

**ZIONISM**  
*and the*

**ARAB  
REVOLUTION**

**THE MYTH  
OF PROGRESSIVE ISRAEL**

**A YOUNG SOCIALIST PAMPHLET 30c**

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Published by the Young Socialist Alliance:  
P. O. Box 471  
Cooper Station  
New York, N. Y., 10003

Printed in the United States of America  
August 1967

## INTRODUCTION

At this writing the conquering armies of Israel are encamped on the banks of the Suez Canal and the Jordan River. Israel's surprise "blitzkrieg" attack on the Arab countries has been a cause for rejoicing from the palace of General Ky in Saigon to the White House and the Pentagon in Washington.

What attitude should American radicals take toward the Zionist government of Israel? And how is it possible to secure a lasting peace in the Middle East? These are the questions the articles collected here try to answer.

The current struggles in the Middle East can only be understood in the broader context of the worldwide struggle between the underdeveloped countries and the advanced imperialist powers, particularly the United States. The attempt to achieve real national independence from foreign intervention, investment and control sharply divides the Middle East.

On the one hand is the progressive aspirations of the Arab masses for complete economic and political independence and for an end to the miserable conditions under which they are forced to live.

On the other side is imperialism's desire to maintain, by savage force if necessary, this oil-rich area under its dominance. The numerous popular revolts that continually flare up and the nationalization of property in Syria and Egypt, especially the nationalization of the Suez Canal, are a direct threat to this domination.

How does Israel fit into this picture? In "The Myth of Progressive Israel," Peter Buch lays bare the central fact that Israel is not really an underdeveloped country at all, but has an economy which is an artificially transplanted, heavily financed, European-type capitalism. It acts as a guardian of imperialist interests in the Middle East

Peter Buch was an active member of Hashomer Hatzair, a socialist-Zionist youth organization. He spent six months in Israel in 1951 where he worked on a Kibbutz and attended a leadership training school. He later broke with Zionism, becoming a Marxist and a founder of the Young Socialist Alliance. He is a spokesman for the Socialist Workers Party.

The "Israeli Socialist Appeal," issued on the eve of the outbreak of the war outlines the only workable solution to the bitter conflict in the Middle East—a socialist union of all the countries of the Middle East. The Israeli Socialist Organization, which issued the appeal, is an organization of Israeli Marxists composed of both Arabs and Jews; this lends special significance to their proposals.

They point out, after a rigorous examination of the concrete situation, that the socialist Middle Eastern union they propose could only be achieved by a rejection of the specifically Zionist character of Israel, and a break on the part of Israel of its ties with the United States.

The last article, entitled "Politics in Israel," is also by the Israeli Socialist Organization, drafted in January, 1967. It traces the historical development of the ruling parties in Israel, and of the other parties on the left. It pays particular attention to the role of the Kibbutzim in the Israeli economy, the origins and significance of the massive "labor federation," the Histadrut; and the policies of the Communist party in Israel.

These articles, first published in the weekly socialist newspaper *The Militant*, give the first consistent explanation of the politics of Zionism, and point to a realistic solution of the Middle East crisis for the Jewish and Arab masses.

PETER BUCH

## The Myth of Progressive Israel

A few days before the June 5 Israeli attack on the Arab countries, Senator Robert Kennedy called for the "defense" of Israel as an "outpost of democracy and civilization" in the Middle East.

Kennedy's remark reflects the liberal version of a myth that grips many radicals in the U. S., the myth of "progressive"—even "socialist"—Israel. This myth pictures Israel as a land of Kibbutzim or communal farms, with workers' parties dominating the government and steering Israel in a socialist direction.

Partisans of this view must first of all answer the question: If Israel really is moving in a progressive direction, why is its foreign policy so reactionary, and why does its policy in the Middle East meet with such approval from Washington, Chiang Kai-shek, Nguyen Cao Ky, etc.?

That U. S. imperialism is pleased with the recent Israeli victory was indicated by the following gleeful remarks in the June 19 *Newsweek*: "To Washington, the combination of Israeli muscle and U. S. sweet talk had produced eminently satisfactory results . . . As an indirect beneficiary of the Israeli blitz, the U. S. should at least be in a position to neutralize the Middle East, so that its oil can be profitably marketed and its waterways used for the benefit of world commerce . . ."

The June blitzkrieg is not an isolated instance where the interests of the Israeli regime happened to coincide with those of the imperialists.

In 1956 Israel launched an attack upon Egypt in conjunction with Britain and France. Israel supported the U. S. in the Korean war; supported the fascist Secret Army Organization in Algeria against the Algerian revolution; opposed the independence movements in Morocco, Tunisia and Indonesia; trained counterrevolutionary paratroopers for the Congo's General Mobutu; opposes the admission of China into the UN; endorsed the Eisenhower doctrine and supported the landing of U. S. and British troops in Lebanon and Jordan during the Iraqi revolution of 1958.

Israel has supported King Hussein of Jordan against efforts of the Palestinian refugee movement to overthrow him.

The Israeli regime has refused to condemn the U. S. war in Vietnam, as the Egyptian, Algerian and Syrian regimes have done. Israel has found ways of indicating its support to Johnson's war; for example, Moshe Dayan visited South Vietnam earlier this year, financed by the U. S. Information Agency.

The truth of the matter is that these policies flow from the character of Israel as a capitalist and colonizing society. Israel is plagued with the typical problems of such a society, including class struggles, economic crisis, unemployment, racism and militarism.

The Zionist policy of Jewish colonization at the expense of the native Arab population, has led Israel into an alliance with the imperialist powers, especially the U. S. Instead of seeking integration with an anti-imperialist and socialist Middle East, Israel is an opponent of the Arab revolution. As a small and economically unviable country, cut off from its neighbors, it is dependent upon aid from the imperialist countries in order to survive.

Israel's vaunted prosperity has been an artificial one, propped up by outside aid. Since 1949, it has received \$6 billion in such aid, two-thirds in grants and contributions. Most of this money has come from Jewish fund-raising (mainly in the U. S.), German reparations payments, and U. S. government grants.

The German reparation payments recently came to an end. Jewish immigration has dried up, leading to a slump in the housing industry. Production in Israel is concentrated in light industry and agriculture, requiring importation of

machinery, fuel and raw materials. These factors have led to a foreign deficit this year of half a billion dollars, and a huge national debt of over a billion dollars. Israel is in an economic crisis, marked by inflation, unemployment, wage freezes and wage cuts, and a strike wave.

The response of the "workers" government has been to place the burden of the crisis upon the working class. The situation was described early this year by Ya'akov Chazan, member of the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and a leading spokesman for Mapam, a left-Zionist party:

"The great peril confronting us now is unemployment. The threat of its growth is being used by the employers to strengthen their own position through the threat of further discharges and layoffs, and in this way they seek to break down workers' solidarity and force the workers to acquiesce to lowered standards of living and increased exploitation . . . This situation is more critical than it seems, since unemployment is not uniformly distributed throughout the country, but has hit certain sectors more than others, in particular the development towns and certain Arab communities." ("Development towns" are mainly occupied by Oriental Jews from Yemen, Iraq, Algeria, etc.).

Mapam, the United Workers Party, formally adheres to Marxism and "undogmatic" Leninism. It is opposed to socialist revolution in Israel, however, and fully supports Zionism. It is presently in the government coalition, lending its support to the campaign against the Arab countries.

The Mapai party is social democratic. It is the strongest party, and controls the powerful Histadrut. The Histadrut is the central labor union, but is also the country's largest employer and runs the main health insurance program.

The fact that Mapai is the leading government party helps foster the illusion of "socialist" Israel. But the Mapai government no more makes Israel socialist than the Labor party government makes England socialist.

The existence of the Kibbutzim and the fact that Histadrut owns or partially owns many enterprises also raise illusions.

The communal farms represent a very small section of the economy, and a still smaller section of the population. Their major function has been as an advance guard of the Zionist state in settling and defending territory. Economically un-

viable, they are supported and subsidized by Zionist funds. They in no way characterize the economy of Israel as a whole.

The Histadrut's enterprises function not as a part of a socially-owned and planned economy, but within the context of capitalist market relations. They confront their own workers as any other capitalist bosses. Histadrut shares ownership and profits of many major enterprises with private capitalists. Its enterprises serve to aid the development of capitalism in Israel, just as nationalization of certain industries in many capitalist countries serves to stabilize the system.

A series of examples of this were provided by Mapam's general secretary, Meir Ya'ari, at the fourth Mapam congress in 1963, when Mapam was not in the governing coalition. A typical example is described by Ya'ari, concerning T'nuva, a Histadrut wholesale produce marketing agency:

"T'nuva releases agricultural produce before it reaches the consumer, turning the products over to middlemen who increase their price exorbitantly. It is no wonder, therefore, that sometimes the products reach the consumer after having increased prices by over 100 percent."

Concerning Histadrut's role as a "trade union," Ya'ari writes: "It has been a long time since we last heard of Histadrut leading a strike. We have grown accustomed to seeing the Histadrut leadership preventing strikes and applying sanctions against them. But there are strikes or the threats of strikes to which their ears are more attuned. Towards these strikes of 'our own people' from the higher bureaucracy they use gentler methods of persuasion. The same is true when the strike is led by a rebellious Mapai politician. But when the strikes are organized by production workers, the Mapai leadership knows how to show its fist."

Ya'ari discusses the growth of bureaucracy in Histadrut: "Today, bureaucracy is gnawing away at Solel-Boneh [Histadrut construction firm]. The wage gap between managers and workers is growing. The worker has no voice in the problems of production and management. One party rules over everything . . . Workers applying for jobs in these firms have to undergo Mapai party screening . . ."

The nature of Israeli society is clearly revealed by the development of the capitalist class. In 1956 *Time* magazine

made this evaluation:

"Under the New Economic Policy laid down in 1952, a conspicuous group of near-millionaires has arisen. A 'Gold-Coast' of California-style villas has sprung up north of Tel Aviv where the wives of the new \$50,000-a-year men vie in entertaining ambassadors or ministers at lavish dinner parties . . . half the population is now composed of Oriental Jews . . . Some Europeans complain of being put next door to 'blacks,' and Israel with all its other perplexities now must worry about the color problem."

On the development and enrichment of the Israeli capitalist class, Ya'ari writes:

"A considerable number of our millionaires have demonstrated their private initiative mainly in schemes to get rich at the expense of national and public capital. Of course, there has also been private capital from abroad. But it generally wasn't this capital that turned construction foremen into rich building contractors. Nor was it this capital that financed the big importers whose wealth must also be credited, to a large extent, to the generosity and carelessness of the Treasury . . ."

In other words, the state functions as a source of funds and capital for private capitalists.

Ya'ari continues, discussing the extent of capitalist profits: "A Bank of Israel report states that, in 1961, the assets of the banks increased by 406.1 million Israeli pounds, or 26 percent, in the course of one year. During that same year, the profits on their own capital increased by 51.8 percent, while profits from operations and capital together increased by 30.1 percent. These are not normal capitalist profits! . . ."

"In 1958, total returns on (industrial) capital were 1,681 million pounds . . . and net gain reached 25 percent. During that same year all wage-earners together received 1,962 million pounds."

Citing official statistics, Ya'ari points to the fact that the maximum monthly wage of the lower half of the wage earners was 250 pounds, while the average was 140, compared to the minimum official requirement of 450 pounds per month for a family of four.

Discrimination is practiced not only against Arabs, but also against the Oriental Jews, "As we know," Ya'ari points

out, "most production workers now belong to the Oriental communities. To be quite frank we are concerned not only with freezing wages but with deepening the ethnic differences in the country. This social exploitation helps hold the Oriental communities, one half of the population, in their present state of economic, social and cultural discrimination . . ."

Ya'ari compares the ethnic discrimination against both Oriental Jews and Arabs in Israel: "The common denominator of the two problems is that the Arab worker must live in a hut or hovel on the outskirts of Jewish towns where he must seek his work, and the worker of the Sephardic [Oriental] community is packed into crowded slums . . ."

"We are witnesses to the desperate struggle being fought by slum dwellers in Tel Aviv whose land was sold from under them at exorbitant prices to a corporation which plans an entertainment center on the site of their homes, costing millions and perhaps tens of millions of pounds. This land is the stage for a devil's dance of land speculation involving astronomical sums.

"Slums have been destroyed with the help of eviction notices. Policemen were recruited to aid the land speculators in order to evict the dwellers into the streets. Almost incredible! Women and children tried, empty-handed, to defend their homes against the policemen and their clubs, against the threat of expulsion."

Although the military administration over the Arab communities and the noxious travel permit system was recently ended by the Eshkol government, the conditions of the Arab population in Israel still evoke comparisons with the black ghettos in this country.

In a collection of essays entitled "Israel and the Arabs," published in June, 1962, by Hashomer Hatzair, the main constituent of Mapam, Yosef Vaschitz points out:

"After the first years of enforced segregation, the barriers to the general labor market were lifted. For manual unskilled and skilled occupations they have been lifted completely. For professionals and white collar workers, however, the gates to jobs outside the Arab sector have been raised only to a very small degree . . ."

"Tens of thousands of Arabs—most of them young people—

leave their villages in order to seek employment in the towns. Their hold on the labor market, however, is a tenuous one as they remain mostly in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories. Since they continue to live in the village though they work in the city, they are unorganized for the most part. Their living conditions are very bad, especially when compared with those of the average Jewish worker . . ."

Although Histadrut finally decided in the late '50s to open its membership to Arab workers, Vaschitz points out that "there is no value in formal membership of the Histadrut as long as it is not accompanied by a fundamental change of values in the organization of employment . . . The Arab worker has not penetrated into the large-scale industry of the country, but only to the fringes of manufacture—garages, metal workshops, concrete block and tile manufactures . . ."

The facts related by these left spokesmen for Zionism, give eloquent testimony to the falseness of the picture of "egalitarian," "socialist" Israel.

For Israel to become truly progressive, it will have to break with capitalism, Zionism and imperialism, and seek to aid the Arab revolution in a struggle for a socialist and independent Middle East.



Peter Buch, speaking at Militant Labor Forum in New York on Arab-Israeli War.

## Israeli Socialist Appeal

The 19th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel will occur this month. During these 19 years the Israeli-Arab dispute has not come nearer a solution . . .

Especially grave is the state of the Palestinian Arabs—the direct victims of the 1948 war and of the collusion between "the friendly enemies," Ben-Gurion and Abdullah. The majority of Palestine's Arabs were dispossessed of their homes and fields during and after the 1948 war, and have since been living as refugees, in suffering and distress, outside Israel. The leaders of Israel emphatically refuse to recognize their elementary right to be repatriated. The Arabs who were left in Israel are victims of severe economic, civil and national oppression.

During those 19 years, Israel has been an isolated island in the Middle East, a state which is independent only in the formal sense, being economically and politically dependent on the imperialist powers, especially on the USA. It has continually served as a tool of these powers against the Arab nation, against the progressive forces in the Arab world. The clearest manifestation (but not the only one) of this role of official Israeli policy was in 1956, when Israel's government joined Anglo-French imperialism in an aggressive collusion against Egypt, and even furnished those powers with a pretext for military intervention . . .

The present economic crisis in Israel, which has caused grave unemployment of the workers and great hardship to the popular masses, also serves to underline the fact that

Israel cannot long continue to exist in its present form, as a Zionist state, cut off from the region in which it is located.

Thus, the present state of affairs is against the interest of the Arab masses: Israel, in its present form, constitutes a grave obstacle for the struggle of those masses against imperialism and for a socialist Arab unity. The continuation of the present state of affairs is also against the interests of the Israeli masses.

The Israeli Socialist Organization, in whose ranks there are both Arabs and Jews, holds that the Palestine problem and the Israeli-Arab dispute can and should be solved in a socialist and internationalist way, taking into consideration the unique features of this complex problem.

This is not an ordinary conflict between two nations. Therefore it is not enough to call for "Coexistence based on mutual recognition of the just national rights of the two peoples."

The State of Israel is the outcome of the colonization of Palestine by the Zionist movement, at the expense of the Arab people and under the auspices of imperialism. In its present, Zionist form, Israel is also a tool for the continuation of "the Zionist Endeavor."

The Arab world cannot acquiesce in the existence in its midst of a Zionist state, whose declared purpose is not to serve as a political expression of its own population, but as a bridgehead, a political instrument and a destination for immigration of the Jews all over the world. Israel's Zionist character is also opposed to the true interests of the Israeli masses, because it means constant dependence of the country upon external forces.

*We therefore hold that a solution of the problem necessitates the de-Zionization of Israel. The State of Israel must undergo a deep revolutionary change which will transform it from a Zionist state (i.e., a state of the Jews all over the world) into a socialist state which represents the interests of the masses that live in it. In particular, the "law of return" (which grants every Jew in the world an absolute and automatic right to immigrate into Israel and become a citizen of it) must be abolished. Each request to immigrate into Israel will then be decided separately on its own merits, without any discrimination of a racial or religious nature.*

The Palestine Arab refugee problem is the most painful part of the Israeli-Arab dispute.

We therefore hold that every refugee who wants to return to Israel must be enabled to do so; he should then obtain full economic and social rehabilitation. Those refugees who will freely choose not to be repatriated should be fully compensated for loss of property and for the personal suffering which has been caused to them.

In addition, all the laws and regulations aimed at discriminating and oppressing the Arab population of Israel and at expropriation of its lands must be abolished. All expropriations and damages (to land, property and person) caused under these laws and regulations must be compensated.

The de-Zionization of Israel implies also putting an end to Zionist foreign policy, which serves imperialism. Israel must take an active part in the struggle of the Arabs against imperialism and for the establishment of a socialist Arab unity.

The Zionist colonization of Palestine differs in one basic respect from the colonization of other countries: Whereas in other countries the settlers established their economy upon the exploitation of the labor of the indigenous inhabitants, the colonization of Palestine was carried out through the replacement and expulsion of the indigenous population.

This fact has caused a unique complication of the Palestine problem. As a result of Zionist colonization, a Hebrew nation with its own national characteristics (common language, separate economy, etc.) has been formed in Palestine. Moreover, this nation has a capitalist class structure—it is divided into exploiters and exploited, a bourgeoisie and a proletariat.

The argument that this nation has been formed artificially and at the expense of the indigenous Arab population does not change the fact that the Hebrew nation now exists. It would be a disastrous error to ignore this fact.

The solution of the Palestine problem must not only redress the wrong done to the Palestinian Arabs, but also ensure the national future of the Hebrew masses. These masses were brought to Palestine by Zionism—but they are not responsible for the deeds of Zionism. The attempt to penalize the

Israeli workers and popular masses for the sins of Zionism cannot solve the Palestinian problem but only bring about new misfortunes.

Those nationalist Arab leaders who call for a *jihad* [holy war] for the liberation of Palestine ignore the fact that even if Israel would be defeated militarily and cease to exist as a state, the Hebrew nation will still exist. If the problem of the existence of this nation is not solved correctly, a situation of dangerous and prolonged national conflict will be re-created, which will cause endless bloodshed and suffering and will serve as a new pretext for imperialist intervention.

In addition it should be understood that the Israeli masses will not be liberated from the influence of Zionism and will not struggle against it unless the progressive forces in the Arab world present them with a prospect of coexistence without national oppression.

*The Israeli Socialist Organization therefore holds that a true solution of the Palestine problem necessitates the recognition of the right of the Hebrew nation to self-determination.*

Self-determination does not necessarily mean separation. On the contrary, we hold that a small country which is poor in natural resources, such as Israel, cannot exist as a separate entity. It is faced with two alternatives only—to continue to depend on foreign powers or to integrate itself in a regional union.

*If follows that the only solution consistent with the interests of both Arab and Israeli masses is the integration of Israel as a unit in an economic and political union of the Middle East, on the basis of socialism.*

We therefore hold that the Palestine problem—like other central problems of the Middle East—can only be solved in the framework of a Middle Eastern union.

Theoretical analysis and practical experience alike show that Arab unity can be formed and exist in a stable way only if it has a socialist character.

*One can therefore sum up the solution which we propose by the formula: de-Zionization of Israel and its integration in a socialist Middle Eastern union.*

We hold that the problem of the political future of the Palestinian Arabs should also be solved within the framework

described above.

There are people who think that justice necessitates the establishment of a special Palestinian Arab political entity. Our view is that this question must be decided by the Palestinian Arabs, without outside interference.

However, we think that it would be a grave error to pose the problem of the political future of the Palestinian Arabs separately from and independently of the question of socialist Arab union. At present the Palestinian Arabs are in the first ranks of the struggle for unity. If they would be presented with a separate and independent aim, the cause of Arab unity may suffer grave damage. Also, the establishment of a small *separate* Arab state is not consistent with the interests of the Arab nation, including the Palestinian Arab people.

We therefore hold that if the Palestinian Arabs decide in favor of establishing a political entity of their own, the necessary political and territorial arrangements should be made within the framework of establishing a socialist union of the Middle East. The countries that now hold parts of the territory of Palestine—Israel, Jordan and Egypt—should particularly contribute to such a settlement.

A WEEKLY SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER

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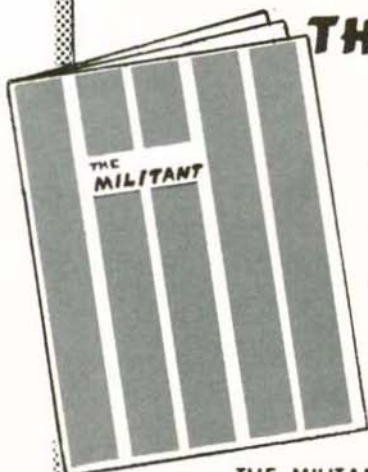
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## Politics in Israel

The left-wing parties existing today in Israel were all founded before the state of Israel came into existence; no new left party was formed after 1948 (apart from splits which had a brief existence before joining another party.) Therefore, in order to understand these parties one must analyze their history prior to 1948.

This history is (exempting one notable case: the CP [Communist Party]) the history of the Zionist left; i.e., the history of a nationalist left.

\* \* \*

In order to give the reader an idea of the unusual character of Zionism and its left wing consider the following fact:

All Zionist parties, from the rightist "Herut" ["Freedom"] to the leftist "Mapam" ["United Workers Party"], whatever their enmity on the Israeli political arena, are members of "The Jewish Agency." This agency is the organizational backbone of Zionism. One of its various activities is fund-raising among Jewish communities all over the world. (Although we do not possess exact figures it is not exaggerated to say that it raises sums of the order of \$112 million annually.)

This money finances all Zionist activities; a considerable part goes to subsidize the Israeli economy (mostly the agricultural sector, the Kibbutzim, etc.), another part to finance the Zionist parties, all of them—from Herut to Mapam.

These parties receive according to their size and bargaining power between \$840,000 to \$2,240,000 annually, each.

Thus, a Zionist party can finance a large daily paper, pay

wages to many party officials, and keep a whole political organization running although the rank and file hardly pay membership fees or their newspaper subscriptions.

This peculiar circumstance enables political parties to exist long after the social forces that brought them into existence ceased to exist.

\* \* \*

The Zionist left originated in czarist Russia (mostly Poland) in the closing decades of the 19th century and the early 20th.

The Russian Jews participated actively in all anti-czarist parties, in the Social Revolutionary, Menshevik, Bolshevik, and others. Martov and Dan, Radek and Zinoviev, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, are only a few of the revolutionaries of Jewish origin who participated in the revolutions of 1905, February 1917 and October 1917. (These revolutionaries were, of course, anti-Zionists.)

The percentage of Jews among the revolutionaries was always greater than their percentage in the population. This was the result of a few factors: (1) Jews tended to concentrate in the urban areas. (2) A large Jewish proletariat existed in Poland (mostly in the textile industry). (3) There was a large Jewish intelligentsia in Russia. (4) The Jews were oppressed by the czarist regime not only as proletarians, but also as a national minority.

The persecution of the Jews gave rise to social and economic interests, which eventually gave birth to a number of political parties.

A whole spectrum of left-wing parties came into existence, all seeking to alleviate the plight of the Jews as proletarians as well as members of a national minority group.

The main difference between these parties was between Zionists (a minority) and non-Zionists.

The largest party was the Bund ["Fraternity"]. This was basically a Social Democratic party of the Second International, which, under the conditions of czarist Russia, was driven to the revolutionary side. The Bund never aimed at political power, only at improving the lot of the Jewish proletariat.

Lenin waged a long ideological struggle against the Bund, insisting that the proletariat must be organized on a terri-

torial basis (i.e., all proletarians living and working in the same region or country, irrespective of their nationality) whereas the Bund claimed that existing circumstances of national persecution forced the Jewish proletariat to defend their daily rights as a national minority especially as considerable parts of the Polish proletariat participated in anti-Jewish riots.

The Bund, however, never accepted the Zionist principle that only in an independent national Jewish state can the Jewish proletariat become free. The Bund was nationalist but not Zionist.

When Hitler exterminated East European Jewry, the Bund was exterminated, too. Remnants still exist in the USA, Latin America and Canada as a result of mass immigration of Jewish proletarians in the first decades of this century.

The ideologist of the Zionist left, who contested the ideas of the Bund as well as those of Lenin, was Ber Borochow.

He formulated the idea of the "Inverted Pyramid," meaning, briefly, the following: every nation consists of a pyramid of social layers; a broad basis of peasants, a layer of proletarians, then a layer of transport and services, civil servants; on top of this—the self-employed, artisans, doctors, lawyers, intellectuals, scientists.

In the Jewish case this pyramid was deformed; many lawyers, doctors, intellectuals, and other middle-class occupations, with few, if any peasants, and little proletarians. Therefore he claimed that the social structure of the Jewish people must first be rectified before it could undergo a transformation to socialism. This meant that the Jews must first establish a national state and therein become peasants and proletarians and only after accomplishing this step could they proceed to the step of revolution. (Theory of Steps.)

Following this theory in daily practice, the Zionist left preached and practiced emigration. After a period of training and indoctrination they sent their recruits to Palestine, mostly to the agricultural settlements. Ben-Gurion, Eshkol, Lavon, and many other prominent Zionist socialists who later became leaders in Israel came from these parties.

Some of these parties continue these practices even today in the U.S. and Latin America. We refer to Habonim ["the

Builders," affiliated to Mapai], and Hashomer Hatzair ["the Young Guardian," affiliated to Mapam].

These parties had sharp political conflicts with all those parties which aimed at a transformation of their own societies; ideologically they upheld the principle that no transformation of society can ever overcome anti-Semitism.

They considered the persecution of national minorities to be a permanent feature of mankind (a view which the revolutionaries strongly opposed). Politically they diverted many people from participating in revolutionary politics by their "emigrate to Palestine" policy.

When the founder of political Zionism, T. Herzl, met the czarist foreign minister Plehve (a notorious anti-Semite), he mentioned explicitly the last point in order to persuade him to grant permission for mass emigration of Jews from Russia.

The primary division in Israeli politics is between the Zionists and non- or anti-Zionists.

The division into right and left is of secondary importance (both subjectively and objectively).

The division inside the Zionist left is a family affair. Once, there was a considerable gap between the Social Democrats (Mapai) and those who considered themselves revolutionaries (Mapam), but in the last decade it narrowed so much, and the whole political spectrum of the left shifted so much to the right that ideological and political feuds gave way to a squabble for economic benefits.

Mapai ["the Palestine Workers Party"] has, for the last three decades, been the central party in Israeli politics (for reasons we shall explain later). Originally it was a Social Democratic party preaching gradual and peaceful transition to socialism. About a decade ago it dropped this aim in order not to antagonize the USA, on whose direct and indirect support Israel depends for its existence.

In Israel there exist three major power structures: the Histadrut, the Jewish Agency, and the official government. Mapai was always the largest in the first two, hence—also in the third.

Its main asset is the fact that it is in power, thereby possessing all benefits resulting from power, which in the special

case of Israel are all-embracing. Its voters are, mostly, people who might lose their jobs, salaries, possibly houses and health insurance, by voting otherwise.

Mapam is the second largest party of the Zionist left. It was formed in the forties as a bloc of bodies, the most important of which was Hashomer Hatzair.

Mapam is torn between nationalist Zionist practices (e.g., expropriating fellahin [Arab peasants], as in the case of the village of Biri'm in 1952) and internationalist slogans. This is reflected in the slogan in the heading of Mapam's daily paper *Al-Hamishmar* [*The Guardian*] which reads: "To Zionism, Socialism, and friendship between nations."

The order is significant. Whenever Mapam was forced to choose between Zionism and socialism, or between Zionism and internationalism (and this happens quite often in Palestine), it chose Zionism, justifying this by the "uniqueness of the Jewish case."

One has to remember that the internationalism of a party like Mapam has to be tested not by its policies toward the U. S. but first of all by its policies and practices toward the Palestinian Arabs.

In words Mapam supports socialism, the USSR, Cuba, the people of Vietnam. Once in a while it organizes a demonstration; but the nearer the issues come to Palestine—the more nationalistic it becomes.

Thus, Mapam supported the Suez campaign to the full, its ministers stayed in Ben-Gurion's Suez cabinet and justified (they still do!) the Israeli aggression. Later, when Ben-Gurion was forced to withdraw from Sinai and the Gaza Strip, Mapam organized mass demonstrations against the withdrawal, insisting on the annexation of the Gaza Strip to Israel.

Mapam refuses to recognize the right to self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs, or the right of the Palestinian refugees to repatriation; recently it went so far as to oppose a UN proposal to hold a referendum among the refugees to find out whether they prefer restitution payment to repatriation.

In Israeli politics Mapam does not play an independent role; it follows the lead of Mapai (sometimes reluctantly, but always submitting in the end). However, it does play a sig-

nificant role in presenting Zionism to socialist and left-wing intellectuals in both the East and the West.

Thus Mapam publishes a special periodical in English (*New Outlook*) for the West; also, Israeli ambassadors to Eastern countries like Poland or Yugoslavia are often Mapam leaders, whereas for negotiations with right elements the Israeli government sends a right winger, and to Afro-Asian conferences—(often) a dark-skinned Jew.

Mapam's name is often connected with Kibbutzim, although most other parties (including the extreme rightist Herut and the religious parties) run a few Kibbutzim of their own.

\* \* \*

A Kibbutz is a communal agricultural settlement. Its members join it voluntarily and are free to leave at any time. The members do not own anything privately except a few clothes. The land belongs to the Zionist organization, the means of production, too—but they are donated to the Kibbutz. All labor is carried out communally, decisions on policy, development, investment, election of chairman, secretary, treasurer, etc., are made by the general meeting of all members.

These elements of "Free Socialism" fascinated many intellectuals and socialists in the West, and are much advertised by Mapam all over the world.

A closer scrutiny reveals some flaws:

(1) The Kibbutz is usually a one-party affair, people voting Communist were expelled from Kibbutzim of Hashomer Hatzair and those voting Mapam—from Kibbutzim run by Mapai, etc. There is little political tolerance in the Kibbutz.

(2) The Kibbutz is part of a whole ideological setup. Namely: "From the Commune—to Communism"; or—let us fill the country with Kibbutzim [Communes] and eventually the majority of the population and economy will be of the Kibbutz type; i.e., a peaceful transition to Communism.

Reality proved this to be a fallacy. All Kibbutzim are in debt to the government, private banks and firms. Without constant subsidies from Zionist institutions they would have been unable to exist. Fuel, cash, fertilizers, water, electricity, and machinery, have to be bought from sources external to the Kibbutz, and the products must compete in the market

with goods produced by others, sometimes—by Arab fellahin. The Kibbutz (whose creation was largely motivated by the Borochow ideology) proved to be uncompetitive and was kept alive by Zionist subsidies.

(3) Faced with this reality, the Kibbutz turned to industrial activity, at first processing its agricultural products but gradually moving into other fields such as plastics, crockery, furniture and a host of other light industry products. However, the small population of a Kibbutz (a few hundred) could not provide the labor force for both agriculture and industry.

Since giving up the agricultural activity would be tantamount to betrayal of the principles of Zionist socialism, the Kibbutz was forced to employ hired labor from nearby towns. Thus the communal Kibbutz society became a communal exploiter of hired labor.

Usually the Kibbutz members act as overseers in their factories while the hired men do the less professional jobs. When work is over, the hired men go back to town. For them the Kibbutz is an employer like any other capitalist, except that capitalists don't preach socialism.

When a strike occurs in a Kibbutz factory, the owners call in the police without scruples.

The slogan "From the Commune—to Communism" proved doubly false. It did not bring about a transformation of Israeli society to socialism, let alone communism. Instead, the communes themselves were transformed from phalansteries [Utopian socialist communities] into collective exploiters, profiting from hired labor. The history of the Kibbutz (indeed the history of the whole Zionist left) is the history of a Social Democracy corrupted by nationalism and the harsh economic realities of capitalist economy.

A point often overlooked is the significance of the Kibbutz for Zionist colonization. A spirit of pioneering, collective, organized labor, a social structure specially suited to absorb newcomers, to defend itself, to carry out, through great personal sacrifices, unprofitable economic tasks in order to establish Zionist presence in a hostile area—these are the reasons why Zionist institutions financed the Kibbutzim, whether they belong to Mapai, Mapam, Herut, or the religious parties.

The reader might get the impression that most activities of the Zionist left centered on the Kibbutz. This is by no means the case. Though the Kibbutzim played a significant Zionist role, their membership in Palestine (and later in Israel) never exceeded five percent of the Jewish population.

The Zionist left created another establishment whose importance, power and wealth exceeded by far those of all the Kibbutzim put together. This is the "Histadrut" ["Organization," or, in full, "The General Organization of Jewish Workers in Palestine"].

This giant was founded in 1922 by the Zionist left as an instrument for creating the Jewish proletariat. Today it owns a giant industry, banks, shipping, airline companies, the largest construction firm in Israel, a major share in nearly any economic branch in Israel, the largest health insurance system (there is no national health insurance in Israel).

One out of three in the population pay membership fees to the Histadrut. Those who do not—lose their health insurance. Ninety percent of the Jewish workers are members of the trade unions run by Histadrut.

Although the Histadrut calls itself in English, "The General Federation of Labor in Israel," thus aiming to create the familiar image of a federation of trade unions, it is unique in its aims and structure. Its Zionist characteristics outweigh by far its trade unionist ones, its present character having been shaped when it was established four decades ago.



In the early decades of this century, when the first Zionist socialists came to Palestine, they discovered that most of the earlier Jewish settlers (noticeably in the colonies established by Baron Edmund de Rothschild before the founding of the Zionist organization) employed Arab labor. How was it possible to transform the Jews into peasants and workers when Jewish landowners and capitalists preferred to employ Arab labor? they asked.

As an answer they launched the Kibbutzim movement and (somewhat later) the Histadrut. Moreover, they started a nationalist campaign against all Jews employing Arab labor: "As Zionists you ought to create a Jewish working class in Palestine, and not to employ Arabs," they cried. All through the twenties and thirties their main slogan was, "Jewish labor only," and they terrorized both Jewish employer and Arab worker.

The main instrument in this campaign was the Histadrut. It was not established for organizing the Jewish working class but for creating it. Arab workers were not accepted as members as a matter of principle; the Histadrut was "for Jews only," as its name (in Hebrew) clearly said. It did not aim to defend the class interests of the Jewish workers either but called on them to make sacrifices, work harder, earn less, for the sake of establishing and (nowadays) strengthening the Jewish state.

When the capitalists complained that Jewish labor was more expensive than Arab, the Histadrut often paid the difference out of its own funds and with other Zionist institutions launched the "Buy Jewish Only" campaign, implemented a boycott on Arab products, etc.

To this very day, the membership card of every Histadrut member reminds him of his duties, not the least important: to teach the new immigrants Hebrew—hardly a task for a common trade union, but a typical task for a nationalist organization.

When some socialist Zionists feebly objected to this negative policy toward the Arab workers, they were reminded that the Arab workers were unorganized and that it was the duty of a trade union to fight against employment of unorganized labor. Curious as it may seem—this argument was ef-

fective. The Histadrut is probably the only trade union which has a "Department for Trade Unions." This is so because its activities as owner and employer outweigh its activities as trade union.

Actually the Histadrut owns the trade unions much as it owns the health insurance. In many unions the Histadrut officials appoint the secretaries of the unions. Where these are elected, they must first be approved by the officials before they may be recognized by the employers as representatives.

As an extra precaution, all membership fees (amounting to about seven percent of the income of a member) are collected directly by the central organization; the local unions receiving their allotments from the central authorities. Thus, the central authorities maintain a firm control over the entire Israeli working class.

When an "unauthorized" strike occurs, the strikers find themselves without a strike fund, facing the possibility of losing their jobs for good (if the employer happens to be the Histadrut itself) and sometimes—as in the seamen's strike of 1951—opposed by everything in the country which the Histadrut can mobilize against them.

The only analogue to such a state of affairs is, paradoxically, an "unofficial" strike in a Stalinist regime, where likewise such a strike implicitly antagonizes the official ideology, challenges the foundations of the Establishment, and often causes the regime to mobilize all its means (army included) for swiftly crushing the strikers.

Usually the strikers are very surprised by such a reaction because they are rarely aware of the hidden implications of their action, and only meant to defend their economic interests—a task their trade union failed to carry out.

Considering that the Histadrut is the largest employer in Israel, and simultaneously, the "Federation of Trade Unions," one realizes its enormous power. It is a state within a state, the backbone of the Israeli society and economy. Historically it is the legitimate father of the state of Israel (as the socialist Zionists claim). It preceded the state and by its nationalist policies created a Jewish working class.

He who controls the Histadrut, controls Israel; Mapai has

controlled the Histadrut for about 30 years—and also Israel (prior to 1948 it meant the Jewish community in Palestine). It is not by accident that Ben-Gurion, one of the founders of Histadrut and one time its secretary general, was the most significant premier of Israel. The present premier, Eshkol, and other leaders like Lavon, Namir, all had a similar past.

The right wing of Zionism never achieved power in Israel (or Palestine) and was never strong enough to dethrone the left. It never constructed anything as powerful as the Histadrut, and even today is not a serious opponent for it.

The only possible opponent who could overpower it, is the state itself. But a struggle between the state administration and the Histadrut requires either a schism in Mapai or an election victory to the right. Considering the fact that economic pressures and baits are employed in the elections and the enormous financial, economic, and organizational means of the Histadrut, the right has a very slim chance.

A military dictatorship by generals of Mapai (which consolidated its control of the army during Ben-Gurion's reign) is a more likely possibility.

The question whether the Histadrut can be transformed from within and become a revolutionary tool, or at least a normal trade union, or whether it must be overthrown like any other institution of the existing Zionist state apparatus before any essential change can occur in Israel, has been a perplexing problem for revolutionary-minded Israelis.

The Israeli Communist Party (rather, the two factions of the CP, as it split in 1965) vehemently rejects any suggestion of a struggle against the Histadrut as an institution. The CP considers the Histadrut purely as a trade union (though perhaps a "reactionary" one). They refuse to recognize its essentially Zionist character (they consider any struggle against Zionism as "irrelevant," "outdated," "unnecessary," etc.).

They even oppose any campaign for establishing a national health insurance system (which Ben-Gurion, as premier, tried to organize in order to transfer some power from the Histadrut to the government), because they consider this as transferring an asset from the working class (i.e., the Histadrut) to the bourgeoisie (i.e., the government).

Of the three Zionist socialist parties (Mapai, Mapam and Achdut Haavoda [Unity of Labor]), none advocates revolution.

Mapai ceased talking about socialism about a decade ago, sometimes muttering to Social Democrats or trade unionists from abroad that Israel is "of course a Free Socialist society."

For proving this statement the visitors are as a matter of routine taken to some Kibbutz and this convinces them. Of course, when John Foster Dulles visited Ben-Gurion he was not taken to a Kibbutz.

Mapai is viciously anti-Soviet, supported French imperialism in Algeria, supports U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, initiated and actively participated in the Suez campaign. It is the mainstay of Zionism in Israel. The struggle between its factions (Ben-Gurion and some of his followers split off in 1965) is for power, not ideological or political differences.

Achdut Haavoda is a faction which split off Mapai sometime in the past for personal and ideological trifles. It hardly differs from Mapai in its foreign or interior policies, but as it runs a few Kibbutzim and is financed as an independent Zionist party it can go on vegetating.

Mapam is the traditional left extreme of Zionism. Its main constituent once advocated revolutionary ideology; and, for the unique case of the Jewish community in Palestine, peaceful coexistence between classes till a Jewish state be created. As it happened, the state came into existence, the revolutionary ideology dissipated, the peaceful coexistence remained.

Mapam advocates friendship with the USSR, denounces U.S. imperialism. In Zionist and Israeli issues of defense, labor, etc., it trails behind Mapai, occasionally uttering leftish noises. When it happens to be outside a coalition government that is usually not because it opposes some Mapai policy so strongly that it refused to join the coalition, but because Mapai preferred different partners.

It refuses to join a "Popular Front," which the CP has repeatedly suggested, on the ground that the CP is non-Zionist (though recently one faction of the CP crossed the ideological barrier into Zionism) but Mapam never considered the anti-socialist policies of religious or right-wing Zionist parties an obstacle for a joint coalition in the Jewish Agency or government.

The main role of Mapam is to mobilize the goodwill of socialists and left intellectuals in the West for Zionism.

\* \* \*

Outside the Zionist camp exists the CP. The history of the CP (as yet unwritten and unknown to most of its present rank and file) is the history of its splits over the question of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine (and since 1948 in Israel). It was torn between Zionism and Arab nationalism ever since Stalin imprinted his nationalist policies on the Communist movement.

The CP was born out of a split which occurred in a conference held in 1922 in Danzig by the "Zionist Workers (Left)" Party on the issue of choosing between joining the newly formed Communist International and the Zionist Congress. Those who chose Zionism (Lavon) eventually became leaders of Mapai. Those who chose Communism later founded the Palestine Communist Party [PCP]. Some of these leaders, like W. Averbuch, were deported by the British to Russia in the twenties and thirties where most of them were exterminated by Stalin.

Briefly, the difficulties of the CP were as follows: The founders of the party, the cadres, were Jewish immigrants from Russia, so too was their ideology and their political experience. The very fact that they arrived in Palestine meant that sometime or other they were Zionists.

When they realized that they were part of a nationalist, colonizing society which constituted a minority in the Palestinian society and which had little sympathy for their internationalist, anti-imperialist policies, they directed their efforts towards recruiting Arab members and influencing Arab society.

Not only had they little knowledge of Arab language, history, uniqueness, customs, etc., but under the impact of Zionism the Palestinians became more nationalistic and fell under the influence of reactionary religious leadership.

In the Arab community too there was little chance of spreading internationalist, socialist, revolutionary ideology. Faced with the reality of two hostile, nationalistic communities combating each other by mass movements (general strikes, rebellion, armed underground movements, etc.) which the CP

could not ignore, it was forced to shape a policy towards two conflicting nationalist movements. In 1936 it supported the Arab rebellion; in 1948 the establishing of Israel. On both occasions it split.

The last split occurred in 1965, again on the issue of policy towards Arab nationalism and Israel. One faction considers it as its duty to criticize the policies of Arab nationalist leaders towards Israel. They object to identifying Israel with imperialism, accept the facts established by Zionism as final, accept the existing status quo, and adopt a more "constructive" criticism of Israeli policies.

They consider any fundamental critique of Zionism as "irrelevant." This faction relieves Mapam of its duties as the left extreme of the Zionist camp. They are tired of being unpopular in the Jewish population, try to become "respectable" and hope eventually to become mediators between the Zionist establishment and the USSR (whereas the latter prefers to deal with the Zionists directly).

The other faction continues the previous line and refuses to be "modernized." It is reluctant to criticize Arab nationalist reactionary tendencies since it considers this to be the duty of Arab internationalists.

It maintains the previous "unconstructive" criticism of Israeli policies. It does, however, insist (just like the other faction) on "transforming the Histadrut from within." The eclectic character of such policies highlights the source of the numerous splits.

Both factions of the CP vie for recognition by Moscow; both denounce Peking; both are headed by leaders from the Stalin era who pursue Stalinist policies (alas, without the guiding hand of Stalin), both employ the old Stalinist organizational methods. It is a case of a Stalinist party torn between two antagonistic nationalisms.

The CP always did, and still does, recognize the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, and of the refugees to repatriation, yet, following Moscow, they oppose changes in the territorial status quo, thus sanctifying annexations made by Ben-Gurion in 1948.

Both factions fail to recognize Zionism as a major cause of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and cover this up by the formula

of "recognize the right of the Jews and of the Arabs in Palestine to self-determination." What if these rights are materialized and the self-determined Jewish state chooses Zionism (as happens to be the case)? To this the CP has no answer.

\* \* \*

In 1962 a small new left wing was formed, calling itself the "Israeli Socialist Organization." Its monthly *Matspen* [Compass] advocates de-Zionization of Israel as a necessary step toward any socialist revolution in Israel as well as any rapprochement with the Arab world.

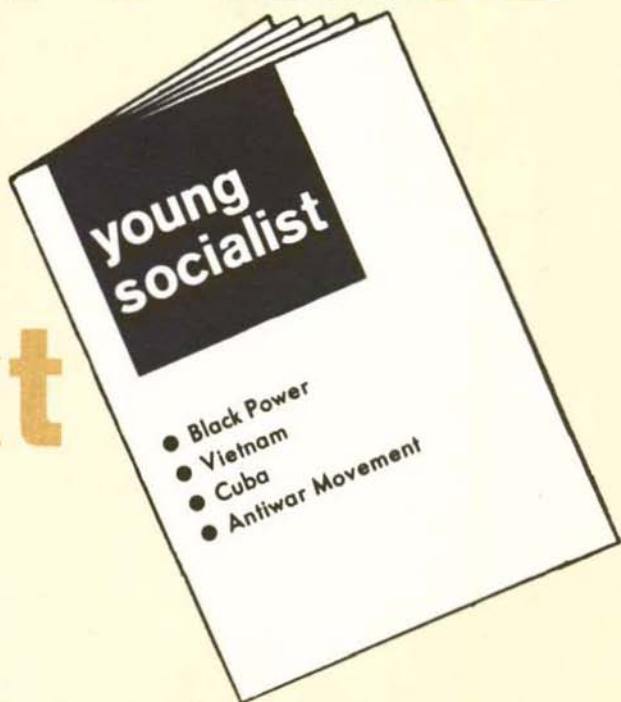
It refuses to sanctify any status quo and opposes the policies of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, capitalism or Zionism.

It refuses to subject revolutionary policies to the interests of the USSR or China. It considers nationalism to be the main weakness of the anti-imperialist forces and the best asset of imperialist policies. It believes that genuine internationalist revolutionaries can cooperate and eventually bring about a unification of presently antagonistic nation-states. This is a task which the nationalists cannot accomplish.

At present this organization has little influence on Israeli politics (though its very existence is a pressure on the CP and non-Zionist nationalists); but qualitatively it is an essential ingredient to future developments, for only through a clear and firm rejection of Zionism and any other sort of Israeli nationalism (there is a non-Zionist type) can a link be established between revolutionaries inside Israel and those acting through the Arab world.

Such a link is necessary for achieving the historical task confronting revolutionaries in this area in the next few decades; namely, that of establishing a Unified Socialist Republic from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf.

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