

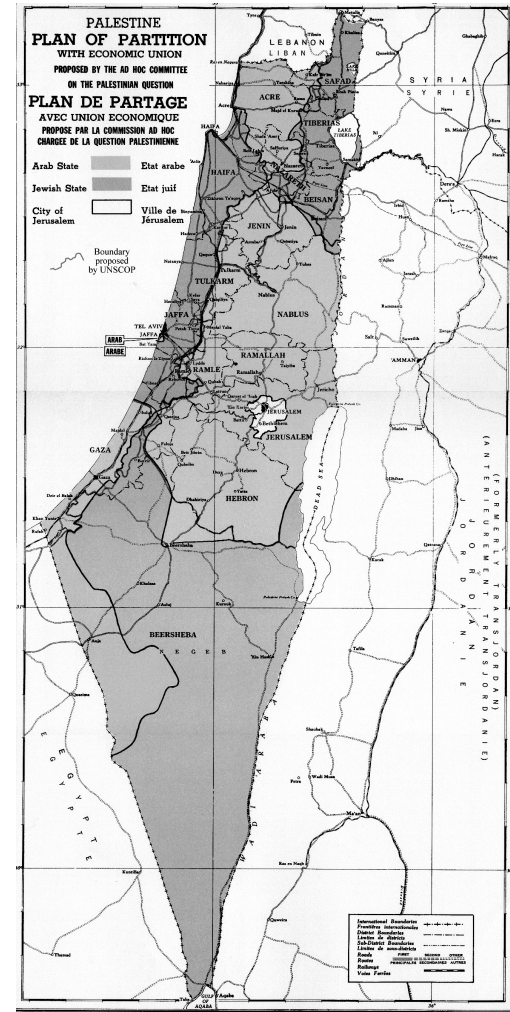
AN ANARCHIST ON PALESTINE



Albert Meltzer in Cairo
Photo by way of Phil Ruff

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Albert Meltzer

Anarchist Tactic for Palestine, by Albert Meltzer (1939)

From 'Revolt!', March 25, 1939, London, UK

The Arab revolution is centred on Palestine. The re-awakening of the Arab nation and the consequent nationalist revolution has brought the masses of Palestine in conflict with British Imperialism. Every movement against British Imperialism must be welcomed as the rulers of this country rule (or, synonymously, misrule) the larger part of the world's colonial peoples. The opposition of revolutionaries to British Imperialism and its allies must be taken for granted.

The clashing of two nationalisms (Jewish and Arab in this case) has inevitably given rise to controversy abroad. In the Houses of Parliament sympathy is naturally pro-Zionist; as one MP [Member of Parliament] is reputed to have said, when asked why he supported the Jews in Palestine against the Arabs: "In my constituency I have thousands of Jewish Voters — I haven't a single Arab". The Labour Party, free from the responsibility in the Government of a bloody suppression of all vestiges of Arab life, urges the Government to insist upon the policy of a Jewish National State. The majority opinion here seems to be pro-Zionist, perhaps because the Zionists are so definitely pro-Imperialist while the Arabs are vaguely accused of being pro-Fascist. It would be a surprise, therefore, to read about the Government's rejection of the Jewish side in the Palestine talks (up to the moment of writing) if the Government had not to reckon with millions of other Arab and Moslem subjects in the Empire. Chamberlain's policy of "Appeasement" has up to now not been primarily in the interests of the Democratic imperialisms, and in the Palestine issue, again, he is far less concerned with the maintenance of Imperialism than his "Left" opponents!

What is the case for Zionism? Zionism represents the age-old desire of the Rabbis to return to the "Holy Land". The significance of the word "Zion" (the Biblical and traditional name) will be noted. The Rabbis, whose jobs depend on the keeping-up of the race-barriers and the consequent survival of the religion, in the fear of assimilation, have fostered these artificial laws in order to maintain, by tribal "totems and taboos" a separate race. Naturally, they have failed, and Zionism is the way they are endeavouring to succeed. There is to-day no pure race, despite the claims of Hitler and the Rabbis. It will be noted that the revival of Judaism has only been a reaction to pogroms and persecution. In times and countries where there has been complete racial and religious toleration, assimilation has begun; intolerance always defeating its own ends.

Herzl began the move for "Back to Zion". Was his primary concern for the refugees, then fleeing from the pogroms of the Tsar? On the contrary, Herzl refused far more suitable land in Africa, insisting on the "Holy" Land. Finally, the Balfour War Government promised Palestine to the Jews, as well as to the Arabs, when Turkey was defeated. Since the Mandate, the

Farewell Albert, by Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin (1996)

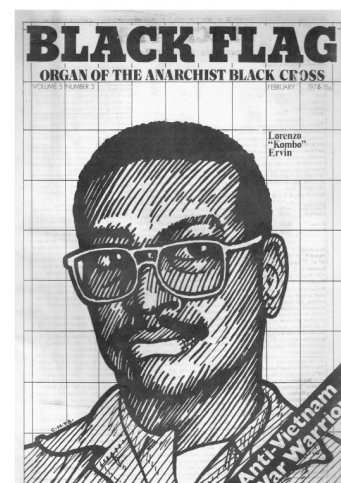
From Black Flag, 1996, London, UK

Albert Meltzer is a large part of the reason I am walking around on this side of the prison wall. He worked tirelessly through the Anarchist Black Cross during the 1970s on my behalf and other US political prisoners/ POWs. I was released in 1983 after 15 years on two "life" sentences. He sent articles on my case all over the world yet I had never met him until October 1994, and though in poor health, he never stopped fighting the state, its prisons, its cops and for a new world generally. It was a pleasure to be in his company.

Albert fought all his life for the rights of the poor and for worker's rights. He was opposed to fascist dictatorships all his life struggling against them from the 30s through the 60s until the end of his life. He was an anti-racist and would not condone racist attacks and prejudice because of a person's race or skin colour. In fact, the last fond memory I have of him is him coming with me to the offices of the Independent Black Panther Movement (UK) and literally charming them no end. They loved him! What a sweet man. When we look up the word revolutionary in the dictionary there should be a picture of Albert Meltzer, who gave his life over to the struggle.

I loved him, he was my friend, always there for me. He was a great man, but he was never one to put himself above anyone else, always feeling that what he had done, so could anyone. You enriched my life Albert and helped mightily pull me out of the deepest pit where my/our enemies had hurled me. I will always love and respect you for that, and will see that everyone I work with knows of you and your works. They can bury your body but never your spirit.

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin
Black Autonomy International, Atlanta, US



Africa can allow it to its white population only; like Israel its democracy is one-sided. Britain retains the monarchical principle against the bearing of arms but at a pinch, in 1940, could allow home defence if it came to it. (Of course it never did). [...]

Excerpt from Albert Meltzer's autobiography, 'I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels' (1996)

[...] The [British] Army [in 1947] was in a virtual state of war with the Jews in Palestine when Ernest Bevin, having stated firmly he was determined to hold on to the colonial mandate, suddenly abandoned it in the face of terroristic attacks by a section of Zionists. The [British] forces, who had no real interest and no ideological excuse for being there, were totally disillusioned with the whole set-up. There were anti-semitic songs going round about 'The holy but now hostile land'. It did not affect us, now in Moascar [Egypt], except that a group of deserters known as the Schofield Gang were active buying and selling arms, while in Cairo itself many local Jewish agents were buying arms from Egyptian and British soldiers alike and smuggling them over.

I did my best to persuade people not to become involved. For a few quid it wasn't worth it, though very tempting for soldiers who had been rebuffed for years or whose services had been devalued by detention. [...]



introduction of capitalist Western ideas has undoubtedly benefited the Arab workers, as has the introduction of the proletarian organisations of Europe. But this is no excuse, whatever the Zionists may say. Capitalism introduced in this fashion benefited everywhere the working class; the same thing happening in Russia was hailed as a triumph of "communism". It was nothing of the sort. Despite the coming of capitalist benefits, the struggle against capitalist malevolences must be fought.

Originally there was no agitation against Jewish immigration; moreover there was never previously any anti-Semitism in the Arab countries. Not until immigration became colonisation, and the aim of a Jewish state, did the trouble commence. The Zionist leaders, keeping up a pretence that they were struggling against Fascism, have been the motivators of Fascism in Palestine and have the responsibility for the heavy toll of wasted lives. Fascism? From the "Jewish Hitler", Vladimir Jabotinsky, with his "Storm Troop" Revisionists to the Rothschild and Imperialist Zionists in London (who take good care to keep out of the "Holy" country), from the "Nuremberg" laws of the synagogue to the basic ideology of Zionism (nationalism based on race and not on country) the whole of the Jewish nationalist movement has been as fascist as any other nationalist movement which has left its early liberal phase. The labour leaders like Ben Gurion accuse the Arabs of being in the pay of Hitler and Mussolini and under that pretence act the Hitlers and Mussolinis. Meanwhile they dupe the masses of Jewish workers in the pogromist countries that there is only one future — Palestine — and furnish the excuses for the anti-Semitic governments.

Undoubtedly the Arab revolution must have the support of the workers abroad. Let us not be duped as "revolutionary socialists" have been duped, however. There is no hope for the future in a Palestine under the Grand Mufti and Company. There is no reason to suppose that a bourgeois nationalist government will do more for the working class than did the Imperialist government. The lesson of Ireland alone affords proof. The struggle must be against Imperialism first, against Zionism secondly, and lastly against the bourgeois nationalist government when created.

There is no evidence that the present nationalist movement is capable of such a task. The task is to forget the past and to build up a revolutionary labour movement in Palestine, without consideration of nationality. The only hope there for workers' unity is a movement that will not include within its ranks the religious leaders of Judaism or Mohammedism, and exclusive of Jewish or Arab or British exploiters. From which side it will come remains to be seen, there is little hope of a revolution in Palestine becoming a social revolution. It may be necessary at the moment to struggle alongside the petty bourgeoisie against Imperialism, but it must be borne in mind that they can neither play a revolutionary role, and that neither the Nehrus in India nor the Muftis in Palestine can be considered as friends, but only as pawns, of the revolutionary working-class.

The programme of the new Palestinian labour movement must be for the overthrow of the Mandate; for autonomy; for a struggle against the autonomous government when created, for workers' control and freedom. The anarchist tactic for the situation in Palestine is the only road that will lead away from the present debacle; the co-operation of the Arab revolutionaries throughout the Near East, in co-operation with anti-Zionist Jewish minority and all workers, of whatever race, will alone push forward the opportunity for a complete revolution.

ALBERT MELTZER

Palestine and the Jews, by Albert Meltzer (1942)

From 'War Commentary: For Anarchism', March-April 1942, London, UK

To civilised people today the position of the Jews is intolerable. In increasing numbers of countries the centuries' plague of the ghetto and the pogrom is reviving. Against the mediaeval curse of anti-semitism, on the one hand, and the inevitable Jewish reaction to its own nationalism on the other, there must be some method of struggle.

What is the method advocated by liberals and the left today? In the main it is agreed: the re-establishment of religious and racial tolerance in all countries, on the one hand; and the establishment of the Zionist aim — a Jewish National Home — in Palestine, on the other.

It is perhaps necessary to give first the background of Zionism, and the reasons why Zionism came into conflict with the Arabs in Palestine.

The first modern exponent of Zionism was Theodore Herzl. Moved by growing anti-semitic feeling in France and in his native Austria, and later by the feeling of sympathy with the persecuted Russian Jews felt by all sections, Herzl evolved his plan of a Jewish State. His idea was that the Jews could form a small nation somewhere in the world, and so end the national distinctions pervading amongst the Jews themselves.

It is sometimes said by Zionists today that Palestine was the end-all and be-all of Jewish hope and aspirations for centuries. This is not so. True, the Jewish religion has centred around the idea of "the Promised Land" which the Jews would re-enter but it was thought that only Messianic times would see the "Chosen people" arrive in Jerusalem. In short, the rabbinical idea of the "New Jerusalem" was pretty much the same as the Christian. (The prayer concluding "Next year — in Jerusalem!", for instance, has always been and still is used by Jews in Jerusalem, too). Only the portents announced in the Talmud could herald the return of the Jews to the "Promised Land," and in fact the Jewish religion thought of Palestine as a spiritual, not a material, concept.

Prior to Herzl, hardly anyone ever dreamt of an actual return of the Jews to

to Ben-Gurion.)

The most, therefore, that the revolutionary can ever do in the matter is to look somewhat pityingly on the people around him who, on some issues, appear to be moving in his direction, and then, at the sound of battle in Sinai, either rush to Marks & Spencer's London office to volunteer for Israel; or mutter about the sinister influences at work on the London editors publishing news of Arab defeats.

A revolutionary movement within either Israel or the Arab countries can only come from the bottom upwards; and ultimately it will. It will not do so while the working class have, or feel they have, the major interest in warfare that perpetuates the nation State.

One cannot in revolutionary terms think of 'Jews' and 'Arabs'; it is only by the abandonment of nationalism and the State that we can end both exploitation and war. It is equally true, of course, that there is no solution, in those terms, to the problems of 'whites' and 'coloureds'; or 'Northern' and 'Southern' Irishmen. Such 'solutions' only solve the problems of the present exploitative society. Solutions in terms of a free society mean scrapping such abstracts as nationalism — that is why these solutions have to be revolutionary.

A. MELTZER

Excerpt from 'Alternatives to Suicide', by Albert Meltzer (1981)

From 'Black Flag', January 1981, London, UK

[...] Finally, it should be recognised that the basic right of self-defence is implicit in a democracy: this was recognised in America from the beginning to distinguish itself from the monarchical principle that only the privileged could bear arms. However, in most modern capitalistic states, and in all feudal states up to the present, there is an acceptance of the monarchical principle, caused by an understandable fear that if the people have arms, they will not tolerate the government.

The left finds itself confused with its own logic on Israel, when it tries to say it is a fascist state: it is basically a democratic state which can allow its citizens to have free access to arms and to take the arms for a conscript army home with them. Fascism, as in fascist Spain, is frightened to let even conscript soldiers learn too much and relies on an "old guard", select-SS, Praetorian guard or the like. Of course, saying that a country is democratic is not to say that it lacks aggression against others, or is a free society, least of all that it lacks police repression: all these things exist in Israel as in other democracies. What distinguishes a democracy from a dictatorship so much is not freedom — that is only achieved by a libertarian society — but voluntary acquiescence. Fascist countries cannot allow people to take arms home with them. South

political pressures can also be applied).

Advanced co-operation on the industrial and consumer level, with liberal injections of private enterprise from capitalists and bankers elsewhere, have produced a mixed economy in Israel that is perhaps a foretaste of the 'alternative to 1984' — the liberal-socialist-capitalist solution of involvement and integration within the present economic framework. Martin Buber held, of course, that the alternative to 'Moscow' (and to 1984) was 'Jerusalem'. This mixed economy of liberal capitalism is indeed the antithesis to feudal communism on the Egyptian plan (public works plus hereditary class control).

But the difference in economies has nothing to do with the clash which was inherent from the very beginning. One can blame 'the Jews' by saying that obviously from the start it was clear that the only way what was then Palestine could become a Jewish State would be by genocide (in those days the Zionists argued they did not want a Jewish State but merely a National Home).

On the other hand, the majority of Jews did not go to Palestine voluntarily. They went as a direct result of European antisemitism and because genocide in Russia and Germany made no other place possible. The world was prepared to accept small numbers of Jews, particularly as traders; nowhere in the world was prepared to accept millions of 'pauper' (in other words potential working class) Jews, least of all those countries which claimed to have attained socialism and solved the unemployment problem which was claimed to be the barrier.

It is for this reason that the recurrence of hostilities are inevitable, because it is the Jewish working class which has the stake in Israel, while the capitalist can (and frequently does) go anywhere in the world he chooses. And conversely the displaced Palestinian Arabs in particular, but also anyone in the neighbouring Arab countries with nothing to lose, has everything to gain from war, which — so long as it is successful — will be popular.

Has the revolutionary, therefore, nothing whatever to say in the matter? He has certainly no method of influencing the situation, because no single group emerged in any of the Arab countries without being instantly suppressed, nor in Israel at all, that was prepared even to consider the possibility of revolutionary internationalism.

So far as the anarchist movement is concerned, to the best of my knowledge the Husseini brothers were the only propagandists to be directly influenced by anarchism. Within a few weeks of forming a labour movement amongst Egyptian and Sudanese workers and open to Jews, they were murdered (one by the police in open fire; one by nationalists).

In Israel, despite occasional allegations that an anarchist movement is about to be created, there has certainly been no vestiges of one. (I cannot regard seriously the not unknown reformist-anarchist who retires to Israel to write an occasional broadsheet in Yiddish on the wonders of Judaism from Moses

Palestine, and when Herzl's plan was published, its fiercest opponents were the rabbis, it being contrary to all their teaching. They cast doubts on Herzl's orthodoxy, helped by the fact that, like so many Austrian Jews, his father was a convert to Christianity and Herzl had been brought up as a Christian, returning to Judaism later in life. (It was asked contemptuously if Herzl considered himself King David!)

In addition to incurring the opposition of religious Judaism, Zionism was frowned on or ignored by the rich and powerful Jews, who naturally had no wish to see the status quo upset.

Herzl's scheme might have appealed to the homeless, hungry and persecuted Jews of Russia. But a vague promised land had nothing on a definite Promised Land — America! Like the rest of Europe's downtrodden they looked to the symbol of liberty that to Europe's millions was represented by the United States. The acute labour shortage following the Civil War gave rise to a demand for labour — for immigrants — and the immigrants came in their thousands; Jews from the pogrom countries with the thousands of Italians, Irish, Latvians, Armenians, Poles, Czechs and the rest.

It rather seemed at first as if Herzl was to enjoy only the support of a handful of Jewish intellectuals and a number of influential anti-Semites (many of whom strongly advocated the acceding by the French Government of a plot of land in Africa for the settlement of the Jews — willy-nilly). At first the Zionists listened to the schemes of settlement in Africa, but under the influence of Herzl turned down all such promises. The choice was finally made — Palestine only. In this Herzl made a tactical move. He gave his movement a solid basis, by gaining religious Jewish support. While for long the orthodox opposition on the grounds that re-settlement in Palestine prior to the Messiah's belated arrival was contrary to teachings, the rabbis were shrewd enough to realise that their shibboleths were crumbling, not against persecution but against tolerance. America, the "melting pot" of all nations, was assimilating its Jewish citizens too.

The same process was at work in South Africa, in Britain, in France, in Germany. Jews were losing their identity as Jews. Most of them were unable to believe in the God of their fathers (any more than their Gentile neighbours), they were forgetting the old codes and taboos. A "religious revival" was the Gentile reaction to 19th century agnosticism. This in turn passed to Fascism. With the Jews it was similar. The rabbis looked to a mystical nationalism, such as Herzl was advocating.

It cannot be said that the majority of Jews who pioneered Zionism in Palestine were orthodox Jews. Other than the Polish and Russian Jews, there were few orthodox Jews left. Palestine since has not been a home for orthodoxy. A modern Palestine Jew would not at all bother about a pork dinner in the shadow of the Wailing Wall. But orthodoxy has gathered more strength; and while it has not produced its goal — a Jewish religion and race separated from all others — it has helped to produce a separatist feeling

amongst nationalist Jews that may (with or without the religious stimulus) have far-reaching effects. In all this the whole outlook of Zionism was and is essentially reactionary and of a fascist nature. Prior to this aping Hitler's anti-semitism, the Revisionists (right wing Zionist extremists) did indeed look on Mussolini as an inspired statesman.

On the other hand, it is unquestionable that side by side with the pipe-dreams of a Messianic Jewish community in the Near East, and the nationalist aspirations of others, there existed a number of Jews who, with no sympathy with their abandoned religion, hoped Zionism might be a symbol of regeneration. It may not be altogether possible for Gentile readers to appreciate how bitterly they detested the racketeering elements who figured so prominently in the early days of South Africa. The entirely unscrupulous Rand financiers were too often Jews. A product of the inferiority complex engendered by separatism, and of the city, the gambling mob that disgraced itself was unquestionably regarded by large numbers of decent Jews as "the type of Jew who causes anti-semitism." To get away from this city bred type they did hope for a national regeneration on the land. "To get back to the land" — "regeneration on the soil" — it is the usual mystical nonsense that has a great appeal to people who themselves have not experienced the narrowness of life in an agricultural community, but so far as it was a reaction it was progressive.

The above gives a clear picture of the whole tenor of Jewry prior to the 1914 war. (Note 1)

The Balfour Declaration gave the Jews the right to a National Home in Palestine. While promising the Arabs and other subject peoples of the decaying Ottoman Empire full liberty in the post war world (added to the specious promises made by Lawrence and others) the idea of a Jewish State in Palestine was given life (which to the majority of people, including most Jews, was as fanciful a project as the establishment of an Eireann state in Ireland, with the old Gaelic language — or, since this too happened after the war — as if Sweden suddenly went Viking).

Why was the declaration made? It must have been realised that the Arabs, when free of Turkish rule, would not voluntarily submit to any other foreign domination. But, since it was decided that this strategically important country must be in the jurisdiction of the British Empire (to safeguard the route to India and the Orient), some plan had to be evolved of colonising the country in part. Evidently the British Government was influenced by the Zionist minority in agreeing to the idea of a Jewish Home in Palestine. The only alternative (in fact) was to settle emigrants generally, as in South Africa and Australia. But British emigrants were few (as colonial experience had shown): and it may well be that European emigrants were simply not trusted. Already in Canada and Australia the door was barred to the "teeming millions" of European immigration. (Note 2) In Palestine, too: none but the "reliable."

Inevitable War in the Middle East, by Albert Meltzer (1968)

From 'Freedom: Anarchist Weekly', November 16, 1968, London, UK

The demands of modern war require that the individual not only commit himself on one side or the other, but insist on the general perfection of his side. The argument that runs 'if you were a Vietnamese, you would have to choose to be involved' applies equally in Israel and also in the neighbouring Arab States. It is the more likely to appeal to people with revolutionary social consciousness.

The Jewish bourgeoisie could fit in as a trading community in the Levant, to the complete satisfaction of the Arabs generally; no Zionist would object to the oil sheikhs, desert kings and Arab military leaders, provided they afforded no threat to the growth of the Jewish state. Since however Israel has evolved into a nation with a working class as well as a trading bourgeoisie; and since the Arab leaders have to reckon with a vast mass of pushed-under workers and peasants who have no chance of life at all but revolution at home or war abroad (and in the case of some, war on their own territory), there is no alternative to war in some degree or another. Ultimately — such is power politics — such a war could involve the world.

International considerations may limit the Middle East war or cause it to observe an uneasy armistice from time to time while both sides watch for the inevitable incident which can say that the other side is 'aggressing' — as if anyone really cares which side 'starts it' — so that hostilities may commence; in fact, all realists know that hostilities will commence the moment it is in the military interest of either the Jewish State or the Arab States.

To judge from the standpoint of the schoolyard argument ('he hit me first') may suit innumerable paid and unpaid propagandists for either side, but it is only in default of an alternative case. No plea that 'the other side started it' is needed in order to oppose tyranny. But all who espouse from a partisan point of view either pan-Arabism or Zionism must feel uneasy at the company they keep.

The followers of 'Communism' (Moscow, Peking, Havana or Mexico-Mausoleum brands) are almost all committed to the notion of a current Arab revolution, unless they happen to be in an Egyptian desert prison (and including many of the latter, too). Nasser's officer clique, the oil-rich sheikhs, the Nazi advisers in Cairo, the 'Socialist' officers of Baghdad and the wily entrepreneurs of Beirut who even manage to stay neutral in their own war, are all 'objectively' part of the socialist revolution because they are deemed to be anti-imperialist.

Unfortunately, the Israeli Socialists who have picked at the same texts, use the same anti-imperialist arguments and the same quotations from oil statistics, to prove that theirs is an anti-imperialist struggle, too; it is unfortunate from this point of view that power politics aligns them now with the French Right Wing, now with the Americans (on whom domestic

had any real right there anyway, and with the growing national consciousness, it was inevitable that a showdown should come – which really left Weizmann high and dry from Zionist opinion, an apostle of appeasement, but by virtue of his years he remained the titular head and later became President of the State when it was formed by force of arms.

To do him credit, Weizmann never joined those humbugs who for so long declared, ‘The Jewish people is not interested in building a State. It only wants a National Home, etc., etc.’ – the people who more or less denied that the Arabs were to be excluded in any way whatsoever, until finally they were altogether liquidated. On the other hand, he did help to obscure the final aims of Zionist nationalism in his policy of appeasement with the British which involved such soft-soaping of the Arabs prior to the final trial of strength.

Leaving aside the legends about Weizmann, it can still be said he made an enormous difference in Europe. It was due to him that so much energy and intelligence and application was diverted from Europe to the building of the State of Israel. All the enthusiasm that has been given to erecting that State has created one more State like any other, with its own police like any other, its own Army like other, its own class divisions. It is impossible to say what would have happened had all that remained in Europe. If the private armies formed in Palestine to fight immigration restrictions and military rule had been recruited in Eastern Europe to fight anti-semitism on the spot for instance, it might well have made the one great check to Hitler’s mass murders, as could be seen in the final decision of the Warsaw Ghetto to rise, when it was too late. Moreover, a great difference might have been made in the transformation of Europe had Jewish proletarians not been diverted into Palestine. These considerations, however, are now too late. The terrorism that might have brought Hitler and Stalin to their knees and assisted a libertarian transformation instead has been used in a military victory that has created the State of Israel. Its future lies largely in its military power, and it is not the liberal and pacific Weizmanns who will have any influence on it in the foreseeable future. For the moment the Social Democrats form the Government – due solely to a coalition with the Orthodox Religious bloc in order to form a Parliamentary majority. But the nationalism which has been created will not rest until the Old City of Jerusalem, Arab-occupied Palestine and Transjordan, too, are included in the borders of Israel. This will mean increasing restrictions, austerity, military rule and autocracy, and the days of idyllic ‘Plant a tree in the Holy Land’ Zionism are over.

INTERNATIONALIST

The British Government was assured of Jewish reliability. While the Arabs could not be trusted from an Imperial standpoint (they would, like the Egyptians, raise awkward questions about autonomy) the war had proved that the Jewish community would respond to a patriotic demand. The majority of British Jews were viewed with suspicion at the commencement of the war of 1914. The fact that a majority of them were foreign born, and the anti-immigration agitation of the ’00s had been mostly anti-semitic rather than anti-foreign, was an incentive to the suspicion against them. Looting of shops bearing German names soon spread to looting of shops bearing Jewish — even Russian (then Allied) names! The Jews had, however, not been provoked; had supported the war like the other communities.

Prominent in recruiting campaigns was the Chief Rabbi (Austrian born, and therefore an “enemy alien.” The German Chief Rabbi was also an “enemy alien” being Russian born!). Jews were volunteering and being drafted into the army. But even more there had to be considered the tradition of the upper class Jews, which naturally had more influence on the Government. The Disraeli tradition persisted in Lord Reading, there were the Rothschild and Sassoon dynasties, men such as Lord Burnham (founder of The Daily Telegraph) the circle of Edward VII, the Montefiore family and others — the existence of whom assured the British Government of two things:

(1) that the leaders of British Jewry could be trusted to influence the remainder into supporting any Imperial designs in Palestine, and in regulating the European Jewish immigrants into that country along the same road. (Foremost among the “safe men” chosen for the regulation of Palestine was, of course, Lord Reading; the prominent bourgeois statesman whose administration in Palestine, as in India, combined “reconciliation” with implicit obedience to Imperialist dictates).

(2) that since the position of Jews in most countries was, following the changes made by the war, favourable, (and the Versailles Treaty was to last a thousand years!) only a minority of Jews from the ever-decreasing pogrom countries, plus a few Zionist idealists, plus some British Jews seeking administrative positions, would enter Palestine.

Hence immigration was intended to be controlled, regulated and shepherded into a steady colonising trickle that would act as a safeguard against anti-imperialist designs of the Arabs; would colonise the country; would build a European community able to commercialise the assets of the country and at the same time guard against foreign aggression towards the oil-fields of the Middle East, and the route to India.

At first Arab objection as such to the “Jewish National Home” did not arise, There was some Moslem rioting in Jerusalem in connection with the alleged “Holy Places” — but in Jerusalem, the “City of Peace” there has always been rioting over that! Trouble began first when the colonial enterprise became profitable, owing to the cupidity of both Jewish capitalists and Arab

landowners.

Jewish capitalists from America were interested in the commercial proposition. They were building new industries and new towns. Tel-Aviv, for instance, rose from nothing to a new Chicago; farms appeared on what was once desert; Jerusalem, from being a sleepy Turkish provincial town where the different Christian priests quarrelled over their rights, became a hive of twentieth century industry. The Dead Sea became a live centre for tourists. In short, Palestine was being developed in the same way as South Africa had been, only in a much more rapid process. Unfortunately, contrary to the opinions of idealists who had hoped to pioneer an agricultural socialism, the same faults and methods of colonisation appeared in Palestine as in South Africa. (It is sometimes argued, of course, that capitalists coming into a country and colonising it develop the land “and make work for the natives,” an even more ironical statement than the old anti-socialist story that “the capitalist puts up the capital without which the worker could not work; hence the worker lives on the capitalist, not vice versa!”)

As for the Arab landowners, they were no less culpable than the Jewish capitalists. They sold their land at high prices to the investors, stretching the price to the highest conceivable limit because of the need for land, knowing full well what the sale of land would mean to their own peasants. Having forced the peasants off the land which they had sold at high prices to the Jewish investors, they told the peasants that the Jews had stolen the land, and carried a political agitation on to win back the land — in order to sell it again.

By virtue of their ties with Mohammedanism, the Arab landowners were able to influence the British Government. They were politically identical with the “Muslim League” minority in India, representing as it does the landowning and financial clique, and not the Arab peasants.

However, in saying that the Arab landowners took advantage of the Jewish influx to sell their land at high prices, and force down the standard of life of the peasant, this does not mean that it was not the case that the Arab peasant was forced off his land. The Jewish capitalist, and (playing a double game) the Arab landowner, were responsible. But because nationalist feeling is what it is, the Arab peasant thought of only the Jewish capitalist — and hence all Jews — as responsible. This explains the whole feeling of the Arab peasant. Led by a corrupt gang under the Grand Mufti, he could only see the whole thing as a national feud — Arab versus Jew.

In the same way, the average Jewish immigrant was not able to appreciate any reason for the disturbances that arose with intensity each year, culminating in the struggles of the late thirties. He came from Roumania, or Poland, or Hungary, where it was not unexpected for a sudden pogrom against the Jews. Escaping from his country, he arrived in Palestine, hoping to form a nation of his own. On arriving in Palestine, he found the Arabs incensed at the arrival of Jewish immigrants, hostile to the outlying settlements, unfriendly, and finally openly taking to arms. What could he

Chaim Weizmann and Israel, by Albert Meltzer (1952)

From 'Freedom: The Anarchist Weekly', November 22, 1952, London, UK

The death of Chaim Weizmann, President of Israel, has called forth many eulogies from the Press. This was to be expected since like many other politicians who live to a ripe old age, the sentimentality that attaches to the veteran tends to overlook any serious criticism even while they are alive.

It has long been forgotten by the Zionists themselves how the obstinacy of Weizmann drove their leader and pioneer, Theodore Herzl, to his grave — broken in spirit over the stubborn insistence of those who insisted on Palestine as the only possible ‘homeland’. Herzl originally contemplated a Jewish State, but the religious element led by Weizmann cast aside all offers of land anywhere but Palestine, insisting on ‘the Promise’ and other such myths. It is true that Herzl probably did not foresee that the Jewish State would eventually triumph in Palestine, but it would have been difficult to foresee in the early days of this century how religious orthodoxy could combine with an artificially-stimulated nationalism and even a secular socialism that nevertheless held fast to a mythical ‘Promise’ in the settlement in Palestine.

A modern myth which may well yet rank with the ‘Promise’ made by ‘God’ is that which was fostered by Lloyd George and others, namely, that they made the ‘National Home’ promise to the Jewish faction led by Weizmann because of the latter’s ‘assistance to the Allies’ in certain chemical inventions. Weizmann himself discounted this legend though there is an apocryphal story that during a luncheon to aid Israel in the early days of its establishment, a Zionist leader remarked bitterly to Einstein, ‘If the Weizmann story’s true, Albert, you certainly sold yourself cheap’. In actual fact, of course, the politicians give nothing away so easily. The whole point was that in re-drawing the boundaries of Turkish possessions, they wanted an ‘Ulster’ in Palestine and the ‘Jewish Nation’ within a mandated territory suited them very well. It also diverted the Arabs from anti-imperialism. But what was not foreseen at Versailles was the resurgence of barbarism in Europe — as a result of their other deliberations — and the anti-semitic drive that began in Poland and spread a thousand times worse in Germany, which forced Jews to leave Europe and who, finding no other sanctuary but Palestine, became Zionists by force rather than by argument.

Thus the minor settlement gradually increased in importance, and under various influences — though, despite what the religion taught, they were not a nation before, but a religion — a nation was in fact created. Weizmann took the course of trying to reconcile Zionist aspirations with British foreign policy. It is probably true that this was due to his consciousness that the victors agreed to settlement provided that such an Ulster was created. His opponents in the Zionist movement, however, cared nothing for the arrangements he had made. They could not agree that the mandatory power

promises than it could keep.

When the war ended Russian pogroms under the Stalin regime compelled a multitude of European Jews to emigrate to Palestine. These murderous onslaughts took place particularly in occupied countries such as Poland and Rumania, where Russian invasion had once been thought a lesser evil than German conquest! All this was a deliberate plan of Stalin, who knew that as a result the British Government would necessarily split with the Arabs or the Jews, since this would force a change from the traditional line of appeasing both sides with different promises. The outcome was that tragic spectacle of treks from the death camps of Europe to the D.P. camps and voyages in hellships to finish up in Cyprus concentration camps or die in the dusty streets of Palestine.

The wordy American Zionists have chosen to represent this as betrayal by the British Government; but what observer can be taken in by the pretense that there was any fundamental difference between the British and American Governments on that issue? True, the British Government has taken the Arab side (and by so doing kept the Arabs in the Anglo-American bloc against the Stalin bloc) while the American Government has been conspicuously pro-Israeli (thus preserving the Zionist vote, which counts in the States, and keeping Israel in the Anglo-American bloc). But one would have to be very naive to believe that the results show good will on either side, and British diplomacy has come off remarkably well with a pro-British President and a pro-Allied party in power in Israel, and a British-dominated mission to the only Arab state with any conquests! On which ever side they fought, they consistently represented the “master’s voice.”

In the face of such obvious Machiavellianism, who is going to claim that the last war was fought for the liberation of Europe from such evils as anti-Semitism? At a time when, as his many admiring stooges tell us, Mr. Churchill was aware of the danger of war, he told an audience that if ever the British Empire was defeated “we should need a Hitler to lead us back to our rightful place among the nations.” He spoke for the capitalist mentality.

One cannot emphasize too often the hollowness of the claim that wars are fought for any ideal, since that claim looks only at the surface and belies the real issues. It is like telling us, as history books do tell us in that disarming naivete of the schoolmaster—that such-and-such a war was fought over someone’s ear, for the love of Helen of Troy, for a certain succession to the throne, or over a case of tea or a gift of tennis-balls. [...]

think, except that the pogrom spirit had followed him across Europe to the “Promised Land”? What alternative could he see except the continuance of the national feud?

In short the Jewish immigrant was brought over on a short term policy of the Jewish capitalist: and the capitalist was aided by the Arab landowners to force out the Arab peasant.

The policy pursued in Palestine, therefore, could only lead to disaster. The Arab peasants were forced off the land, and saw relief only in the national feud. There was a section that saw relief in assistance from the Axis powers, “since they too were against the Jews” (Quite obviously this was nonsense; European anti-semitism would speed up Jewish immigration into Palestine rather than the reverse. The Axis was interested in fostering its agents amongst this section because of the very tactical nature of Palestine in the Mediterranean, rather than from any motives of ideology). There were also the wealthy Arabs who looked forward to a scheme of division, in which their own future would be assured, by the scarcity of land and hence its high market value. (This scheme, roughly resembling the “Pakistan” of some of Mr. Jinnah’s followers in India, but in a much smaller country, would have allowed so many cantons on the Swiss model to Jews, and so many to Arabs). The whole civil war that blazed up in Palestine was in the last analysis vain; because the nationalist leaders would not in any case have looked for sole independence, but merely an end of the system of colonisation being pursued.

On the Jewish side, the persecutions breaking out again in Europe had brought a large-scale immigration to Palestine. For a long time Hitler permitted the Zionist organisation to exist, and it enjoyed the unenviable position of being the only non-Nazi political organisation in Germany tolerated by the State. The leaders of Jewish communities, particularly in America, accentuated the efforts to get Jewish families out of Germany, especially into Palestine. The British Government which had never foreseen such a move, was reluctant to permit this, particularly since it did not wish to disturb the situation in Palestine any more. The whole effect of the Palestine experiment so far as the victims of Hitlerism were concerned was to raise a false chimera of hope before them, of allaying anti-Nazi feeling which would have broken out in Germany itself on this issue had not the Jewish homelessness been explained away by “but the Jews have somewhere to go — it’s the British Government that prevents it,” and most of all it encouraged the governments that wished to have an excuse not to admit immigrants themselves, but to express their desire for the refugees to enter somewhere—in particular, the American Government.

It does not seem as if abandonment of Zionism is anyone’s war aim. The British Government no doubt intends to continue as before, allowing a trickle of immigration, not to disturb its present basis. Hitler too wants a Ghetto State — a Jewish “Pale of Settlement,” but apparently in the worst

areas of Poland. Palestine itself is no doubt regarded by the Nazis as a vital link which they would colonise themselves, In short, a Nazi victory in the war would mean the re-colonisation of Palestine, and the position in a few years' time would be similar to today. An oppressed Arab population would be still struggling for independence.

A British victory no doubt means the status quo in Palestine. But we have the usual claims on the Government, and policy may be influenced in one or the other direction. Ever since the war began the Revisionists, and later most Zionists, have been clamouring for a "Jewish Army" in Palestine, with its own flag, its own divisions, its own commanders, on a level with other Allied nations. In vain has the Government explained that there is no Jewish State, that Jews are citizens of other States, consequently Jews can only be soldiers of the armies of the Allied Governments and not of their own non-existent Government. There is no pressing demand by Jews in the ranks to have their own Army, why therefore create one? Yet the demand persists, especially from American Jews (Dr. Abba Silver is at the moment in England on this very mission). The answer is obvious. They want a Jewish Army based on Palestine as the thin edge of the wedge for a Jewish State based on Palestine.

Why should this demand be so popular amongst American Jews? They have no disabilities in America; there is no urgent need for an exodus of Jewish refugees from New York; the problems of European anti-semitism do not affect them. It must be admitted that American Jews thinking of the creation of a State in Palestine have no intention of taking its citizenship themselves. They want to see the State, but with citizens strictly limited to those from Europe. They cannot see that actually they themselves are preparing the ground for American anti-semitic laws.

For essentially the whole prospect of Zionism for the Jews is as unsatisfactory as it is for the Arabs. The exclusion of the latter from their homes is equally balanced by the exclusion of the former. The gainer in each case is the coloniser and the landlord; and the loser both the immigrant worker and the native peasant.

The kind of Zionism envisaged before the war meant essentially cooperation with Hitler and other anti-semitic rulers. The kind of Zionism envisaged for after the war means that it is considered that anti-semitism will still prevail in the countries from which the settlers are emigrating.

The solution of Jewish miseries in the world today does not therefore lie in Zionism (nationalism); it lies in the fight against anti-semitism, and hence the fight against nationalism.

In the last analysis, the solution to the whole problem of Jewish homelessness and persecution, lies in the solution to the problem, of the workers everywhere: i.e., the building of a world freed from nationalism and States.

But it may be asked, can this particular problem wait? No problem can wait. A desirable conclusion may have to wait, but the means of action must be

Excerpt from 'Should We Defend Democratic Rights?', by Albert Meltzer (1951)

From the book 'The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View', by the Free Society Group of Chicago, 1951

[...] It is well worth taking one particular illusion, since this has been used for propaganda purposes in England and America to such an extent, and that is the belief sincerely held by thousands of Jewish people suffering from or sympathizing with those under the Nazis, people who looked hopefully for Hitler's defeat, only to find that the great sacrifices they had made toward that end were largely in vain.

One must sympathize with those who were bitterly disillusioned when they learned that all that the closing of the death camps meant was the opening of the D.P. camps (corrals for displaced persons), but what are we to say to the politicians who created that false illusion? The New York chorus, for instance, that sang the praises of the British Empire nightly in 1940, those self-seeking liberals with high ideals and low motives, who licked the boots of Churchill & Company, and afterward could not understand how "Bevin had betrayed them" lest understanding might reveal that they had betrayed others! How can one forgive them for the fact that it took six years for the Stephen Wises et al to sail from the East River like Christopher Columbus in reverse, and rediscover the British Empire! Mr. Ben Hecht, who ran dry of fulsome adjectives for the Tory leader of the Empire to fill up his column, suddenly changed to being elevated by the British press to the role of Britain Hater No. 1 as he and they raised each other to the status formerly occupied by Goebbels in both cases! By the time "victory" came the New York liblabs were running dry of Ireland and India and digging up fictitious characters like Fagin and Shylock to "prove" anti-Semitism in England!

What is the truth about all this? Did the British Empire really change? Only its critics changed. In spite of all their protestations to the contrary, the war was imperialist in 1940 and Churchill's Cabinet never tried to deny it, even the most "progressive" supporters of the government claiming only that they could "alter its character" and utilize it for European revolution, which now proves to be singularly ridiculous. It was handy to have a liberal coating of ideas, to talk about restoring democracy, breaking down racial hatred, etcetera, which enabled the Left Wing to support the war with an easy conscience instead of admitting to themselves that they were betraying what socialistic ideas they had retained. They would have supported it in any case, but the idea of a changed type of war was consoling to former conscientious objectors who found themselves supporting war when their fighting days were over.

In regard to the Palestine issue, the Government acted in a consistently imperialist manner and can hardly be said to have acted in opposition to its fundamental policy, except that the Labor Party had made rather more

to go, and are naturally bitter at the cynical ease with which Great Powers who deny the great open spaces under their control to settlers, declare that they ought not to go to Palestine but elsewhere. They cannot be expected to stay behind barbed wire and bars until their death, as has been apparently the view of the British Government in its great Cyprus concentration camp experiment (which still goes on). They are no more likely to consider Arab claims than the thousands of Europeans who swarmed to build up America considered the Indians. In spite of all the bunk about peace by settlement and negotiations between the Powers, under the United Nations delusion, the fact is that conflict, in these circumstances inevitable, and victory will certainly go to the strongest side. The Powers are not really interested in any other solution, but are doing their best to use the Palestine struggle as one of the many pawns in the cold war.

As internationalists we ought not to delude ourselves into any other facile solution, but rather to look for hopes that in the future some measure of international co-operation will come about, not between governments or political leaders, but from the people from below, and in the meantime to expose such delusions as those spread by the leaders of all sides in any war. But the major deduction to be drawn from the Palestine conflict is the utter degeneration of Soviet Russia into Czarism, a fact known to everybody with the least perception who witnesses the flight of so many Jews from Europe, but one concealed not least by the Zionist parties who welcome Russian U.N.O. [United Nations Organization] support, and who have in any case a certain vested interest in anti-Semitism. There can be no denying the fact that if conditions were normal and decent in Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the other countries behind the Iron Curtain, there would be no "D.P. problem": the fact of open and silent pogroms in those countries causes the great exodus from Eastern Europe to the overlaid D.P. camps of Germany and Italy, and the great freights of human cargo leaving the Danubian ports. The Communists may deny responsibility for this, but the fact remains that all opposition to Stalin has been stamped out in those countries and if Stalin so wished, anti-Semitism could not last a minute. It has not been tolerated in Russia for many years because of its identification with and exploitation by the "White" Czarists, but now that Red Czarism is so firmly in the saddle, it is used throughout the Great Russian Empire of Eastern Europe to divide and rule.

INTERNATIONALIST

[A known pen name used by Albert Meltzer. -Ed. 2026]

taken now.

It is clearly difficult and nearly impossible for the anti-Zionist Jew in Palestine itself to take action. He not only incurs the hostility of the majority of other Jews, but cannot allay the suspicion of the majority of Arabs. But an anti-Zionist minority, and a class-conscious Arab minority too, can grow, and from the nucleus of a minority of revolutionary Jews and Arabs can grow a movement with the main principles:

(a) the abandonment of the Zionist State experiment on the one hand, and of an Arabic kingdom on the other;

(b) anti-imperialism, opposition to external capitalism and internal landlordism;

(c) disregard for the religious scruples causing barrier amongst the people;

(d) the struggle for an independent workers' country, to take its place amongst other independent workers' countries of the new world, on the same principles of revolutionary libertarian socialism (and with absolute disregard for race).

I do not say such a minority with such a programme is an immediate likelihood, but it is towards the creation of such a minority that the policy of revolutionary workers elsewhere must be. It would not matter whether such a movement were inaugurated solely by Jews or solely by Arabs; the point is that such a movement can arise to take in all of whatever nationality. It is by aiming at such a movement, and not by supporting any propositions which may come from interested parties during this war, that the revolutionary workers may know they are not being misled by false nationalist divisions once again.

On the question of Arab Independence: it may be that Arab revolutionaries would feel themselves bound to a movement of Arab independence, similar to Indian and Moroccan revolutionaries. We agree, it may sometimes be necessary to go part of the way with colonial bourgeois nationalists; but our aim in all cases is to expose the leaders of the colonial peoples, and point the way to their own emancipation. The support of any independence movement should not therefore prejudice the main object, that of a movement of all the toilers.

This may well point to a course of action for the Jews of Palestine, but it will be argued that the Jews in the pogrom countries will be left without hope, except with the hope of far-off revolution. In the first place, this is an improvement, for even the hope of a revolution and a free system of society in the future is more practicable than the hope of a peaceful national state, when one views the position of all other small states, in far less strategic positions.

Moreover the course of revolution can be pursued, but as the "Struma" tragedy shows, the Governments of the world have no intention of letting immigration be pursued. It may be that Herschel Grynspan, before the war, had a clearer notion than many of the worthies who washed their hands of

him, as to how the pogrom governments should be fought. It was better to have struck at Vom Rath than to have committed suicide, at least; and while perhaps it did not accomplish much — had not Grynspan been denounced so readily by those who wished to show they had nothing to do with it — the example might have been contagious.

We do not have to go into details to show that fascism can be fought from within. It goes equally to show that anti-semitism is a product of capitalist and nationalist society, and that it can be equally fought with the system by the revolutionary workers; that in fact, a government cannot impose it without the aid of the masses (as witness Holland, Denmark and Norway, countries where the virus of anti-semitism had never infected the masses, and where the Nazis have been unable to carry through the Nuremberg laws).

Countering nationalism with nationalism does not solve a national problem, The revolutionary class struggle does. Anti-semitism will finally be smashed by the revolutionary class struggle, if pursued logically. And the logical course of the class struggle is not to confuse anti-semitism with anti-Zionism. The former is reactionary, but the latter is one of the means of fighting the former.

A.M.

Notes

1. The interested reader will find profitable study in many of the novels of Israel Zangwill (“The King of Schnorrers?” “Children of the Ghetto” etc.) whose pen has made a truly Dickensian survey.

2. The U.S.A., when padlocking the doors to the European immigration that evolved it, gave the reason in its notorious declaration that all persons entering the U.S.A. (even on a visit) are compelled to make — one effectively ruling out anarchists, radicals, — even democrats!

Fine Day For The Race, by Albert Meltzer (1947)

From ‘Freedom, Anarchist Fortnightly’, May 3, 1947, London, UK

Those who imagine that racial laws are exclusively something German or South African have yet to come across the most peculiar racial laws of “our” mandate, Palestine.

Identity cards require the race of the holder as distinct from his nationality. Jewish inhabitants of Palestine are “Jewish” irrespective of their nationality, unless they change their religion when their “race” automatically also changes! It comes as a surprise to — for instance — British and American Jews to find themselves in a different classification from fellow-citizens at home when entering Palestine, and it leads to quite an absurdity as regards

grounds of the association with Abdullah of Transjordan, and there is a left-wing picture (which is now accepted as truth by all Zionists) of Bevin forcing through a pro-Arab policy against the Cabinet’s wish, and being able to call the war off any time he chose.

Bevin’s ability to control the Arab States’ policy in regard to Palestine (but not in regard to Egypt or the Sudan!) may be doubted. It is more certain that Britain has played a diplomatic game of keeping in with both sides: influencing the Arab countries by the military missions under Glubb, etc., and relying on the pro-British sentiments of Weizmann and the Social-Democrats on the Jewish side. An alternative theory is pointed out by many: namely, that Britain and America — who are agreed on policy in every country in the world — may be not so much at loggerheads over this one small country as may be imagined. America ostensibly and loudly backs the Jewish side and calls on their support in the case of war. This is convenient for whoever may be President (having to placate the New York Jewish vote) and in addition, American influence among European Jewish circles can be considered. On the other hand, Britain ostensibly backs the Arabs — she has “traditional friendships” among the Arab countries, and calls on their support in the case of war. The Jewish vote in this country does not count very highly; and in any case is not generally pro-Zionist. Thus, whoever wins is an ally against Russia for Britain — or America!

It cannot be doubted that Palestine may be an important focal point in another war, since Russia has seen the weakness of the Arab countries, and that even such a small body as Palestine Jewry can resist them all, and if it had not been restrained, might by now have toppled them all over. Her striking point in a war might well be the oil fields of Iran and with only “Glubb’s Girls” to stop them might soon be in Cairo. The Israeli leaders are well aware of their importance to world politics, and disinclined to give way over limiting their territory, to please the Arabs.

Meanwhile, the most pressing of all post-war problems has received very little notice — namely the displacement of thousands of Arabs from their homes. These thousands became refugees not because of “misleading Arab propaganda” as the Israel Government claims, but because they feared terrorists attacks such as that of the Jewish Fascists on Deir Yassin, when a village which had actually not cooperated with and even resisted Arab terrorists, was massacred by Jewish terrorists. As the thousands of Jewish immigrants come in, the Israel Government can only accommodate them in the deserted Arab cities, and in such towns as Jaffa, transform it completely from an all Arab city to a Jewish city. Before very long, there will simply be nowhere for them to go back to, and having gone, the Israel Government does not particularly want them back, however it condemned the methods which drove them away.

It is futile and unreasonable to blame the Jewish immigrants for this problem of Arab homelessness; they have themselves certainly nowhere else

The persecution of Jews behind Stalin's Iron Curtain may lead to more "Hebrews" via Cyprus and the D.P. [Displaced Persons] camps. They are certainly no more illogical than the Jewish proletarians in Mile End who kept out Mosley's marchers during Hitler's pogroms and elected Piratin to Westminster during Stalin's pogroms.

Palestine, by Albert Meltzer (1948)

From 'Freedom, Anarchist Fortnightly', November 27, 1948, London, UK

The war in Palestine continues to take up headlines in the Press, as politicians bicker in pretences at armistices and parleys, not in the least in an endeavour to find a reasonable solution, but solely in order to preserve the balance of power existing in the "cold war".

The ironic nature of the war is that the opposing forces consider themselves as fighting against something which does not happen to be on the other side of the barricades. The thousands of immigrants arriving from Europe are passionately keen to defend their stakes in Israel, and after years in D.P. [Displaced Persons] camps and concentration camps they are anxious to "fight back"; but, of course, the Arabs they are fighting against were not responsible for European anti-Semitism. The Arabs regard themselves as fighting against European influence; to them it is a "new aggression of the West against the East" and they regard it as a par with British Imperialism or the Italian war in Abyssinia [Ethiopia].

There is a certain amount of truth in both claims, because undoubtedly much of the outside criticism of Zionism comes from anti-Semitism and support for Zionism out of sympathy with Jewish victims of Nazi and other oppression in Europe. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the majority of Zionists regard the Arabs in the same way as other colonisers have regarded other "native inhabitants", and it is hardly an answer for the Israeli authorities to claim cooperation from certain Arab tribes, such as the Druses, who have always been on unfriendly terms with other Arabs and inclined towards their enemies. Similar tactics were pursued by the British in India.

There is not the slightest question of Jewish superiority in any renewed outbreak of fighting, no matter how rated the Arab troops may have been in the past; and particularly since the British withdrawal enabled them to bring in thousands of Jewish D.P.s and also munitions from all over Europe, as well as volunteers. The Arabs accuse Britain of betraying their interests in withdrawing at the particular time it did (had it withdrawn in 1936, for instance, the Jews could have been militarily defeated by them, since at that time they had no possibility of calling in large-scale immigration from Europe, importing arms from countries like Czechoslovakia, nor had they the thousands of British-trained troops from the war.) On the other hand, the Zionists generally have portrayed Britain as aiding the Arabs on the

British and American non-Jews.

An American could not say "Race — Irish" or "Race — Swedish", etc., his "Race" could either be Jewish or American! Whoever heard of the "American Race" outside of the Palestine government? (If there were one would not the Jews be an important part of it?) And yet — believe it or not — I even came across a non-Jewish refugee whose identity card actually read "Race — Christian". As regards "Race — Anarchist", we do not believe in Identity Cards, but if ever I had one I would want it to be "Race — Human".

A.M.

Middle East Notes: Civil War, from Freedom (1948)

From 'Freedom: Anarchist Fortnightly', March 20, 1948, London, UK

(By Our Correspondent)

As previously indicated in these columns, civil war in Palestine is now opening up and the rival terrorists are meeting. How can one convey what it means? One can only see vague flashes. An isolated Jewish settlement in the middle of hills from which Arabs come swooping down at night. A poverty-stricken Arab village which could be wiped out at one swoop by a nearby Jewish town and whose houses shiver at every mortar.

The Eastern Jews — more Arab than Jewish — cooped up in the walled, narrow Old City of Jerusalem surrounded by hostile neighbours who once were friends. The mixed slum area between Arab Jaffa and Jewish Tel Aviv which has become the "Flanders" of the war. The Westernised Arab men who have caused the biggest boom in the tarboosh industry by rushing to buy the red "fez" (tarboosh) with their Western clothes . . . and the Westernised Arab girls who are prepared to face death rather than go back to the feudal woman's dress which cannot be limited to head-gear alone.

The isolated communities (Armenians, Coptics, Greeks, etc.) who are neutral in a situation that forbids neutrality. And the forgotten British soldier, called-up on the pretext of an "emergency" arising from the defeat of Germany, who is sent to the warring country against his will and finds himself in the midst of a situation of which he knows nothing, and is court-martialled for negligence because somebody who is interested in what goes on there steals his rifle; or suffers as a "reprisal" because of the activities of a group of would-be Lawrences of Arabia who have retired from the police and Army and look forward to being Smith Beys or a Jones Pashas.

If there are any encouraging signs, it is only that, in spite of everything, there are one or two people with the moral and physical courage to swim against the stream. And "one or two" is literal. The fact that here and there some people of different nationalities still speak to each other is the only

encouraging sign for the future.

The arrival of Fawzi Kawukji will give a tremendous impetus to the Arab reactionaries, as he represents the extreme Right in the Arab camp. The liberal trend is represented by Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha, secretary-general of the Arab League, but the fact that the Arab League has promised so much and done nothing but raise collections has lowered his stock considerably.

It is significant that Kawukji's arrival strengthening the Arab Right comes at a time when the Haganah's united front with Irgun strengthens the Jewish Right. The inevitable result of civil war. Fawzi Kawukji will how ever increase the dissent among Arab leaders — King Abdullah of Transjordan distrusts him and King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia has sworn to behead him with his own uncalloused hands.

The Mufti of Jerusalem, who shares with Fawzi bey Kawukji the leadership of Palestine Arabs, is now dominant in Arab counsels and is sending volunteers from Syria. (This is the only Arab country which has sent practical aid to the Palestine Arabs and it is said that it is partly motivated by a desire of the Christian Arab rulers of Syria to get rid of as many Moslem Arab Syrians as they can.)

Simultaneously comes a move by the Mufti (a Husseini) to settle his scores with the Hashashibi family, the only dominant family to dispute his leadership (the feud between them goes back years). It is said the Hashashibis would prefer the Jews to the Husseinis, and similarly, that Ibn Saud would prefer the Jews to Fawzi Kawukji. Possibly a "Munich settlement" may come about at top level — who can tell? — but the Right Wing is against it and their influence is the most telling now.

A grim joke said — apropos the fact that the Sternists tried to bump off the Jewish Mayor of Tel Aviv about the same time as Arab terrorists killed the Arab labour leader of Jaffa — that in view of the appeal for economy in transport, the rival gangs were exchanging blacklists and working street by street on a mutual basis. This, of course, is absurd as they both have entirely different reasons for doing the same thing . . .

One often feels tempted to think there might be something in the criticism of Anarchists that we are "tolerant of intolerance" and prepared to allow reactionary groups to carry on who will one day destroy us. But an interesting confirmation that "freedom is the best security" came my way recently.

It might fairly be claimed that the Irgun Zvai Leumi [IZL] and the Sternists were preparing to take control of the Jewish State should this emerge victorious from a civil war. As the earliest Anarchist criticisms of Zionism said — a new nationalism could only create a State and this would become more reactionary, as witness the decline of Italian nationalism into fascism. This, however, is answered in Palestine by a fair query: How do you know the terrorists are fascists?

The general impression among the Jewish community is that they are over-

zealous Zionists; if they are condemned, it is not for their views, but for their violence. Haganah has at the moment of writing (10/3/48) made a pact with the Irgun with the sole proviso that it ceases its terrorist attacks on the British, but Haganah (largely social democratic) makes no proviso as to the views and policy of the Irgun and it is expressly understood that Irgun will be able to remain a separate entity so that after the war it can emerge as a political party with its own influence.

However, it can be clearly seen in England that the I.Z.L. and the Sternists are fascist in nature and aim, quite apart from the use of violence, which is used by all political groupings other than pacifists on one occasion or another. Accordingly there is little support or tolerance for them among the Jewish community. The reason for this is solely due to the difference in the British Government's policy; in Palestine the terrorists are illegal and cannot state their views openly, in England they can, and don't have to be exposed, because they expose themselves.

Their organ *The Legionaire* (Voice of the Hebrew Legion) gives their points of view. I quote from its issue of 13/2/48. From start to finish it preaches unadulterated racial hatred in a tone reminiscent more of the Rosenberg publications in English which the Nazis sent out from Munich before World War II than of half-baked editions of its local fascist counterparts.

Although it deplores (inaccurately) that "this land is in the happy position of being the only one where it is legal to be anti-Semitic", it may be said that *The Legionaire* ought to be thankful for that fact because any laws against the propagation of racial hatred would knock it right on the head. Not only is it against the English and, of course, the Arabs ("Islam is the same murder religion wherever it appears" is its passing contribution to the Punjab question), but I cannot see how anyone can deny that *The Legionaire* is anti-Semitic.

It makes strong attacks on a certain "thirty dumb Jews, the wonder of the world" not because they are Labour M.P.'s [Members of Parliament] but because they are Jews also!

"Unser [our] socialist Jews have thin skins and tender consciences. Not about us, Hebrews."

It appears that a new racial theory has been invented by them.

"The difference between Hebrew and Jew grows clear every day."

Accordingly they attack the Jews a la Hitler in defence of "the Hebrews"! This enables one to understand the fact of compliance with pogroms in Eastern Europe. Irgun itself (as quoted in the same issue) says "the Soviet Union is among the most important of our friends". Its general attitude is pro-Stalin. Certainly if an artificial division is made between the Jews suffering in Stalin-controlled territory and "Hebrews" (i.e. Jewish nationalists not necessarily in Palestine, as far as one can tell from the paper in question), the Hebrew Legion and hence the Irgun and Sternists may be quite logical in their fascism.