tour of Palestine/Israel with Narrative 4 activists when he heard these two (extra)ordinary men speak at the Cremesian Monastery at Beit Jala. He asked for consent to tell

their stories. The result is a hybrid book, constructed and imagined by the author but rooted in Bassam and Rami’s stories. They fully support what Colum has done.

While the frame of the story is simple, the narrative is full of digressions, allowing readers to explore connections. There are many fragments about birds. The choices of digressions are Colum’s but

they are vivid, intriguing, specific and illuminating and only occasionally seem forced. They are part of the arc of the book which always comes back to the two girls. By not rushing the core narrative, the author allows the impact of their killings to sink in more deeply.

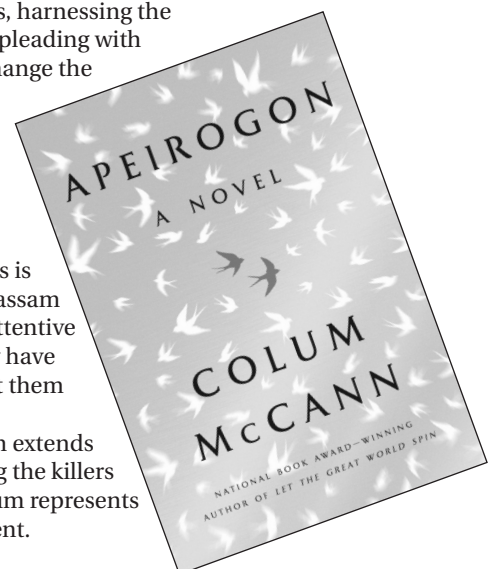
While these core narratives are clearly those of the fathers, the voices of their partners Nurit and Salwa, as well as Abir and Smadar’s siblings are vividly present too. The structure of Colum’s narrative shows Bassam and Rami’s deepening friendship and trust through everyday activism and intimately illuminates the cruel reality of the occupation.

Bassam and Rami first met at a Combatants for Peace meeting in Beit Jala but hadn’t yet joined forces. Bassam was involved in peace building after leaving prison before Abir’s death. It was later through the Parents Circle, founded by Yitzhak Frankenthal, that Bassam and Rami decided to travel together around Israel/Palestine and internationally, telling their stories, harnessing the power of their grief, encouraging, pleading with people to “know the other” and change the world.

Their joint demand for and practice of equality is the emotional, as well as the formal, core principle of their activism. Showing and receiving solidarity across barriers of deep inequalities is difficult, often problematic, but Bassam and Rami, and their families are attentive to subtle and blatant pitfalls. They have built a trust and a practice that get them through, often with humour.

The two families’ empathy even extends to Abir and Smadar’s killers, seeing the killers as victims of this conflict too. Colum represents this in his powerful central fragment.

APEIROGON
Colum McCann
Bloomsbury,
£8.99 pbk



REVIEWS

Towards the close, the author says of Rami: "So many people considered Rami a traitor, a lackey, a turncoat, but ... he knew what he was doing, he knew he was getting under their skin, he was peeling it back, exposing the rawness. He was outnumbered, yes but they would find a tipping point sometime, somewhere along the way. It was inevitable."

And of Bassam: "He hated the endless matryoshka-doll boxes his people were shoved into, even among themselves, but he wasn't going to be reduced to a single idea, a spectacle of disintegration. He was Palestinian. Waiting was a matter of spirit. There was perseverance in the refusal of defeat. He had already lived his life across a score of slaughters and he, like his people, had survived. He, like them, had been sentenced to life. He had spoken out for peace long before he had lost his daughter. He had decided to resist. He wasn't immune to criticism, but he had served his time."

Bassam spent seven years in jail from the age of 17, was tortured, regularly beaten, became a prisoners' leader, and went on hunger-strike against an arbitrary decision to extend his sentence. He left prison "as a man who wanted to pit himself against the ignorance of violence including his own". In prison he had developed a dialogue, later a friendship, with a part-time guard and mathematician Hertzl Shaul. Bassam came out of prison committed to non-violent resistance. He came to England with his family to do an MA in Peace Studies at Bradford University before returning to Palestine.

Activism has passed to the next generation, too. At an Alternative Memorial Service for Palestinians and Israelis, the murdered girls' siblings Yigal Elhanan and Araab Aramin spoke against "occupation, segregation and dispossession". They

said: "We do not talk about peace, we make peace. Uttering their names together, Smadar and Abir, is our simple unadulterated truth."

When Bassam and Rami arrive home after being together they always text each other "home brother" – there is such genuine feeling and concern for the other in this ritual. Can this change the world? Probably not at present, but cracks are appearing. This outward looking and generous friendship, forged through grief, solidarity and activism is hopeful. I have seen how inspiring their storytelling together is for young activists (see Narrative 4 "Summer of Impact" for example)

Apparently film rights have been sold to Steven Spielberg's company. I worry that the deep critique and activism against the occupation at the heart of this book would be lost in a mainstream film about friendship across divides. I would hate to see this powerful book gutted, even subtly so. I suggest reading the book, watching documentary film of Bassam and Rami, listening to Colum, Bassam and Rami speaking directly (at Narrative 4 for example) before watching any feature film.

The book begins with Rami setting off from home on his motorbike. It ends with Bassam and Salwa talking about their day. There is a beautiful symmetry to the book, but no implied symmetry in the situation. This is a book where the protagonists and author challenge the occupation, segregation, oppression and violence in the most intimate way, and give a glimpse of something different.

Simon Lynn

Find out more

Combatants for Peace <https://cfpeace.org/>
Parents Circle www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcf-home-page-en/
Narrative 4 "Summer of Impact" <https://narrative4.com/>

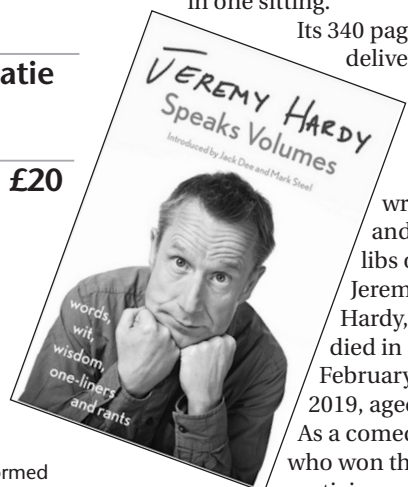
Surreal, thoughtful and astute

JEREMY HARDY SPEAKS VOLUMES

Edited by Katie Barlow and David Tyler
Two Roads, £20

There are some books designed for the dipping-in-and-out style of reading, as this probably is – but for the fact that I devoured it in one sitting.

Its 340 pages deliver the



writing and ad libs of Jeremy Hardy, who died in February 2019, aged 57. As a comedian who won the prestigious

Perrier Award only a few years after starting out, he eschewed the comedy club circuit itself, focusing on longer one-man theatre shows. Radio, too, was a perfect medium for him. He

could provide a politically astute rant, a daftly surreal allusion and a thoughtful musing on life's problems – usually in the same outburst, as every page here demonstrates.

With material edited by his widow Katie Barlow and long-time producer David Tyler, this has Hardy's voice from the off. "I was born on a council estate, but once I'd been called Jeremy we had to move."

The singing voice was his very own, as audiences of *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* on that marvellous BBC wireless will know. Hardy's rendition of "Hallelujah" in the style of George Formby is beyond words.

His ad libs emerge perfectly crafted. In the long-running radio show *Jeremy Hardy Speaks to the Nation*, he took questions from his audience. "There's a man in a mauve shirt there ... is that mauve? Or is it more purple? Split the difference. Hideous."

A chapter on death and funerals is poignant, but achingly funny, "We scattered my parents last year. We did cremate them first."

Humanists don't come out of those pages well. That's not surprising, as many of his friends remember the memorial service for his friend, fellow comedian Linda Smith, when a pompous celebrant wanted them to pause and think of their departed pal. "Thanks for that advice. I was going to take that moment to think of General Franco," said Hardy, destroying solemnity.

There is thoughtful reflection here, too, as he recalls a visit to Palestine, "the saddest place I've been", and his joy at the resilience and hospitality of those he met.

A dozen or so pieces are contributed by close friends, fellow comedians who clearly thought Hardy was the best of the bunch. They miss him, and so do we.

Lynne Walsh

Jeremy Hardy performed at several benefits for the Jewish Socialists' Group and for *Jewish Socialist*, from the earliest days of the magazine. He had a rare understanding of Jewish issues and is an huge loss to progressive politics.

A legacy of live questions

REVIEWS

Can there be anything new to say about Rosa Luxemburg? In this passionate, fast-moving and yet scholarly account Dana Mills shows us that there is. In the century and more since Rosa's murder, her major contributions to socialist controversy and scholarship and the questions she posed have never ceased to be at the centre of working class politics – whether explicitly or as the ghost at the feast.

As long as Bernstein's wretched heirs continue to “discover” that capitalism has ceased to be a system of crisis, overcoming its central contradictions and opening up an endless road of incremental and painless reform; for so long will Rosa be there to refute them – as if any proof were needed beyond each morning's news.

Let the talentless jobsworths of official parliamentary “politics” turn up their delicate noses at strikes and mass protests as a rude irruption of the unofficial and unwashed into the professional business of political management. Rosa will be there with us in spirit and intellect to show that, on the contrary, mass action – unpredictable, unruly and frequently inconvenient – is the necessary lifeblood of any real change, and the ever-renewing wellspring of political innovation, transformation and hope.

How should socialists organise politically? How does the need for disciplined, efficient and centralised party organisation relate to democracy both within socialist organisations and in how a party relates to its broader mass base? And how do these dilemmas affect the choices of socialists who are actually wielding power – whether in parliaments or at the head of revolutions?

Rosa was the first to confront these issues as practical problems, both as an activist in the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), the first modern mass socialist party, and later in relation to Russia's revolutions. These questions recur in every political generation. Their form is constantly changing and they have no simple off-the-shelf answers. But every successive attempt to engage with them finds itself following in the wake of Rosa's questions.

And does anyone still believe that imperialism and wars can be left behind in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world? Or that growing enlightenment leads to ever greater peace and understanding between nations in a pacific “end of history”? Who now remembers one Francis Fukuyama, who in effect predicted that future in the 1990s after the Cold War ended with the triumph of the West, hailed as the “end of history”? Yet Rosa tackled and demolished a far more impressive version of the same Panglossian perspective when served up with a Marxist sauce by Kautsky.

How often since Rosa's death have the questions she posed been confidently dismissed as the products of an outmoded combination of doctrinaire Marxism and naive utopianism, only to reappear with added urgency in each successive crisis.

Some still see her world as the last golden glow of progress and peace before the guns of August 1914 and the horror of the trenches drowned it all in blood. But this could never have been Rosa's view.

She was born a Polish Jewess under the Russian Czars, fighting most of her political battles in the Kaiser's Germany, in a world and a socialist movement both male-dominated to a degree now difficult to credit. She personified so many of the multiple oppressions which the rosy nostalgia for the *Belle Epoque* glosses over.

Dana interweaves her account of Rosa's political and intellectual battles with a running presentation of her extraordinary empathy for all forms of life, and solidarity with all victims of hurt and injustice – human, animal and even insect. She also brings out, with illustrations, Rosa's great talent as a visual artist “whose artistry showed her holistic understanding of the world as human psyche and nature need more than one outlet”. She said: “I feel at home in the entire world, wherever there are clouds and birds and human tears”.

This dialectical relationship between her empathy and her intellect undermines the common clichés about her political legacy. One such, pits Rosa the idealistic libertarian democrat against the hard-nosed apparatchik Lenin, the progenitor of Soviet totalitarianism; or Rosa as protagonist of an idealist (but impractical) humanist democratic Marxism against doctrinaire economic determinism.

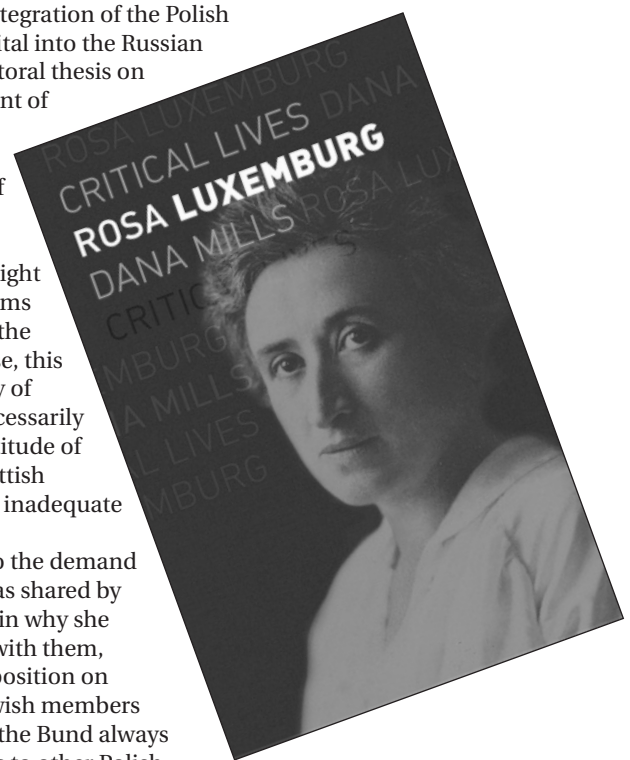
There is no space here to enumerate the various sorts of nonsense in these caricatures. Her well-known opposition to Polish independence was certainly not founded on any indifference to Polish national oppression at the hands of the Czar, which she denounced with her usual eloquence and passion. Rather it was based on a rigorous economic analysis of the integration of the Polish bourgeoisie and Polish capital into the Russian economy based on her doctoral thesis on “The Industrial Development of Poland”.

Here, it was Lenin's advocacy of the principle of self-determination as a democratic right on the analogy of support for the right of divorce which was, in terms of the conventional cliché, the more “libertarian”. Of course, this in no way implied advocacy of Polish independence as necessarily progressive in itself. The attitude of socialists in England to Scottish independence is a partial if inadequate analogy.

Indeed her opposition to the demand for Polish independence was shared by the Bund, which may explain why she always had good relations with them, despite her rejecting their position on complete autonomy for Jewish members within the party. Mills says the Bund always preferred Rosa and Jogiches to other Polish marxists, and republished her articles on the Polish question in their Yiddish press.

According to Nettl, the family spoke Polish and German at home and though she could understand

**ROSA
LUXEBURG**
Dana Mills
Reaktion books
£11.99



REVIEWS

Yiddish she did not speak it. Nettl also claims that her family may have known the great Yiddish writer YL Peretz, himself a native of her home town of Zamosc – though the family moved to Warsaw when Rosa was three.

Of course it could be said that her opposition to autonomy for the Bund was somewhat in contradiction to her demand for autonomy for her own Polish party within Russian social democracy. In fact, it seems she had originally supported a relative autonomy for the Bund as well but later dropped it as she felt their interpretation of it was divisive – a view held by others. But here, as in many other areas, the conventional version of these historic disagreements overlooks the degree to which all the participants changed their opinions over time – a point which there is no space to elaborate here!

The same explanatory framework disposes of a common misrepresentation of her position on imperialism. She argued that the inner dynamic of capitalist economy required expansion into non-capitalist economies, as a purely capitalist economy could never generate enough demand for the volume of commodities produced; leading in its turn to a decline in the rate of profit. Thus, imperialism was not as Kautsky and others argued an optional add-on to capitalism due to pressure from the most reactionary and militaristic sections of the ruling class. Rather it was an inseparable part of capitalism itself. Not only socialism but capitalism itself was impossible in one country!

Some have interpreted this as meaning that Rosa believed capitalism would collapse when it ran out of non-capitalist parts of the world to expand into. But as Mills shows, Rosa did not believe that capitalism would simply “collapse”, for this or any other reason. “The tendency towards this terminal point of capitalist development manifests itself in forms that configure the final phase of capitalism as a period of catastrophes.”

But Rosa’s central argument has been disputed by many other distinguished marxist economists at the time and since, and there is no space to go into it here. What indisputably survives any outcome of the detailed controversy is Rosa’s conclusion that: “Capitalism is the first form of economy with propagandistic power; it is a form that tends to extend itself over the globe and eradicate all other forms of economy – it tolerates no other alongside itself...”

Mills quotes the Luxemburgian feminist Cakardic as arguing that the expansion into non-capitalist areas should not be understood only spatially but can also be seen as explaining capital’s expansion into non-capitalist formations, especially the household. Could it also explain the compulsive neoliberal drive to commodify even those areas of social life which the heyday of capitalism left only indirectly commodified, if at all, such as basic public services, schools and universities; or those which working class pressure partially decommodified such as, in Britain, the NHS?

Merely to pose these questions is to show that despite the rifle butt which smashed her skull in January 1919, as Mills puts it, “Rosa Luxemburg’s fierce intellect and stormy heart have left us a calling to answer ... She was, she is, she will be. History will do its work. See that you join Rosa Luxemburg’s march.”

Stephen Marks

Further information

Dana Mills explains her encounter with Rosa here: www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/browse/article_detail/discovering_rosa

LIFE

Denis Goldberg was first and foremost a comrade in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. When he and fellow ANC leaders, including Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, were prosecuted for sabotage in the infamous Rivonia Trial of 1963-64, Denis insisted that he be the only one to take the blame for the weapons and bombs found at an ANC safe house, so that the leaders would be free to continue the struggle. They refused, but the offer was a reflection of Denis’ commitment, courage and selflessness.

The accused in the trial were fully expecting to be sentenced to death by hanging. As the judgement was being read out, Denis’ elderly mother couldn’t hear the verdict. She shouted out to her son in the dock “Denis, what is it? What did the judge say?”, to which Goldberg responded: “Life, and life is wonderful”.

Denis Goldberg’s life was tough but wonderfully inspiring. His parents were born in London to Lithuanian Jews who emigrated to the UK in the latter part of the 19th century. Both parents were communists. They moved to South Africa and were active in their local branch of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in Cape Town. The SACP, which later entered into an alliance with the ANC that continues to this day, was the political home of many Jews and produced some of the ANC’s most revered leaders including Joe Slovo, Ruth First and Ronnie Kasrils. The SACP is also credited with persuading the ANC to adopt a policy of non-racism in its struggle against apartheid.

In 1950, aged just 16, Denis began his studies in civil engineering at the University of Cape Town (UCT). They would prove useful in his later underground activity with the ANC. While at UCT, Denis met Esme Bodenstein, also from a family active in the Communist Party. They married in January 1954.

Even after the Communist Party was banned by the apartheid state, its activities continued, often with dire consequences for its activists. In March 1960, Denis and his mother were both arrested for supporting strikers in the townships, and spent four months in jail.

As state violence against the majority of South Africans intensified in the early 1960s, an impassioned debate raged within the ANC about whether to adopt an armed struggle in response. The older members of the movement were reluctant. Nelson Mandela, President of the ANC Youth League, argued vociferously for armed struggle, albeit aimed only at strategic sites and installations rather than people. Goldberg too was strongly in favour. After the establishment of the ANC’s armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) – Spear of the Nation – Goldberg, the engineer, set up and ran the first internal training camp for recruits. He was, by all accounts, a master explosives maker.

However, on 11th July 1963 the security police raided Liliesleaf farm in the northern Johannesburg suburb of Rivonia, which was used as a safe house and secret meeting place by the

IS WONDERFUL

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MK High Command and ANC leadership. Denis, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and Rusty Bernstein, another Jewish socialist at the heart of the struggle, were arrested and put on trial, along with Mandela, who had been jailed in the earlier Treason Trial.

While Denis was in jail facing gruelling interrogation, threats and attempts to turn him, his wife Esme was also arrested under the heinous 90-day detention law. On her release, she and their children left South Africa for the UK. Denis' situation was dire as he had penned the instructions for arms manufacturing that were found by the police. Bernstein was acquitted, while Denis, at 31, was the youngest of those sentenced to life imprisonment, and the only "white".

Denis was a true antiracist: he credited his Jewish roots and communist upbringing for informing his lifelong commitment to non-racism, justice and equality. In his later life he imbued activists with these tenets, often explaining that the Jewish history of suffering had convinced him that one should always be on the side of the oppressed and the marginalised. "I understood that what was happening in South Africa with its racism was like the racism of Nazi Germany in Europe that we were supposed to be fighting against. You have to be involved one way or another. That's what I grew up with. I come from a generation who were prepared to put our lives on the line for freedom."

Goldberg was sent to the "Whites" section of Pretoria Central Prison, while his comrades were shipped off to Robben Island. He was mostly alone in his cell for 16 to 18 hours a day. A couple of years later he was joined in prison by one of his lawyers, Bram Fischer, an intellectually brilliant fellow communist. Denis helped care for Bram when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. While in jail, Denis also gained four degrees and was part of the way through a fifth, in Law.

Denis' daughter campaigned for her father's release and eventually, after 22 years behind bars, he was freed and deported on condition that he renounce violence. He agreed not to engage in future political violence but refused to repudiate his involvement in, and the necessity of, the armed struggle.

After his release in 1985, Denis lived briefly with his daughter on a kibbutz in Israel. He denounced Israel's war in Lebanon, its occupation of the Palestinian territories, and its close ties with South Africa, and soon left for the UK. In London he again worked for the ANC, primarily building support for the international Anti-Apartheid Movement. He returned to live in a democratic South Africa in the early 2000s, where he inspired young activists and strongly and bravely criticised ANC leaders involved in corruption. He became a revered elder of the ANC, admired for his steadfast principles and progressive internationalism.

It was these latter qualities that compelled him to speak out about Israel with great honesty: "Apartheid exists in states that enforce laws and policies that discriminate between people on the basis of race or religion, and this holds true in Israel

proper as well as in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip ... There is no doubt in my mind that Israel is an apartheid state. Having lived through apartheid in South Africa, I cannot allow in my name the same kind of oppression to go on. I have to be an opponent of the exclusionist policies of Zionism, but let me say straight away that I have to be opposed to the exclusionary policies of the feudal Arab states of the Middle East as well.

Denis' refusal to excuse Israel's racist and brutal actions, and his vehement condemnation of appalling regimes like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, reflects his unwavering and total commitment to speaking truth to power regardless of the locus of that power.

In Britain we can certainly learn lessons from Denis' integrity, his steadfast commitment to the principles of antiracism, equality and justice. There

are Jews in Britain today who criticise human rights abuses in many parts of the world but will not include Israel in their condemnation. There are Jews in Britain today who readily condemn antisemitism but are silent on

Islamophobia and other racism. There are Jews in Britain today who will use what are sometimes fake charges of antisemitism against the Labour Party or to fight factional political battles within the party, while remaining silent on actual antisemitism occurring in other arenas of British public life. There are some Jews in Britain today who will call a committed antiracist and close friend of Denis', Jeremy Corbyn, an antisemite, but will ignore the actual antisemitism of people closely linked to the ruling party, of Donald Trump or of Viktor Orban.

This hypocrisy was manifest in the response to Denis' death: the rabidly right-wing *Jewish Chronicle*, at the forefront of the antisemitism witch-hunt, praised his role in the South African struggle while making no mention whatsoever of his trenchant, life-long criticism of Israel as an occupying, apartheid state.

Denis Goldberg's life was lived with integrity, sincerity and an unwavering commitment to principle. He made clear, in both words and actions, that you are either antiracist or you enable racism, you are either for the equality of all or you enable inequality, you are either for justice everywhere or you enable injustice anywhere.

And what his extraordinary resilience in the face of unimaginable suffering and torment, his tolerance, his steadfastness and his infectious sense of humour remind us, is that a life in pursuit of justice and equality is a wonderful life.

ANDREW FEINSTEIN honours the life of Denis Goldberg, comrade of Nelson Mandela and Jewish socialist, who died in April this year



Lifelong comrades – Nelson Mandela and Denis Goldberg

Andrew Feinstein is a former ANC MP. He was the first MP to introduce a motion on the Holocaust in the South African Parliament. You can see his conversation with Jeremy Corbyn on ANC struggle hero, Denis Goldberg, here: <https://www.doubledown.news/watch/2020/30/july/jeremy-corbyn-andrew-feinstein-on-denis-goldberg-the-jewish-freedom-fighter-who-helped-mandela-defeat-apartheid>

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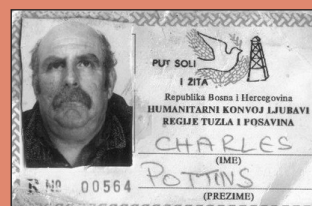
The group works and campaigns with other organisations sharing some or all of our aims and always welcomes new members who support our political principles. All members receive a regular internal discussion bulletin, a frequent newsletter detailing meetings and events and can participate fully in our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

For further information write to:

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BM3725, London WC1N 3XX
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www.jewishsocialist.org.uk

Remembering Majer and Charlie

This issue of the magazine is dedicated to the memory of two outstanding members of the Jewish Socialists' Group who we sadly lost five years ago and 15 years ago.



MAJER BOGDANSKI died in September 2005. He joined the JSG in the mid-1980s and remained a member until he died. Majer was a treasured living link for us with the Bund. He had been a Bund and trade union activist in Lodz, Poland, before the war.

In the 1940s he was part of a Jewish Socialist Organisation in England formed by Bundist refugees, and was also active in the Workers Circle. He chaired the London Friends of Yiddish for two decades.

CHARLIE POTTINS died in September 2015. He joined the JSG in the late 1970s, and was a member of the Editorial Committee of JS and the JSG National Committee for many years. He was a prolific writer for the magazine who specialised in unearthing wonderful radical histories, Charlie was active in socialist, trade union and internationalist causes, including the JSG, until his death. In 1994 he was part of a convoy taking Workers' Aid to Bosnian communities in Tuzla.

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.

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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.