

# FLASHPOINT

**Magazine of the Israel Palestine  
Socialist Action Group [U.K.]**

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Summer 1971 and  
Winter 1971/2.



*Israel's Black Panthers out on the streets.*

Israel: The Crisis Within.

Zionism: The Debate from Outside

# CEASE FIRE FOR THE MILITARY BUT NOT FOR CLASS STRUGGLE!

For some time the Israel-Palestine Committees including their British section, the Israel-Palestine Socialist Action Group have held the consistent position that the present state of national hostilities which dominates the Israel Palestine conflict and indeed the whole situation in this area of West Asia, have had the tendency to give the ruling classes an opportunity to stifle class struggle. It has therefore come as no surprise to us to find our theory vindicated by recent events in both Egypt and Israel, the two main parties affected by the Suez Canal cease fire agreement. The ease in tension since the signing of this agreement is nothing less than spectacular, even now after the ending of the official agreement a tacit understanding has led to a prolongation of the original cease-fire. In Israel we have witnessed a tremendous number of strikes and a very encouraging new development—the emergence of a highly militant group, the Black Panthers working in the Ghettos of the Sephardi (a synonym in Israel for Oriental) Jews. Also inside Israel we see a strengthening of the "left" groupings and a growing radicalisation of the school-age youth. In Egypt the effect of the comparative quiet on her borders with Israel has also been far reaching, massive strikes in the heavy industry sector, a re-emergence of the student movement (once brutally suppressed by Nasir) and a series of dramatic divisions in the ruling classes—an occurrence which cannot be solely attributed to the death of Nasir.

The ruling classes are finding it difficult to divert the attention of the working masses from the real struggle for any longer. While the guns are quiet, (albeit for a temporary period) it becomes increasingly difficult for them to claim that the workers demands are impossible to meet owing to "security" considerations. The class as a whole is coming to realise that there can be no postponement for an indefinite period of their just demands. And, even though these demands are still only of an economic nature the signs are clear that under a determined leadership,

a transformation of this situation onto a political level can and will take place.

We need have no illusions to imagine that a revolutionary leadership is already in existence. In the Arab countries revolutionaries have been brutally suppressed for many years and the repression against them continues (the situation of the Sudanese C.P. is by no means unique). It is true that in the Yemen some small groups are emerging, and in Tunisia a similar situation is apparent. The nearer we come to the scene of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the fewer revolutionaries are to be found. In Israel itself, thanks to the work of the Israel Socialist Organisation (known as Matzpen) whose irresponsible and arrogant tactics have alienated all support and due to discrediting of the old Stalinist organisations, including Rakach, Maki, Mapam (Stalinist in structure, if not in its politics) the task of building a revolutionary party has received some massive set-backs. The Palestinian Guerillas who have been faced with a series of betrayals, wasted compromises and finally attempts at physical extermination are in no position to provide the necessary revolutionary leadership. Such is the desperation of their situation that Palestinian Guerillas were even fleeing to Israel (!) In fact, as a result of the quasi 'peace' the Palestinians have suffered more than anyone else—Israel has given Hussein a breathing space to rid himself of his troublesome guerillas. Those who talk romantically of the Palestinians as the vanguard of the 'Arab Revolution' must know that this vanguard has been proved inadequate. The Guerilla organisations will only ever succeed by building a political base of support and by an alliance, on equal terms, with their comrades in Israel who are fighting for the creation of a socialist Middle East.

The Cease Fire has come at an opportune period. Now is a decisive time for the revolutionary movement. It should not be squandered.

## ISRAEL'S BLACK PANTHERS

About a year ago the first meetings of oriental Jews took place in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem Cafe's of those who had the desire to establish a militant organisation to fight for the betterment of the position of the oriental Jew in Israel.

There is no question that oriental Jews are the victims of discrimination. They came to Israel as desperate refugees and most have barely elevated their position. They live in squalid housing in 'sephardi' ghetto areas, their kids attend sub-standard schools and they do the menial jobs.—They share with the Arab population of Israel the unenviable position of being the country's lumpen-proletariat.

Traditionally the oriental Jews (or Ha Adot Ha Mizrach as they are known in Israel) have been the victims of a double oppression. Besides their material oppression, ideologically they have been the bastion of support for the reactionary ultra chauvinistic policies of Herut (Begin's Party) and also have been misled into the realms of fantasy by their adoption of fanatical religiousness. The emergence of the Black Panther movement is a significant and welcome development.

### WHY PANTHERS?

The choice of the name 'Black Panther' on the part of the organisation was quite deliberate. The Panthers in Israel like the Panthers in the States see themselves as victims of both racial and economic discrimination (they are known as Blacks in Israel). The Black Panther Party in America has achieved far greater political maturity than the Israeli Panthers.

It must be remembered that the basis of this organisation are people with little tradition of independent political activity, their leaders are unsophisticated—many are 'ex-criminals', junkies etc. (the comparison with the American Panthers is again startling—compare the backgrounds of Malcom X, Cleaver, Searle and Newton for example). Their level of education is low and their distrust of any form of organisation is

instinctive. Therefore, to describe the Panthers as a revolutionary organisation is misleading. Their platform is exceedingly Liberal and talks in terms of social justice being provided within the context of the existing systems. Yet it is clear that their experience of struggle will provide them with the necessary background to reach more radical political conclusions. Comrades from SIACH and Matzpen are already working with them; (But they are not a part of them as the Israel Press claims, or initiated by them as these bourgeois hacks would also have us believe) the movement is essentially spontaneous, it will soon discover its true friends and real enemies.

### PATRONISE OR BRUTALISE

The initial reaction of the Israeli establishment to Panther street demonstrations was one of shock. The myth of an egalitarian society and national harmony lay demonstrably in ruins. Even the fuzz acted with some restraint. A wave of self-righteous indignation swept through the media. This was followed by a wave of liberal garbage about the 'terrible conditions' of the poor. Even 'Auntie' Golda jumped on the bandwagon, inviting the Panther leaders to come and discuss their problems with her. Ministers of State began to appear in slum districts, Jerusalem's Mayor Teddy Kolek went to talk to demonstrators etc. etc. The ruling Labour Party even decided to devote a vast amount of time at the annual congress to the problems of poverty. It was clear that although everybody appreciated the necessity for correcting this grave situation none had any intention of actually starting to do something in this direction. Not surprisingly the Panthers were not prepared to accept this inactivity.

### CONFRONTATION

The street demonstrations continued and are continuing. Golda Meir came to the conclusion that the Black Panthers "are not nice boys", the bourgeois press decided that the time had come for a full attack on these "mindless militants". The usual accusations

of "Commie" "Fatah" and all other types of infiltration were dragged out. The backgrounds of the Panther leaders (incidentally, like SIACH, the Panthers have no official leaders) were 'exposed' and the campaign to discredit the organisation came into full swing.

The campaign in the press was coupled with a really unprecedented campaign of police brutality against the Panthers. Beatings, preventative arrests, searches, the whole paraphernalia of an embryonic Police state began to make their appearance—not only was the physical brutality stepped up, also the punishments for demonstrating were increased. A tax on protest is now clearly in operation.



*Panther demonstration in Jerusalem.*

#### SUPPORT

It need come as no surprise at all to learn that the oriental community responded magnificently to this repression—more and more support came forward to the ranks of

the Panthers. A massive demonstration of solidarity was organised by Ashkenazie (or white) Jews on the campus of the Hebrew University (this was largely the work of SIACH). Noticeably the Liberals are now dropping off the band-wagon they were so glad to ride on. Even the Panthers are being forced to make concessions to prove their 'loyalty' to the State of Israel. Yet the momentum which they have set in motion cannot be halted.

The enemies of social progress must know that for every comrade they beat-up many more will join the ranks of the class-conscious oppressed people, the future is with the oppressed. The oppressors are fighting a desperate rear-guard battle to attempt to maintain an anachronistic status quo.

We call on all comrades to hound every representative of the Israeli Government or its agencies and demand from them an explanation of what they are doing to the Panthers. Let them know that they can never isolate militants and get away with their crimes. Let them know that the liberal conscience cannot be salvaged while the most oppressed section of Israeli society continues to suffer.

#### DEFEND THE ISRAELI BLACK PANTHERS!!

AN INTERNATIONAL APPEAL IS TO BE LAUNDED FOR FUNDS TO AID THE PANTHERS, ESPECIALLY TO HELP PAY THE VERY MASSIVE FINES INCURRED AS A RESULT OF DEMONSTRATIONS.

IPSAG WILL BE ORGANISING THIS FUND FROM ENGLAND. WE ASK FOR ALL CONTRIBUTIONS AT THE PRESENT TO BE SENT TO . . .

BLACK PANTHER DEFENCE FUND,  
C/O IPSAG,  
STUDENTS UNION,  
30 LONDON ROAD,  
READING, BERKS.

ALL CHEQUES AND P.O.'S SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO 'FLASH-POINT (B.P.).



# ISRAEL-PALESTINE COMMITTEES STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT CRISIS WITHIN ISRAEL

The protracted conflict in the Middle East, apart from effecting human lives in terms of casualties, has a profound negative influence on Israeli society. We see certain fundamental patterns emerging.

One quarter of a million Jews in Israel are living below the poverty line as defined by the Ministry of Welfare. Military expenditure prevents the extension of essential social services with the oriental Jews and the Arab citizens of Israel the particular victims of this situation. The emergence of the "Black Panthers" is indicative of this situation. The feeling of frustration which emerges in this atmosphere is exploited by Chauvinist elements in Israeli society. Feeling of class solidarity is mischannelled into ethnic strife.

The war structure encourages abnormal responses to the problems of society. Our task is to break through the abusive utilisation of 'security' and to clarify the true interests of the working masses. When the argument of security is employed as a pretext to prevent the legitimate demands of the working class from coming to fruition then the argument of security becomes a weapon against the working masses. The experience in the Ashdod Port-workers' and the teachers' strike among others bears witness to this. When the argument of security is used as a weapon against the workers the politicization of economic demands serves the cause of peace. Therefore the struggle for peace in Israel is an integral part of the expanding class struggle.

The continued annexationist approach of the Israeli government, (however reluctant) as has been shown by their intransigence towards Sadat's current attitude, threatens to have the following consequences:

1. The Dehumanization of the occupied and the occupiers. The January events in Gaza

show the impossibility of any occupation being liberal.

2. The repression threatens to produce its own societal gangrene. Its concrete symptoms are evident when authorization for public demonstration is denied and militants are preventively arrested and when social pressure forcibly prevents the freedom of cultural expression. Witness the closure of the political satire the "Queen of the Bath-tub". The increasing use of the "Emergency Laws", an integral part of the security syndrome, with the deportation of entire families into remote parts of the Sinai and the prohibition of the freedom of assembly in occupied areas represent a furthering of this trend.

3. The danger of the crystallization of a military "caste" in Israel with all its political and economic implications, despite the present escendency of the civilian over the military.

4. The continuation of the conflict perpetuates the dependency of Israel and of her Arab antagonists on the Big Powers subordinating their interests to a new colonial matrix.

5. The abrupt confrontation of two economies of different levels and structure inevitably results in an exploitive situation. The gradual introduction of cheap Arab labour from the occupied territories into the Israeli economy may create a division not only along social lines but one that is reinforced on an ethnic basis. It is evident that we are opposed to any policy of economic segregation. We demand an economic policy based on the principles of parity:\*

- (a) Equality of opportunity in employment.
- (b) Equal work, equal treatment.

6. The Israeli bourgeoisie, by the emotional mobilisation of the Jewish Bourgeoisie in the diaspora attempts to preserve this social status-quo.

## CONCLUSION

The Israel-Palestine Committees believe that the only way for a reconciliation is a consistent policy of non-annexation and non-exploitation of and by the peoples of the region. Unilateral imposed peace is not a peace. The future of the region belongs to the Israelis and the Palestinians.

\*A further examination of this whole question is to be undertaken by the Israel-Palestine Committees.

*This statement was formulated during the I.P. Conference at Coxyde, Belgium, March 1971. Representatives from all over Europe and a Comrade from ACIID in America were present.*



## WHO ARE SIACH?

*The information for this article has largely been provided by Marcel Szatan who was the first representative from Siach to visit Europe.*

In Flashpoint No. 3, we carried a letter from the Israel New Left group whose initials, SIACH signify both their name and the word 'dialogue'.

We hear very little in England about the very important work which SIACH is engaged in, yet we are confident that with the certain growth of this movement, we shall be hearing a great deal in the future. In this article we hope to clarify some of the distortions and dispel the many mystifications which surround the activity of SIACH.

### BEGINNINGS

SIACH existed in embryonic form inside the United Workers Party: MAPAM, at the time of the Maarach, i.e. the alignment of MAPAM with the Labour Party. During 1969, the already discontented elements in MAPAM decided that the time to leave had come. Two groups were formed, one in Tel Aviv, the other in Jerusalem; the Jerusalem group had been working with a liberal co-ordinating organisation called the Peace and Security Movement but found their total lack of political direction too confining. These comrades were joined by dissident youth elements in MAPAM, kibbutz members and members of MAKI, the non-Moscow section of the Israeli Communist Party. There are now branches throughout Israel. At least one kibbutz is now known to have a majority of SIACH members which is no small achievement when the total stranglehold of Party membership which MAPAM tries to maintain in its affiliated kibbutzim is considered.

### ORGANISATION

SIACH is still a young grouping and cannot be regarded as a disciplined organisation.<sup>\*1</sup> In fact, no one is allowed to speak in the name of SIACH, i.e. as a national entity. The group is really more of a co-ordinating body

rather than a political party. In a country infamous for its absurd multiplicity of bureaucratic machinery, SIACH is significantly anti-bureaucratic. There is no such thing as membership and debating is entirely free. Meetings can be attended by all people who, provided they do not belong to other political organisations, can also vote. This state of affairs can, hopefully, only be regarded as temporary. The continual involvement of SIACH in situations of confrontation is giving the movement a political maturity that should lead to the building of a strong organisation.

### "SIACH REJECTS CAPITALISM AS A FORM OF SOCIETY . . ."

Despite the politically heterogeneous nature of SIACH, it is possible to define certain political principles which are broadly adhered to within the organisation. The closest SIACH has ever come to formulating a political programme was during their first national convention in Tel Aviv on the 28th-29th November 1969.<sup>\*2</sup> Much has happened since then yet the following basic premisses appear to be of continuing relevance, always bearing in mind their assertion that "the theoretical work done by SIACH is based on permanent examination of these principles and maxims".

SIACH is against the domination of one people by another and supports a settlement of both the Jewish and Arab Palestinian peoples in Israel as well as a mutual recognition of the rights of both peoples to national self-determination. SIACH sees the main problem facing the state of Israel today as the question of peace. The problem of peace, according to SIACH is the main focal point for organising politically. For SIACH there is 'peace and peace'. There is a peace with Hussein and Sadat etc. and there is a peace with the Palestinians. Clearly the latter is regarded as the true peace. It is recognised that the struggle to achieve this kind of peace involves a more general struggle; in the chauvanistic atmosphere which prevails at the present time it is a struggle against reaction, a struggle against nationalism, a

struggle for the rights of the working class suffering under the particular oppression of a 'war economy', and a struggle to win over the Palestinians to make peace and form a united front against the common enemy, i.e. the oppressing classes.

On the question of Socialism SIACH is less precise. They say they reject capitalism as a form of society, which is based on exploiting man by man and they identify themselves with the peoples' struggles in the Third World for national liberation, progress and social development and are working for a socialist society. They are explicitly anti-stalinist and, in part, this explains a kind of libertarian approach to socialism found in the writings of many SIACH comrades. The over-reaction to stalinism is especially strong in Israel as the confrontation with the consequences of stalinist foreign policy have been especially evident in Israel. Above all, SIACH is increasingly becoming a rallying-point for dissident elements in Israel; the task is to transform dissent into revolutionary action and to build a revolutionary party, an object recognised by Matzpen who have unfortunately been somewhat premature in their organisation and also irresponsible in their methods.

## REPRESSION

The rapid growth of SIACH has worried many figures in the Israeli establishment. Their militancy is becoming "embarrassing"; the degree of repression against SIACH comrades gives cause for alarm. We constantly hear reports of escalating police brutality in dealing with demonstrators; SIACH, Black Panthers, Matzpen etc. What particularly worries the men at the top is the influence of SIACH on the young, especially those about to enter the Army. Frightened at any suggestion of a crack in the facade of national unity at a time of war, the bourgeois press has launched a massive campaign to discredit, suppress and generally harass SIACH. Joining in this unsavoury chorus with great vigour has been the MAPAM press. Mapam is frightened by the influence of SIACH and worried about the damage that SIACH is

doing to their 'respectable' image, (many SIACH members live in MAPAM kibbutzim—Kibbutz Artzi Federation—and many are involved in the MAPAM youth group, Hashomer Hatzair).

## CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

At the present time, SIACH is attempting to organise contacts with Israeli Arabs and these attempts have met some with success especially around Hadera. More generally they have been involved in exposing the true nature of the 'liberal occupation' and, in particular, its effects in Gaza. SIACH is working with the Black Panthers and is active in high schools. In the Hebrew University, SIACH comrades are involved in the establishment of alternative courses and the creation of a 'Free University'.

## THE FUTURE

There is constant talk of a 'split' in SIACH between SIACH Tel Aviv and SIACH Jerusalem, this is misleading as each branch of SIACH is fully autonomous. Certainly there are predominant tendencies in SIACH which have provoked much discussion; at the present time all such discussion is very healthy. SIACH correctly recognises the task of mobilising as many people as possible. SIACH is working with other groups, e.g. Matzpen, Racach, Haolam Hazeh and even MAPAM elements, this too is a welcome sign bearing in mind the weakness of the left in Israel. The central task is now clearly to consolidate the gains that have been made and work towards building both an ideological and organisational unity. This task sounds much easier for comrades in Europe than it is for SIACH members in Israel.

## SOLIDARITY WITH SIACH

David Beer

\*1. A start towards creating a stronger organisational structure was made at the recent SIACH convention in Tel Aviv, July, 1971.

\*2. Full text is to be found in English in 'Shalom Dialogues' 18/19—1970 No. 2 (from IPSAG Publication Service).



## "WHY WE NEED A 'LEFT FRONT' AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT?"

— from 'Kol Ha'am', February 1971; translated for 'Flashpoint' by A. Packter

*We have decided to reprint the following article which originally appeared in the 'MAKI' (non-Moscow branch of the Israel Communist Party) newspaper, because it emphasises the need for a new direction of socialist activities inside Israel. We cannot agree with Comrade Feiler's conclusions (viz MAKI) or pretend to defend the degeneration of his party. A number of good militants remain within MAKI, we feel that they still have a very useful contribution to make to the working class struggle.*

In all the complex external political campaigns in which Israel has been engaged—and in the military campaigns that preceded these—and also in all the INTERNAL campaigns in the areas of economics, wages and democracy, we see again and again one huge CONFORMIST BLOC, made up of the Labour Alignment AND the 'Right' Opposition which agrees with all the actions and failings of the present government—or at least accepts these because there is 'no alternative'. The weakness of the LEFT opposition, on the other hand, is obvious to everyone.

Nevertheless, we all realise that substantial sections of the Workers' Movement do not accept the decisions of the government and the Histadruth leadership in the fields of social policy (for example, the metal workers, nurses, teachers, postmen and others); we also hear criticism of different aspects of the government's foreign policy towards the Arabs in the occupied territories (Gaza). We also know that several Movements, parties and Left groups are active within the Israel community but these activities have not yet led to the CRYSTALLISATION AND CONSOLIDATION of a LEFT OPPOSITION.

The opposite is true; the Left is suffering from grave weakness and further 'atom-

isation' continues to occur. A bitter controversy is raging within the former Mapam majority (whether to join the Labour Party completely—A.P.). Those sections of the former Mapam Left which did leave the party have not crystallised into any specific group but have themselves split up into several different factions while most of this Mapam Left is again active in all the institutions of Mapam and even active in the Alignment.

'Maki' and 'Rakach' continue to exist as separate parties because of the wide political differences between them. Even the ultra-Left MATZPEN has split into three 'micro-groups' while 'HAOLAM HAZEH' also appears to be facing a split (into pro- and anti-Socialist sections).

Here and there, different Left groups demonstrate their existence by bringing out some Manifesto on some day-to-day issue; now and again, this or that group organises some public activity such as a protest-watch but these do not change the overall picture of weakness and fragmentation.

Sporadic partial campaigns and political 'activism' that is not based on the need to change the political system of one's own country can never lead to any permanent consolidation (of a strong Left).

ISRAEL NEEDS A 'LEFT FRONT' SINCE ISRAEL IN FACT NOT ONLY NEEDS A NEW INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICY, ISRAEL NEEDS A NEW SOCIAL SYSTEM.

"Where are the forces that will collaborate in this 'Left Front'?" some will ask and they will never tire of giving the same old answer: INSIDE the Israeli Workers' Movement, INSIDE the Histadruth, INSIDE the Parties of the Alignment. We should not however fall victims to optical illusions; while we should go on searching for groupings developing inside the Labour Party and Align-

ment, we should not overlook the groups that have already developed there. For example, there are the former members of the 'Min Hayesod' group who have since left the Labour Party (Professor Arieli etc.)—surely, they are a REAL LEFT THAT GREW WITHIN THE LABOUR PARTY. Then, while we are waiting for new Left forces to develop within Mapam, we should not overlook the Kibbutz Artzi Youth who have meanwhile organised themselves into Israeli New Left Groups (SIACH)—SURELY, THEY GREW UP IN MAPAM; THEY ARE THE BEST LEFT THAT COULD DEVELOP THERE even if they suffer from various 'Infantile Disorders'.

IF MAKI CAN SUCCEED TO PRESENT A SUITABLE IDEOLOGICAL CHALLENGE AND WILL KNOW HOW TO COMBINE THIS WITH DAY-TO-DAY CLASS AND NATIONAL ACTIVITIES' MILITANT BUT CONSCIENTIOUS, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT MAKI COULD BECOME THE MAIN NUCLEUS (FOCUS) FOR THE CRYSTALLISATION OF A STABLE LEFT FRONT.

What ideological challenge should Maki present to the Left within the Israeli Workers' Movement?

THE CHALLENGE IS TO CREATE A NEW ISRAELI APPROACH, MODERN AND ORIGINAL, THAT WILL BLEND A RENOVATED AND CREATIVE MARXISM WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO STRUGGLED FOR AND BUILT UP THE ISRAELI WORKERS' MOVEMENT.

This APPROACH will not neglect Trade-Union struggles but will not see them as the be-and-end-all of activity; this APPROACH will not neglect defense of the rights of the

neighbouring (Palestine) people but will see this defense as PART of a wider campaign to create (Jewish-Arab) Workers-Solidarity, part of a wider struggle for a new Social Order; this APPROACH will not make the mistake of equating wild street-demonstrations with Revolutionaryism but will plan continuous serious political activities that will SUCCEED IN MOBILISING AND BRINGING CLOSER TO OUR IDEOLOGICAL FRONT large numbers of workers, youth and intelligentsia.

In one word; AN APPROACH THAT WILL BUILD UP THE FORCE THAT WILL PLAY THE CENTRAL ROLE IN CAMPAIGNS TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF ISRAEL POLITICS AND SOCIETY.

Our call for a Left Front, then, is not just a temporary tactical move but a serious challenge. We must not neglect this challenge for the sake of some temporary alliance or day-to-day struggle, however important they may be.

And since there can be no stable ideological consolidation without crystallisation of a joint fundamental approach to the Israeli Left and since there can be no such crystallisation without discussions, debates and exchanges of opinion, let us not forget in these tumultuous times, the dialectical imperative of DIALOGUE and wider discussions (of a theoretical nature A.P.) with those with whom we intend to build an Israel 'Left Front'.

We sincerely extend out our hands to them and our mind is open for this vital and liberating Dialogue.

#### ISRAEL AND IRELAND (2)

Recent reports from Ireland concerning the activities of the I.R.A. note that their 'text book' of guerilla warfare is a collection of notes by one Menalhem Begin, former Commander of the Irgun Zvn Leumi in British occupied Palestine. In the 1930's when the Irgun were fighting the British their basis texts, believe it or not, were works by I.R.A. leaders gained from their experience in fighting British imperialism following the Easter Rising and during the thirties. The similarity ends here, or . . . does it, beware I.R.A.!

# FLASHPOINTS - FLASHPOINTS - FLASHPOINTS - F

## DAYAN TAKES ALL . . .

On 20th August the Herald Tribune in Paris reported that Defense Minister of Israel Moshe Dayan was ready for Israel to take "unilateral and immediate" measures to completely take over occupied Arab territory if the Arabs were continually unwilling to make peace. His rationale: "A peace agreement is of supreme importance to us, but if the Arabs refuse to make peace, we cannot stand still. If we are denied their co-operation let us act on our own".

## CHINESE READY FOR TALKS WITH ISRAEL!

After a meeting with Eli Ben-Gal (the very pushy MAPAM representative in France)—it is rumoured that the Peoples Republic of China are thinking of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. A brief glance at the figures of Chinese spending in the Middle East (see Flashpoint No. 4) will quickly show how absurd this notion is. In 1967 China gave Syria, Algeria, Yemen and the U.A.R. \$212 million in loans, 26% of all Chinese overseas aid!

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA—1968—A ZIONIST PLOT!

A recent analysis of the reasons why the Soviet Unions fraternal assistance was required in 1968 has recently been made by the Czech C.P. They say that "Forces which committed themselves from the positions of Zionism were of considerable influence in the struggle against Socialism in Czechoslovakia".

## THE ISRAEL AND PALESTINE CONFLICT AND THE N.U.S.

At the last Conference of the National Union of Students (U.K.) a successful attempt was made to stifle discussion on the subject of the Israel-Palestine Conflict. 'Free Palestine' (the paper the reactionary Arab League keeps going) reported, with its usual disdain, for embarrassing facts, that 'pro-Zionist pressure on the Executive' (May 1971 issue) had pre-

vented this discussion from taking place. Somehow they managed to ignore the fact that it was IPSAG comrades who were making great efforts to give the Palestinian speaker an opportunity to air his views. Another motion on this question is being supported by well known 'Zionists'; no doubt 'Free Palestine' will still find a way of lying itself out of this embarrassing situation. The truth being that we Zionists have nothing to hide, we want the debate to take place. Incidentally this same issue of 'Free Palestine' published a fake letter supposedly coming from the 'Press Officer' of Young Herut—a right wing 'Zionist' organisation—surely they should at least try and debate with real Zionists!!

## BEGIN GO HOME

In May, Menachem Begin leader of the Herut Party in Israel was due to visit England, a co-ordinating committee of Socialist Zionists was instantly formed to protest and demonstrate against his visit. It is rumoured that he will again try and enter the country—Beware Begin!! You're reception committee awaits!

Gidon Ben-David



(By arrangement with 'Ma'ariv')

# the bear, the the SUEZ C



Once there was a bear who collected people and stuffed them into a great grey sack... and he wore a hammer and sickle to show that he was a friend to the workers



And the bear said that anyone in the sack could leave if they wanted... but when they tried... the bear just squashed them



Something  
bear lo  
fierce



...that he had stolen from the Indians and the Mexicans... and he built a great nation... with the help of slaves and oppressed and exploited immigrants



And when the state of Israel was re-established, the eagle rushed to recognize it... but he slapped on an arms embargo at the same time... and got ready to mourn the loss of the brave little democracy.



Now the Israelis and the Egyptians found themselves in an insane conflict, facing each other across the Suez Canal!



And the bear moved in to "help" the Egyptians with great engines of destruction... and he opened the mouth of his sack



And the ea  
his cajoling  
tissue pap  
and his b



eagle and  
 cana by Jerry Kirschen.



et times the  
r looked  
rce

And sometimes the bear looked silly, but it was always the same bear.

There was, at the same time, an eagle—proud, strong, and free—who lived in a beautiful land...



in the years that  
the eagle wept  
tears for the  
Germans, the Czechs,  
Hungarians, and  
Poles...

He did nothing to help them... but he did slaughter thousands of Asians to save them from KKKOMUNISM

And he made many  
false promises  
to the Israelis



the eagle began  
flying and his.  
Paper promises  
is betrayals

SEVERAL POINTS FOR ARABS AND ISRAELIS TO KEEP IN MIND:

① BEARS AND EAGLES READILY ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO PARTIES BUT ARE OFTEN RELUCTANT TO LEAVE.

② NEIGHBORHOOD DISPUTES ARE BEST SETTLED WITHOUT THE "ASSISTANCE" OF LARGE HUNGRY BEASTS.

## THE FUTURE OF SOCIALIST ZIONISM

Comrades;

I would like to contribute some comments to the discussion on 'Socialist Zionism' initiated by Dany Diner in the recent issue of 'Flashpoint' (4).

For over six years—until I resigned from Mapam (GB) last year—I continuously proposed such a reassessment of the tasks of Socialist Zionists in the Golah; so, I welcome very much the recent articles by Gabi Moked ('Search' 1) and by Dany Diner.

The recent article by Steve Vines on 'The future of the Kibbutz' (Flashpoint 3) was also an extremely valuable contribution to this reassessment.

### 'SOCIALIST' ZIONISM OR 'ZIONIST' SOCIALISM FOR THE GOLAH?\*

I don't think that we should completely negate work in the English Zionist Federation. English Zionist Socialists cannot be the Zionist section of some mythical International Working-Class Movement, since this does not yet exist. We still live in the epoch of mass Social-Democratic parties, loyally associating with their own national bourgeoisie; the 'Third' Internationals are breaking up and several 'Fourth' Internationals are on the scene, apart from several independent Marxist-Leninist groups and many dissident Communist Parties.

A Socialist society in West Asia will in fact come into existence after the establishment of Socialist regimes in Israel and other separate nation-States in the area. So, in the Golah, Zionist Socialists have first to be Socialist Zionists, that is, the 'partners' of the revolutionary Socialist Party of the Israeli working-class (still mainly Jewish). We should also be the consistent Marxist-Leninist section of the National Liberation Movement of the Jewish people in the Golah, the local Zionist Federations.

\*Golah—is the Hebrew word meaning: 'Diaspora'.

However, in this present period, the majority of Jewish Revolutionary Socialists, who support Israeli self-determination, by no means consider themselves full Zionists. For this practical reason, therefore, I do agree with Gabi M. and Steve Vines that the best organisation for this country would be that proposed by the I.P.S.A.G. Conference, that is, not affiliated to the Z.F.

On the other hand, I suggest that I.P.S.A.G. might affiliate to the British Section of the 'World Jewish Congress' and take an active part—even with Social Democratic and bourgeois groups—in certain important Golah activities, in particular, campaigns against anti-Semitism and for Jewish national and cultural rights in Western AND Eastern Europe.

Dany Diner, did however, mention one extremely important new perspective. There exists the possibility, within the coming decade, that the Israeli working-class may consist of a very high proportion of Arab workers—indeed, the Arabs may become the overall majority of unskilled and semi-skilled sections of the Israeli proletariat. I would then agree, that we would have to reassess our association with other Zionist groups in the Golah, even more radically.

Best Regards  
Avraham Packter

Avraham Packter was a founder member of English Mapam and later of Kibbutz Yasur; for many years, a member of the Executive of Mapam (GB).

He resigned from this party in February 1970 in principled opposition to Mapam (Israel)'s Alignment with Social Democracy; and is now National Secretary of 'Progressives for Peace in the Middle East (GB)'.

N.B. We regret that due to pressure of space it has been necessary to edit this contribution, which continues with a lucid assessment of the various Left Zionist, Left Israeli and Left Palestinian Groups which are in existence.

## AN ISRAELI'S RESPONSE

Dear Friend,

I have just gone through the material published by the ISRAEL-PALESTINE COMMITTEES, which you have sent me. I am with IPSAG. I am for IPSAG, if not of it. But I would like to make a few points, which struck me in your—and your associate organisations'—pamphlets.

It seems to me that ISPAG's point of departure is the right one: the right of both peoples, Arab-Palestinians and Jews-Israelis to live in that land, and to enjoy their own auto-determined independence, in a spirit of humanity and socialism. It also seems to me that starting from that point ISPAG has taken the wrong train, which is taking it, and Socialist Jews throughout the world, in the wrong direction, towards a dreadful destination.

You define yourselves as Socialists, and at times as Revolutionaries. A revolutionary individual fights against *his own* set-up, tries to put his own house in order. Not somebody else's. Reading your stuff one finds it heavily loaded in favour of those opinions, men and formations in Israel who fight—and they *do* fight—for co-existence and understanding with the Palestinians. This, in itself, is apologetic. You try to show the good, not to fight the bad in our camp. This is dangerous, in the end—self-defeating.

If you want to try and make a revolution in the Jewish Establishment throughout the world, to rally Jewish youth to the flag of socialist renewal, inside Israel and inside Judaism abroad—fine. But to do so you have to be uncompromising towards the negative values you are fighting: the Jewish Establishment, and its closest link, the Israeli Establishment. It is not by pinpointing the very considerable chauvinism of the Arab-Palestinian movement of national liberation that you will be able to achieve this.

Another point: you and I, both, are for the rights of Jews and Arabs in that country, in Israel-Palestine. But you are for a Jewish

State, as the Socialist-Nationalists of Messrs. Habash and Hawatmeh are for an Arab Palestine. I am against a Jewish State, because a Jewish *state* is, and must become, racist. So must an Arab state, and that is why I am against 'Arab Palestine'. I believe in Palestinian independence, and in Israeli independence. I know that at this particular point of history, these are Jewish and Arab entities. But I do NOT believe our fight, the fight for renewal and change, is one for the consolidation of these racist facts, concepts and entities. Our fight, if we wish to be Socialist, Humanist, Revolutionary or what not—must be, first, for the acknowledgement of individual and national fights of these two entities; and, second, for their conversion in secular, non-Jewish and non-Arab entities, able to fuse, very gradually, into a single entity. Any other solution is one-sided, i.e., racist, chauvinist, pan-Arab or Zionist. Which brings us to my third point: your definition of Zionist-Socialist. I am not going to discuss here with Ber Borochov, peace to his soul. The facts have done so, and defeated him. The facts are asymmetrical, even if the fight for the rights of both peoples is not. The facts are that at the beginning of the century the Jews were less



Ber Borochov

Statue of Borochoy at  
kibbutz Mishmar Hanegev  
(formerly kibbutz Borochoy).  
(Photo: Harry Borochoy)



than ten per cent in Palestine; today they are a majority. The facts are that Israel's borders have become larger and larger, all in the name of Zionism, Jewish independence and the Ingathering of the Exiles. The facts are that although Palestinians kill most unmercifully men, women and children, in the framework of their non-discriminating fight for Independence, it is Israel, not Palestine, which keeps occupied territories, with all that this entails. The facts are that pressure from the neo-Feudal and Socialist-Totalitarian Arab countries, money from Judaism and arms from the US today create a national-syndicalist society in Israel which is not very far, *economically*, from Mussolini's Fascism.

Now, you as a young Jew can and must define yourself in context to Israel. You must relate to Israel, or as you told me: either to be a Socialist in whatever country you grow up, or go to Israel to fight there for Socialism. Going there means *Alyah*, emigration, and makes you, *ipso facto*, a Zionist, in your own mind.

Fair enough. But that refers to your feelings of identification with an entity, which I call Israel, and you call Zionism. I, being an Israel Jew, one who lives and fights, up to

now there, do not see, anymore, the necessity of a link between what were my origins, Judaism abroad. You, living here and feeling a Jew, wish to become an Israeli. The complexity of this interplay between Socialist Israelis and Diaspora Jews creates a new version of very old Jewish complexes. This brings about, precisely, the things I complain about: that you underscore the good (in our terms) in Israel and the bad (in humanitarian terms) in the Palestinian camp. I, wishing first of all to put my own home in order, do the exact opposite.

I can even understand that you Socialist Jews (I like this better, somehow, than Socialist Zionists. It sounds less apologetic in my ears) try to use a parlance which will go over well with the youth organised in Zionist Youth Movements, here and in other countries, youth being cut off from Bourgeois English society and not wishing to see the Kibbutz as its goal. But consider what you do: by offering Borochoy's outdated and refuted teachings as a solution, you create *beforehand* a link between them and the MAPAM party, part and parcel of the Israeli Establishment, the people behind about half of the settlements in occupied territories and along the borders, those who



took the lands of Kafr Baram and so many other destroyed Palestinian villages, whose villagers still live in Israel. You give these youths an alibi for Zionism—not your kind of Zionism, the Zionist Establishment kind of oppressive Zionism.

This happens, among other reasons, because we have not yet reached the point, or should I say the flashpoint?—where a Jewish revolutionary movement appears, abroad (and in Israel). You can, and should, endeavour to do this, to create one. To do precisely what MATZPEN—with all its good sides—does not want to do: work among the Jews, and link your work with that of Palestinians abroad. Only thus will you be able, one day, to have in Israel a revolutionary socialist vanguard, albeit an imported one. But then, are not the origins of most Israelis—abroad?

If you will not do this, you will find that all your Revolutionaries, all your firebrand Socialist-Zionists will become Reactionary Zionists, shortly upon their arrival in Israel, or their becoming part of the Establishment abroad. In Israel, they will be absorbed by society, 'purified' by three years in the army, brain-washed by necessity and environment, enticed by a slice of the flourishing economy. They are, after all, Anglo-Saxon

Jews, not Oriental Jews nor Arabs who come from the territories to do the dirty work. They will get plums, not lemons.

There are but two ways of being an Israeli-Jew or a Jewish-Israeli-to-be with a conscience—you can live over there, and go out to diffuse your ideas, or train abroad and go home—to my home, not yours—to change its essence. In both cases you are rather less—or more—than a Zionist. In both cases you have to discard not only the injustices of Zionism but also the prejudices of a Jewish home and of Zionist indoctrination.

In friendship,  
Maxim Ghilan

\*refers to a conversation with the Editor.

*Maxim GHILAN, is an Israeli writer and journalist born in France. Politically active in Israel's New Left, he was Assistant Editor in Chief of HOALAM HAZEH weekly, and editor of Israel's only free tribune AHERET ("Otherwise") until it closed down. A co-editor of ISRAEL & PALESTINE, his book on the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation appears this autumn in the U.K.*

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## CORRECTION

Dear Comrades,

In Flashpoint No. 4 you headed my article "The necessity and nature of our struggle" as "A view from Young Mapam". It was not a view taken officially by Young Mapam or necessarily by any other member.

The article was an attempt to show that the dilemma of much of Jewish youth could and should be resolved by Marxist-Zionism and the discrediting of stereotyped attitudes. As such, the phrase "smash the Fedayeen" which I used, was used in the context of opposing those who think that there can be no such thing as a valid socialist Jewish national liberation movement (and those with bourgeois ideals who give total support to the Fedayeen). It should therefore be

pointed out that Young Mapam is of course interested in a socialist guerilla movement—which your reply would suggest we weren't.

Finally, I must repeat to you that *Young Mapam* in England has policies (as regards SIAH etc.) which are independent of British Mapam—and that we are of course totally independent as regards our policies from the actual party MAPAM in Israel. This mistake was made not only in the reply to my article—but in the report of the IPSAG conference on Page 9 (there was actually only one member of MAPAM—Israel present at the conference).

Robert Davis

## REPLY

*I find it very difficult to answer many of your criticisms because on the whole I think that your comments about our previous activities are largely correct. Nevertheless on one point in particular I should strongly like to challenge your assumptions. You describe the theories of Borochoy as 'outdated and refuted', this description reminds me strongly of the accusations that liberals make against Marx and marxism i.e. that Marxism was probably relevant during the period of Marx's life but has now become redundant. Borochoy, like Marx did not succeed in producing a dogma, but, by dialectical analysis firmly tied to a materialistic base was able to provide an essential analysis of the Jewish situation which led him to Zionist conclusions, like Marxism, Borochoyism is a continuing dynamic. Working from a basic analysis we are able to adapt this theory to our changing conditions. For me the basic element in Borochoyism, which no changed situation can alter, is the right to struggle without killing any part of myself. Are we, the Jewish people, to be passive spectators in the determination of our fate or are we to demand an active role. A role which recognises the abnormal condition of the Jewish people today and permits us to participate in the wider struggle against capitalism (with which our fate is irrevocably linked). By ignoring the Jewish question i.e. by assuming the possibility of assimilation, the problem does not disappear. It, on the contrary becomes more challenging. Every oppressed people has the right to fight for the lifting of that oppression, for the Jewish*

*people, an oppressed people in an abnormal situation, this entails a territorialistic solution and a Zionist struggle. The Zionist struggle refers to the specific attempts of the Jewish people to break out of the syndrome of exile, persecution, socio-economic abnormality and national 'self-helplessness', a position where our fate is being decided by others. I despise those socialist comrades who tell me that (as if by some miracle!) the Jewish problem will 'disappear' with the coming of Socialism. No one has the right to tell us that they will solve our problem for us—would they dare to say this to the rising class conscious masses of the oppressed black people, I wonder? We demand a solution within the solution and we demand the right to participate in its making.*

*For this reason, if for no other, I reserve my right to be described as a Zionist. We shall not be dissuaded by the existence of those like MAPAM who claim to be following in the tradition of Borochoy, anymore than Socialists are perturbed by the existence of the spurious 'Socialist International' claiming to represent a continuation of the First International established by Marx.*

*More than anything else our Zionism gives us the determination to fight for Socialism in the Jewish state, to transcend the natural boundaries of that State and build a multinational society, the only society in which the Jewish people will finally be liberated.*

Stephen Vines



## THE COMPASS POINTS TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE JEWISH TRAGEDY

Mobilisation manouevours as a left wing preoccupation may be applauded unreservedly except where the technique increasingly transgresses elements of clarity. At this juncture its function is invalidated and a reappraisal imminent.

The Palestine problem provides a striking case in question, for any real analysis, having resort to dialectical method must surely come to the conclusion that strategically, the Left is doing itself an injustice. The oversimplification, and crassly non-ideological nature of PSC<sup>(a)</sup> and other such groups preclude a true understanding of the problem.

Their immediate reality is situated only at the level of the already overflowing cauldron of Jewish and Middle Eastern tragedy.

The Jewish problem was inaugurated at birth, and manifests itself healthily (as the Palestinians would testify) today. As a case of religious discrimination, or clerical self-assertion (as exhibited in Ulster for example) it has hardly ever existed, except in the subjectivity of the exploited and brutally mis-directed masses. Its existence, moreover, is sited amidst the structural components of neo-capitalism, eradicable, only through revolutionary transformation.<sup>1</sup> Assimilation



*Hostile reaction to Matzpen demonstration—Tel Aviv 1968.*

has partially diluted the observable phenomenon, but, because of Jewish existential inertia, and because of recurrent antisemitism the skeleton of the Jewish Tragedy remains intact. Given this much, and taking other factors into account, a Zionist project of some description, was an inevitable sublimite of 19th and 20th century evolution.

### A CHOICE OF TRIUMPHS!!

Only two triumphs could have put an end to the Jewish tragedy:—2000 years of fascistic genocide, or more recently the potency of the socialist movement. Up till now, where socialism has manifested its power it has been powerful enough only to evoke a Nazi response, or to dissolve before bankrupt Stalinist bureaucracies . . . and both, to their credits, have achieved much, to reinforce the Jewish Dilemma.

History has slammed the Jewish people time and time again; and it was hardly surprising that the Zionist venture should have crystallised its foremost anachronism, in the form of a mono-national state. In 1948, the forces struggling for binationalism predicted the dilemma posed by partition: and the vindication provided by history, for the time being at least, blazes conspicuously amongst the long list of Jewish anomalies.

This is not to say, however, that the end for which progressive forces were then struggling remains compatible with the existing situation, concrete strategy of one era becomes sterile and utopian a few years later. It is to the discredit of the undoubtedly committed Marxist group Matzpen,<sup>\*(b)</sup> that their empirical consistency of 10 years, should serve to castrate them from any useful activity in the progressive sector.

### MATZPEN—THE SELF-STERILIZATION MERCHANTS

For Matzpen and its various counterparts, West Asian socialism, becomes contingent upon Jewish self-sterilization (in the form of dezionisation)<sup>2</sup> and consequently its much publicised 'dialogue' with democratic Palestinian elements, becomes increasingly hypothetical. It is a pity that comrades of Matzpen do not realise the crime they com-

mit, how middle eastern socialism cannot wait 50 years, and how Lenin, precisely to avoid such setbacks, posited his thesis on the self determination of nations.

Indeed, it is ironical that the spectre of Jewish tragedy, after haunting Europe for centuries, should today come to roost on the Matzpen<sup>2</sup> compass—and in so doing deflect the true pointer. At the suitable time and place dejudification is a personal concern; dezionisation, a communal matter.

With the strangulation of the Palestinian 'Revolution', almost a fait accompli, the emergence of a new consciousness on both sides must be the focal point of receptive socialist concern. Both complementarity and clear dialectical foresight will mould the vanguard of a long overdue, effective socialist movement in the Middle East. Until recently history has confined embryonic elements to a vociferous complementarity: lack of insight and Jordanian artillery cut short a mere adolescent politic.

So crucial for Asian socialism is the Palestine Arena, that such tragedies must be liquidated to avoid an identical second round and another costly regurgitation. The ultra-internationalism of the Matzpen group and the revolutionary impotence of the Palestinian revolution are expensive luxuries—heroism notwithstanding.

In Israel there is optimism with the emergence of Siach.<sup>3</sup>

The Palestinian revolution is in a state of decay, their true future is tied to ours. Revolutionary socialism is our only joint solution.

Allen Abramson  
IPSAG Liverpool

\*(a) Palestine Solidarity Campaign

\*(b) The word 'Matspen' in Hebrew means 'Compass'—this is the name of the magazine of the Israel Socialist Organisation: commonly called Matspen as a convenient abbreviation.



## APPENDIX

1. See Flashpoint 2—on Borochoy  
The JEWISH QUESTION—Abraham Leon  
Non-Jewish Jew—Isaac Deutscher  
Antisemite and Jew—J.P. Sartre.
2. NEW LEFT REVIEW 65.  
... the absence of revolutionary politics that  
compelled a group of members to leave MAKI in  
1962 and to form the Israeli SOCIALIST Organ-  
isation, better known as Matzpen. The Matzpen

group accepted the MAKI positions on the right of  
the Palestinian people as well as the Israeli people  
to self determination . . . . It considers the over-  
throw of Zionism as the first task confronting  
revolutionaries in Israel. At the same time it  
believes that Israeli society, unlike white society in  
S. Africa may be revolutionized from within  
provided that such a development is subordinated  
to revolutionary developments in the Arab World.

3. See previous issue of Flashpoint for an  
acquaintance of the SIACH group.

## RADICAL URBAN COMMUNE . . . .

During August a meeting of radical  
Zionists from throughout the world  
took place at Kibbutz Gezer. Possibly  
the most important matter discussed  
was the establishment of an Urban  
Kibbutz (or commune) which would  
be a centre for socialist activists in  
Israel. The idea is not new, comrades  
from both North America and Europe  
have been working on various projects  
for some time.

As a first step towards setting up the  
Commune it has been decided to begin  
a revolutionary newspaper. The journal  
is intended both as an information  
media and a basis for organising to-  
wards political goals. A fully collective  
printing centre will be established to  
print the paper and serve the needs of  
all progressive elements in Israel. Also  
an "office" as a physical centre of  
radical contacts would evolve from  
here. From this basis it is hoped that  
the commune would grow, the inten-  
tion is not to create a decadent inward

looking body of individuals "doing  
their own thing" but a viable political  
organisation which would work with  
different sectors of the Israeli popu-  
lation towards the building of a  
socialist society.

The Commune desperately needs two  
things at the present time:

- (a) MONEY—a vast amount (in the  
region of \$30,000 to begin with)
- (b) MANPOWER—in the form of  
contributions to the journal and  
involvement of comrades in, or going  
to Israel.

THE ADDRESS OF THE COM-  
MUNICATIONS CENTRE IS:

Keren Kommuna,  
c/o Manheimer,  
Ha Rav Berlin 35,  
Jerusalem,  
Israel.

# THE 'ZIONIST FEDERATION' IS 'DEAD' ... LONG LIVE ZIONISM!

*Much of this article will not surprise readers of FLASHPOINT who have had truck with the Zionist establishment in this country, so I beg their indulgence for now, and ask these readers to bear with me since they will eventually be asked to provide their own answer in terms of ACTION—action against this same establishment.*

It is all too obvious that Zionist bodies in this country—as in most others, including Israel—are both elitist and bourgeois in their theories, outlook, approach, membership and actions, which are resoundingly few and far between, a point to which I shall return later. This is hardly surprising, in that it reflects the socio-economic composition of the Jewish community in this country. This in no way, however, justifies its use of static, conservative policies at both ends of its narrow political "spectrum"; little or no work is done by it—in a positive sense, towards mobilising the youth and the older generation towards even a Utopian Socialist viewpoint in connection to the State of Israel. Bodies such as the Zionist Federation (ZF) (and its other constituent parties), the Joint Palestine Appeal and other "charity" groups, the Jewish Agency and so on, perpetuate ideals of bourgeois conformity and solidarity that, in practice, can be unequivocally termed anti-democratic (even in social-democratic terms), anti-Zionist (in a Borochovian sense—the only possible one, to my mind), anti-populist and counter-productive towards any politically satisfactory solutions in the State of Israel.

## Z.F.C. . . . A FIX.

Bodies such as the Zionist Federation are notably infamous for their anti-activist attitude and refusal to reform even in a mild, social-democratic sense. The most striking examples of this were last provided over 25 months ago, at the Annual Conferences of the Zionist Federation, whose business largely consisted of mutual congratulation,

reports of petty charities and schools, election-fixing and a concerted attempt by the elite to stop the mildly liberal motions put forward by a few youth representatives. Guillotine measures, "constitutional" moves and the usual sickening manoeuvres of the elitist bureaucrats made this attempt more or less successful.

## FROM THE INSIDE . . .

Furthermore, this and the other bodies already mentioned are riddled with petty rivalries and dissensions that tend to negate any work that might happen to get done. I am aware of this through personal experience, since I was elected a member of the Executive Committee at the ZF. I have attended only one meeting, this was a prime example of backbiting, backscratching and other animal activities. Undoubtedly however, the elite closes ranks when faced with a crisis or calamity—a juicy sample of hypocrisy was provided by the death of the lamented Lavy Bakstansky, ex-General Secretary for numerous years to the ZF, a bureaucrat of the first order—as those of you who read the establishment Jewish press might have noted, the unbearably saddened obituaries and testimonials, written by Lavy's numerous rivals and enemies. Much the same spectacle greeted Miller's death many months ago.

It goes without saying that such a body has no possibilities regarding the proletarianisation of Israel, and is downright reactionary over matters such as the occupied territories, religion and state, underprivileged immigrants, Palestinians, refugees etc. etc. Its "Left-Wing" membership is conspicuously cold footed, forming laugh-raising (and fundraising) groups such as Labour Friends of Israel—patronised by gentlemen such as Gerald Kaufman and his ilk—Poalei Zion (Workers for Zion—as close to workers as the House of Lords). Only Mapam holds out

vague possibilities of progressive change, but have been systematically excluded by the "democratic" process and is depressingly opportunist . . . which leads us to ask very seriously—can IPSAG fit into this charade?

#### CAN IPSAG FIT INTO THIS CHARADE?

My reply is that it both should and inevitably must, for several reasons. Let us consider the present role of IPSAG—a firm Marxist-Borochovian stand, which leads to strong ideological commitments regarding the State of Israel, particularly critical international events, and general events in West Asia. Ultimately, my own interpretation is that a commitment must exist by IPSAG members and sympathisers to go and work in the cockpit of struggle itself—Israel/Palestine, which is the centre of our prime concern—unlike the bourgeois elements described, who are increasingly accused of armchair (armchair = idleness = reactionary) Zionism. Whereas national liberation in their terms, is a progressive embourgeoisement and reinforcement of a part-reactionary State of Israel, it cannot be this for us.—In a sense, our struggle can only really begin when we are there—our work in exile is at best a secondhand rose and at worst dull polemics with a danger of eventual impotence.

#### ACTION

IPSAG's fourth initial can be fulfilled here, not only in Israel. I trust that *action* is not to be feared; expression of solidarity with international socialism, and Borochovian Zionism, is all very beautiful, but it's not enough. IPSAG could with deceptive ease remain the perennial Vestal Virgin—aware of some form of truth but afraid to communicate it, since this means intercourse. Action would shake the old men and women, the bankrupt committees and sub-committees, the moribund charities—more important, it would attract new blood, those many students and young people who sublimate

national problems in acid—in Marxist splinter groups—in joints, festivals, records, tapes—in dropping away—finding nothing but fear and loneliness. This is where we can provide, not as saviours, not as establishment, not as absolutists, but as people secure in our own beliefs, answering ultimate questions of race, politics and taking progressive attitudes as best we can. There are also really dangerous bastards, such as HERUT and other neo-fascist groups who have learnt the values of action from their end of the line, and are growing strong on it . . . but I am slipping off into solutions and tactics, something I feel I cannot adequately propose until a true dialogue has been established concerning the following:

- (a) action and the Zionist establishment in Britain.
- (b) link-ups etc. once in Israel—and later action.
- (c) link-ups with socialist groups in Britain.

Such a dialogue cannot fail to be productive if it is carried out in a sincere and positive fashion. It *cannot* be allowed to transform itself into a vehicle for busybodies and permanent politicians, since this would defeat its own purpose, and also negate the previous point made regarding the need for involvement *within* Israel. By inference, this means the dismantling of the present Federation, or, more realistically in the short-term, the creation of an alternative organisation more representative of our own, and other groups' aspirations.

Dave Allard

*Dave Allard was elected as a provincial executive committee member of the Zionist Federation in April 1970 when a "youth" ticket was presented to Conference.*

**NEXT ISSUE: SPECIAL FEATURE—  
NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR THE  
PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION**

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