

JEW
and the
NATIONAL
QUESTION

by
HYMAN LEVY

(Revised American Edition)

NEW YORK
Cameron Associates

1958

"Jews and the National Question", By Hyman Levy, 1958

Box 3, Folder 122

American Left Ephemera Collection, 1894-2008, AIS.2007.11, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction to the American Edition	5
Preface	15
Jews and the National Question	23
Appendix — A Critique by R. Palme Dutt	90

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Introduction to the American Edition

When this small book was published in Britain a few months ago, it was bitterly attacked, for what to me were wrong reasons, by some critics with whom I have generally agreed in the past. Again it was hailed as a masterpiece, for equally false reasons, by others with whom I have generally been at political variance. It is natural that I should be much more concerned personally with the criticisms of those with whom I have been for many years in political harmony, and the reader who is interested will find these given in the Appendix, where the comprehensive and official criticism by Mr. R. P. Dutt, which appeared in "World News," is reproduced in full. I am glad to be able to do this through the courtesy of the publisher because it provides an opportunity of examining the points made, in a quiet objective spirit, devoid of acrimonious polemics. Only in such an atmosphere can the truth be approached.

The reader will see that, in the main, four distinct accusations were directed at me. I detail these in succession, coupled in each case with a discussion, which, if followed at this stage, will the better enable the argument of the book itself to be followed.

i) Certain of my facts are wrong.

To a scientific man this could be a serious charge, if the false data have in any way vitiated the conclusions arrived at. Let us see. I stated for example that there were now no longer any Jews on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in sharp contrast to what had been the case in the early days of the Revolution, and for many years after that.

I have to admit at once that I was wrong on this point.

I understand that actually there are still two Jews who can be regarded as being on that body. One is not actually a full member, but a Candidate Member who is on the list of replacements for any full members who drop out. The other is Mitin, who at one time was Editor of a Cominform journal, *For a Lasting Peace*. He it was who wrote a very sharp attack on the Jewish doctors who were involved in the so-called Doctor's Conspiracy, which fell apart after Stalin's death, when it was admitted that the whole affair was actually a conspiracy against the doctors themselves, and not one by the doctors against leading political figures, as had been alleged. Mitin, in his diatribe, accused the Jewish doctors involved of being Zionist Imperialist agents. I have not seen any equally public announcement of regret by him admitting that his facts were wrong. Instead of being discredited by this attack before any trial took place, he is now a member of the Central Committee. However, it is the case that my statement was wrong on a point of fact.

In this, the American Edition, I have corrected any such factual misstatements where they have been pointed out to me, and where it was possible to obtain verification. This has not always been easy. Let me illustrate in relation to this same doctors' affair. In the British Edition I stated that *most* of the doctors — thirteen in all — were Jews. I had the impression that nine of the thirteen were Jews but I was not certain so I simply said "most." In a review of this book in the British *Daily Worker* (reproduced in the American *Daily Worker*) B. Ramelson, a full-time official of the British Communist Party, insisted that my word "most" was false, because there were only five Jews among them. On the other hand I find that Mitin, the member of the Central Committee already referred to, in his accusation prior to the dropping of the whole case, prior to the exposure that the whole thing was a frame-up, asserted that nine of the accused doctors were Zionist Imperialist spies and agents. Whom then am I to believe — Ramelson or Mitin? I personally find it impossible to decide.

But there is an interesting piece of arithmetic in all this that does throw some light on the actual problem with which this is all concerned. If we were to select a fair sample of 13 Soviet doctors, how many Jews would we expect to find among them? If the answer is anywhere near 9 then of course the frame-up was merely one against doctors as such; but if it should turn out that nothing like this number of Jewish doctors is to be expected, then the sample would not be a random one, but one with an anti-Jewish bias. I do not propose to detail the calculation here but anyone with an elementary knowledge of the theory of probability can easily verify that the odds I give here are correct. The Jewish population of the Soviet Union is about 1% of the total. The probability of a given doctor being a Jew would therefore be 1 in a 100. Let us make the position 10 times worse, by assuming that among the Jewish population individuals become doctors ten times more frequently, relatively speaking, than among non-Jews. Thus on this basis the probability of a given doctor being a Jew would be 1 in 10. What is the probability, we ask, that of 13 doctors *chosen at random*, 9 of them will be Jews? I find that the odds are 2 million to 1 against this happening. And even if Ramelson's figure of 5 Jewish doctors among the 13 is accepted, the odds against that occurring at random are 200 to 1. If, therefore, the view be accepted that the whole affair was a frame-up, and we seem to have no option but to accept this, any statistician will add that it looks very much like an anti-Jewish frame-up.

It is in my judgment a great pity that this matter was flogged up to the extent it has. Originally I mentioned the case merely incidentally in connection with a general argument that because of the policy of the Israeli Government in the Middle East, and because of the sympathy which Soviet Jews probably feel for their fellow Jews there, it could conceivably be the case that the Soviet authorities might consider their own Jews at this stage rather unreliable politically. The reader will therefore

realise that my case does not rest significantly on the data challenged by R. P. Dutt and by B. Ramelson, and that indeed further examination of the data, if anything, tends to underline my point. However facts are facts, and I must accept Mr. Mitin as a Jew who is still on the Central Committee.

- ii) The next charge against me is that I attach the word "Marxist" to my analysis, but I refrain from giving any clear exposition of the views of Marx, Lenin, and Kautsky on this matter — at least during the period when the last-named, Kautsky, was still "kosher." This again is true. My reasons are, however, quite simple. Except in so far as I traced a little of the past history of the Jews among the nations of the world, in order to bring out the extent, if any, to which relics of nationalist feeling still persist, I was primarily concerned with the contemporary situation. The modern State of Israel did not exist during the lifetimes of Marx, Lenin, and Kautsky, although the early Zionist Movement, and the beginnings of its willingness to build up a "Jewish Home" in Palestine under the protective wing of an Imperialist power, certainly did. Rightly or wrongly I regard the coming into being of an Israeli Nation in the Middle East as a phenomenon of the post-World War II period, and none of these leading minds lived through that devastating epoch. Every Jew knows that the tenuous existence of Israel represents a critical situation in World Jewry. The Jews are an international people, each with his local loyalty to the State in which his home is. The Jews as a people do not regard Israel as their home, but they are nevertheless keenly aware that a nation has come to birth of which they are not a part, but in which they are very interested. Any Marxist who ignores this fact in his assessment of the problem denies the scientific basis of his outlook. Now it is one of the major contentions of this book that the considerable proportion of the Jewish people which lives in the Soviet Union is not a nation there, or a national minority, but an *international minority*. In this way they

are unique among the peoples of the Soviet Union. The problem of how to *develop* such a distributed people in a Socialist environment was not envisaged anywhere by Marx, Lenin, or Kautsky. To me the evoking of the cultural potentialities of a people — even a people as distributed and yet as linked together as are the Jews in the Soviet Union — is a problem of especial Socialist interest. I cannot find anywhere in the writings of these undoubtedly deep thinkers anything to suggest the possibility that a Socialist State, instead of cultivating and enhancing their undoubted cultural activities, would imprison and bring to death their leading cultural Jewish workers, their writers and poets, as undoubtedly was done during the latter years of Stalin's life. I am not content to call such things "miscarriages of justice" whether they occurred to Jews or to non-Jews, and then to dismiss the subject. That I call a denial of Marxism. I am a Socialist and I must understand how such things could come to pass — and on what theory they came to pass — in a Socialist country. All these matters have taken place during contemporary history after the death of Marx, Lenin, and Kautsky. Because their writings throw no special light on these matters I consider that what they have written on the Jewish Question belongs to an earlier phase, and has very much diminished importance today.

I may be wrong, but I claim that I am still entitled to have my case considered on its merits as a discussion of the problem of Modern Jewry. If it is considered that in taking this stand I automatically forfeit the claim to consider myself a Marxist, so let it be. I can state only what appears to me to be a correct judgment of the situation. Labels are of no importance whatsoever.

- iii) The next charge is that in this book I show myself to be an apologist for Zionism.

This allegation is easily met. All that the reader requires to do is to consider carefully what I have said on this matter. It happens that on this subject I have a certain advantage over my critics. As a boy I was brought up

in a Zionist household. My father, little as he could afford it in these days — he was hardly more than a peddler — was keen enough to make his way to the First Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897. I sensed something of the intense desire these people expressed for an escape from the ever-recurring outbursts of anti-Semitism in Czarist Russia, from which they stemmed, and of the political arguments, naive as they undoubtedly were, for the settlement of Jews in Palestine, in Uganda, or in the Argentine. Anyone who asserts that these fear-ridden people, bolstering up their courage and consolidating their unity by embellishing and refurbishing an almost outlived national feeling, were imperialists in any conscious sense, that they were anything other than exploited and ill-treated human beings seeking security, falsifies the situation. Such people composed the rank and file of the Zionist Movement. It was a very different matter with the leadership who sought to establish these people in a "National Home" in one of the colonies of an Empire, and who, in the main, saw it as a danger if these down-trodden people sought their salvation in the Socialist Movement.

I am not a Zionist, and no Zionist body would claim me as such. If I were, sheer logic and not emotion, would have forced me to emigrate to Israel. The great mass of the so-called Zionists among the Jews are little more than Friends of Israel, who would not dream of identifying their lives and those of their families with the fortunes or otherwise of that State. To them Israel is seen as a resting place for that section of Jewry which has been hounded out of other areas during the present generation. And, as I have explained in this book, the great majority of the present population of Israel today are not there because they were Zionists, driven by logic and emotion to emigrate to a National Home, but because their lives in Central Europe under Nazism, and in North Africa under the impact of a new insurgent Arab nationalism, have become impossible. The accusation, therefore, that I am obscuring the Imperialist origin and aims of Zionism and constituting myself into a Zionist apologist turns

out to be little more than the fact that I am really concerned with the contemporary position of Jewry as a people, and with the role which the present Israeli Government is filling in the Middle East *vis à vis* American finance and power politics. I have written here quite bluntly about that role, and its impact on the surrounding Arab peoples.

- iv) The last and final charge against me is that I show myself to be anti-Soviet.

My whole history belies this, for ever since Czarism was overthrown I have fought hard and consistently for a fair and proper assessment of what was being attempted in that vast region, and against what difficulties the struggle was being waged. I have time and again asserted and written that the Revolution was one of the major advances in history, and I have never moved an iota from that standpoint. The material cost of maintaining this over the years has not been slight; we live after all in a capitalist, not a Socialist, world. Nor have certain events in the Soviet Union, particularly during the past twenty years, made it any easier. When stories of faked trials and false imprisonments were bruited about, it was not uncommon to find that most assiduous propagandists on behalf of these stories were themselves well-known anti-Soviet "experts." Visitors to the Soviet Union saw the undoubtedly great positive achievements and recognised that these were consistent with the underlying theory of socialist development on which the system was based. I saw these myself, and was satisfied. I returned to spread the glad news among the others.

Now all this, it seems to me, imposes a special responsibility on us to watch this colossal development with a critical eye. If there is any meaning in the phrase "freedom of thought"—and there is not much—it is bound up with the need to examine such human activities with judgment and with objectivity. We have to discern whether the policy which is being pursued is in fact directed towards achieving the avowed purpose. We see this

in its simplest and sharpest form, of course, in the world of science. The *immediate* purpose of any scientific enquiry is to discover the truth, whatever be the final use to which that truth may be put. No scientist could possibly get away with a lie, simply because it is part of the scientific responsibility of every other scientist to exercise his powers of criticism and of experimental testing on every statement that is offered as valid. In the end, truth must prevail, if "freedom of thought," or, as I prefer to express it, the basic right of criticism, is part of the whole set-up.

A political party that professes to be scientific in its approach to social issues must exercise the same principle, and insist on safeguarding it for its individual members if it is to retain its scientific structure. There is of course a time and a place for such criticism to be expressed, but the opportunity must be there and it must be otherwise unrestricted. But there is something more. The members of such a body must be provided with the fullest information available. The leadership must share its special information with the rank and file, if the latter is to be in a position to exercise its critical powers to the fullest advantage. For example if the leadership of any of the Communist Parties was aware of what had been happening in the Soviet Union during the latter years of Stalin's life, and if they maintained silence before their members, then by that very action they were striking a blow at the scientific understanding of these members and at its entitlement to call itself scientific.

The same is true at a higher level. If the whole body is to be a purposive entity, it must offer and operate instructed criticism and must be seen to do so. When Khrushchev spoke at the 20th Congress about what had been happening in the Soviet Union prior to Stalin's death, he was fulfilling a necessary function in all these senses, whatever criticism might be levelled against him and his colleagues for having maintained silence prior to this. In publicly opening this manhole so that the noxious fumes might escape, he was at the same time pointing

his finger at those leaders of that same movement in other countries, who, under less immediate danger than himself, had sat silent for years. If they knew what was going on, they had not only betrayed the fundamental right of instruction and criticism of their own members, but they had stood silent while the historic advance of Socialism was itself being betrayed.

Was Khrushchev then anti-Soviet when he exposed what had been going on? Clearly not. In cleansing the stables he was boldly pro-Soviet. It is those who remained silent in the knowledge of what was taking place whom history will condemn as anti-Soviet. When the Polish-Yiddish paper *Volkstymme* published its now famous article detailing what had happened to Yiddish writers and poets over the years — the Black Years — in the Soviet Union were the facts denied? No. Was the *Volkstymme* then anti-Soviet? Certainly not. Immediately after the appearance of this article I published a piece in the *Jewish Clarion* — the British Communist Jewish paper — entitled "A Blot on the History of Socialism." In doing so I was justly exercising my fundamental right of criticism at all levels, and therefore I was not thereby anti-Soviet. I was seeking to discover how such things could possibly happen in a country which I had consistently believed was basically socialistic. I still assert that this is so, but I hold, what I have sought to establish in this small book, that the present analysis of the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union, and the present policy there with regard to this people who are neither a nation nor a national minority, but an *international minority*, is mistaken. In tracing some of the consequences of that mistaken policy, I am naturally critical. Does this then make me anti-Soviet? On the contrary, it is I who am striving in my small way towards clarity on this complex issue, while those who rebuke me, those who have remained silent during all the years of travail, have sacrificed their standing in this matter. He who asserts that the Soviet Union is correct when it is wrong, thereby impairs his right to acclaim it when it is correct.

These then were the main criticisms that were levelled against me on the appearance of this book in Britain. There were others, as the reader of the Appendix will notice, but these I have dealt with by actual modification of the text where they have been justified, or by elaboration of the text where they have arisen from looseness of expression. That such looseness occurred is due to the fact the book was written straight on to the typing machine, in a mood bordering on anger! To those who read R. P. Dutt's criticisms in the Appendix this will explain why it is not always possible to find in the text the actual words he quotes, since his reference is to the British Edition.*

HYMAN LEVY May 28, 1958

* Publishers' Note: Mr. Dutt's references have been annotated to correspond to the pages in the American Edition (see Appendix, p. 90). Changes in wording of course have not been indicated. Following are the changes in pagination:

M. Dutt's references	Pages in American Edition
7	17
39	43
42	44
44	46
51	50
54	53
55	54
58	56
66	61
74	70, 71
81	78
82	78
86	83
90	85
93	88

Preface

IT HAS NOT been easy for me to write this small book. There is a curious reluctance on the part of Jews to discuss their problems publicly. This is connected with the kind of admonition I used to receive from my mother in my childhood, "Now remember, behave yourself. A Jewish boy doesn't do that kind of thing. It causes anti-semitism," and this was already part of my flesh and bones almost before I attended school. So a book on Jews might give rise to anti-semitism by making non-Jews Jew-conscious: and it is the case that Jews would rather pass unnoticed. Here however I have the safeguard that only a Gentile already interested in Jews would bother to read this book.

But there is a time for silence, and a time for speech. Many of my political friends imagine that this is a time for silence. I disagree. Let me explain why. I have always had high hopes of the tremendous advantages that were to flow to mankind from the colossal social and political experiment that is being conducted in the Soviet Union, and now also in China. They are the controlled outcome of a long and desperate struggle of the common people for decent survival. If I can be said to believe in anything, I believe in experiment, provided of course that it is guided and controlled by theory based on the fullest available knowledge, and is continually subjected to the most searching criticism. It is the only way in which we can learn to think clearly; and on this basis only can we hope to see the values we acquire in the process of thinking and acting blossom out into practical fruition.

No one today except the blindest of mortals would or could deny that the forty years since the 1917 Revolution in Russia have witnessed a remarkable transformation in that vast country. From being one of the most backward in the world under Czarism it has

moved forward so that, in very many respects, if a comparison is indeed legitimate, it is now one of the most advanced. It is universally recognised that in the modern world science and technology play a very prominent and creative role. The extent to which they are encouraged and developed in any given country is in a sense a measure of the future level of life, physical and mental because they cannot basically be separated, of the society that is there being built up. Today the Soviet Union produces more scientists and technologists of a high order than all the rest of the world together. This, as every educationist knows, does not emerge out of a vacuum, but is the fruits of a generation of organised educational policy from infant to adult stage. Nor could it have been achieved by restricting the mental development of its citizens within narrow prescribed grooves. Science demands wide freedom of thought and the exercise of imagination. It is not surprising therefore that the Soviet Union has also to its credit outstanding achievements in the world of art and music. The Moscow Arts Theatre is famous the world over. In order that all this may be carried to ever higher levels the Soviet Union requires more than anything else that it should live in a peaceful world. As one who witnessed something of the devastation that was inflicted on Eastern Europe during World War II, I am convinced that her main objective in world politics is to work for a period of peaceful transition. Nothing else makes sense. A similar transformation is now well under way in China.

These social ventures in the Soviet Union and in China involve a multitude of nationalities, a medley of peoples. Now professionally I am not a biologist or a medical man, and on matters that fall within these provinces I bow to those with specialized knowledge and more informed minds. For precisely such reasons I disapprove strongly of those individuals, outside the Soviet Union and China, who have no hesitation in criticising sharply the internal policy of the Governments of these vast areas, as if those individuals from the depths of their ignorance of the issues involved must know better. Nevertheless it must be said in all honesty that those who adopt this antagonistic attitude, blind as they are to the great positive achievements that have undoubtedly been made, are not very different in the quality of their critical sense, from those other enthusiasts who are equally blind to the

negative side. In addition there were quite a number who, proud of the great advances, held their speech of set purpose on other matters, lest, as they imagined, they might provide ammunition to the enemies of Socialism. This was a futility. The ammunition was already there, and a developing society would itself finally expose it. This actually occurred at the 20th Congress. It also exposed those who, knowing of these matters, had hitherto kept silent. Either we maintain silence on both aspects, or we speak frankly about both. An experiment is not a piece of one-sided propaganda, but a search after the truth. Anything other than this is unscientific and unhelpful. As one of those who earnestly hope that these great historic social experiments will be crowned with success for the sake of suffering humanity, I hold that on this matter speech, if it is based on specialist knowledge, is golden and silence a betrayal of the very cause itself.

The great socialist experiments are not being conducted in an international vacuum. On the contrary we know that the world today is divided into two hostile camps—socialist and capitalist—to put it very sharply. This political alignment has occurred at a crucial point in the history of science when man is entering the phase where he will be able to redesign the firmament. The sputniks are the fingers of man's groping hand as it stretches out into the skies. If in this situation the political alignment becomes unstable, and governments, for whatever reason, resort to force to achieve their ends, the consequences to mankind are certain to be catastrophic. This nightmare is now a commonplace. The possible outcome of a breakaway from the present position of unstable equilibrium is therefore something that sane people dare not contemplate. Yet none of the leading statesmen on either side, on whose judgement depends the maintenance of this equilibrium until such time as the world can once more move forward stably at a higher level, clearly measures up to the occasion.

This does not mean that there is no difference in understanding of the world situation between, say, Khrushchev and Dulles. There is no proposition which says that things which do not measure up to the same thing are equal to one another! Clearly Dulles has a very great deal to learn about what motivates both the Soviet Union and China along their respective paths. He has still to understand why these two vast regions, inhabited by numerous

nations constituting a considerable proportion of the world population, are almost certain to witness what will be historically the greatest of social advances during the next few years, provided an Atomic War can be avoided. His thinking and his values stem from the ideology of a rampant finance Imperialism, and he cannot imagine a decent and a successful society emerging on any other basis. He seems genuinely to believe that this must represent a danger to established law and order — the law and order of the modern United States. All this is of course crystal clear to Khrushchev. That is one of the reasons why he persistently stresses the need for transferring the competitive tension between the two world systems on to the economic, and away from the military, plane. He understands, as Dulles does not, the basic how and why of the U. S. A. and the rest of the capitalist sector. What he quite obviously does not grasp is the impact his periodic outbursts of bombast, justified as they probably are by actuality in the Soviet Union, have on the minds and feelings of the peoples in the capitalist world, however much they may reflect the new assurance of those in the socialist sector. Coming from a man who exposed some of the worst features of the latter part of the Stalin period in the Soviet Union, and thereby also exposing the fact that he had been at best a passive agent to these things, they create in the minds of many people an uneasy feeling of fear and distrust. To what extent, people wonder, can the Soviet Union have changed from an atmosphere of repression and Beria intrigue in the few years since Stalin's death? In a world in which the H-Bomb hangs delicately by a thread between these two colossi, where the task of coming to the kind of terms that can ensure peace demands some degree of trust and confidence in the bona fides of the leadership and negotiators of the opposite camp, spokesmen who are seen in this light, it seems to me, do not measure up to the existing situation. They would both require to go a long way in action to win the confidence of the world today. It is in fact difficult to imagine anyone, with the present world division, measuring up to this situation, and therein lies the real source of danger today.

I am one of those who hold that, whether we like it or not, we are moving into a socialist era. In these circumstances it is vital that neither the Soviet Union nor China should misjudge or misinterpret the mood, values, and understanding of the capitalist

sector; equally the United States, Britain and France must make an effort to grasp precisely the direction in which the socialist countries are moving. Those of us therefore, in this hemisphere, who think we understand something of the theory and practice of the socialist countries, and of course have first-hand knowledge and first-hand living experience of our own half-world, have a definite responsibility to speak up should it seem to be the case that a possibly false and therefore, in the present world circumstances, dangerous policy is being pursued, albeit unconsciously. It is in this spirit that I have dared to criticise the Soviet Union, where I have done so here, believing that my intentions will be understood and appreciated. In no sense therefore would this be a direct criticism of the internal policy of the socialist countries, but only indirectly in so far as internal policy has external repercussions. The effect, in this half of the world, of the revelations of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union is a case in point.

This approach has a special meaning for the central theme of this book. I am a Jew, and I am concerned for the fate of my people. How I come to be so concerned is a matter of social history, and is of little moment. I could find reasons, if reasons are important. They are not. The fact itself is significant when taken alongside the other fact that, from the religious point of view, my Jewishness is non-existent. I am a human being like others, with all the values I have inherited—and I think refined—from the society in which I have been nourished. That society contains Jews, an internationally distributed people, with a peculiarly unique history. Every event everywhere touches us somewhere. In their own peculiar manner, the forces that mould society have separated us out in this way. In this book I have tried to show that there is nothing mystical or mysterious in this, but because we have been so fashioned and moulded in space and in time, the archives of my people, in one way or another, contain the scrolls of history. It is not surprising therefore that we are extremely sensitive to national and to international happenings. Hitler tried his best to wipe us out. He failed. Hitler is now dead. An international people cannot be eliminated by a national policy, it can only be wounded, and the incinerating chambers of the Nazis now figure in the scrolls in our archives, alongside

the Jewish tortures of the Spanish Inquisition and the Jewish massacres during the Holy Crusades.

Today the Soviet Union faces its special form of the so-called Jewish problem, the presence in its midst of an international people. Its Jewish minority has humanistic and cultural affiliations to Jews, progressive and reactionary, everywhere, at a moment when the world is sharply divided into socialist and capitalist camps. Internally the Soviet Union had inherited a long tradition of anti-semitism and pogroms. During the Leninist period the basic principles of socialist democracy and of the intrinsic rights of nations and of national minorities were laid down and fully applied. For the Jewish people within the Soviet Union these provided great opportunities to sweep aside the cramping walls of the ghetto, and to enter into every phase of social and governmental life. The conviction grew among them that they had finished for ever on Soviet soil with the abominable plague of anti-semitism. Great Jewish cultural centres sprang up in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Odessa, Kharkov, and Vitebsk. State-sponsored Jewish theatres were formed in all major cities which had large Jewish populations, and the pride of them all was the Moscow Jewish State Theatre. The Jewish problem in Russia appeared to have been completely solved. Whether the economic basis of their way of life, and their geographical distribution, would be such as to continue to inspire this cultural outburst, or whether they would finally disappear within the general body of Soviet citizens was a matter that history only could determine. To Jews the world over, as to many others, all this signified the correctness of the Leninist approach to national questions. The growth and development of nationalities within the Soviet Union and their relationship to one another stood witness to it. The years passed, including the terrible travails of the Second World War and the terrific damage done to Jewish centres by the Hitlerite invasion, and rumours began to spread that all was not well on the Jewish front. Troubles that had begun to show themselves just prior to the war, particularly during the build-up of the Hitler regime in Germany, were accentuated during the post-war period, the sharp period of the Cold War. Suddenly, without warning, on April 4th, 1956, the *Folkstymme*, the Jewish periodical of the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers' Party, published an article entitled "Our Anguish and our Solace" which

caused consternation throughout the world of Jewry. It described how the machinations of the "Beria Clique" during the later years of Stalin, had sought to sharpen antagonisms between nationalities in the Soviet Union, and, as far as the Jews were concerned, had engineered the imprisonment and death of political leaders like S. Dimantstein, Esther Frumkin, R. Weinstein, Merezhin, Moshe Liavakov, Michael Leviathon, Jankel Levin, Hershel Bril, and many others. Outstanding Jewish cultural workers, writers, poets, and playwrights, including David Bergelson, Nistor, Perez Markish, Itzik Pfeffer, Jashe Bronstein, Issie Charik, who had devoted all their lives to the happiness of the Jewish masses and to their cultural development, were done to death. The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which, during the years of struggle against the Hitlerite invasion, had done such heroic service, was suddenly liquidated without rational explanation, and its leaders sentenced to death. All Jewish cultural activity terminated sharply.

With the death of Stalin came a drastic change in the situation. The authority and status of the Secret Police were completely transformed, and brought within the jurisdiction of the Judges of the Supreme Court. Beria was himself executed; those who had been arrested but against whom no charges had been established were released forthwith. The good names of those who had been falsely charged, imprisoned and shot were restored, and immediate relatives compensated. As far as was possible justice was done to individuals, and to well-recognised nationalities and national minorities.

But the position of Soviet Jewry during these "Black Years", as the Jews themselves called them, had been deeply undermined. An atmosphere of general fear had been engendered among them, and all outward expression of their earlier cultural life severely and brutally suppressed. Were they then, at this stage after the death of Stalin, still a national minority entitled, on Leninist socialist principles, to exercise the rights of such an entity? Was it possible that the experience of the "Black Years", after the bitterness of the Hitler holocaust, had destroyed their belief in the possibility of any application of minority rights to themselves and that they would fear even to express any desire for them?

These are the vicissitudes through which Soviet Jewry has passed, and this is the problem which the Soviet Authorities have to resolve.

It is by no means a simple direct issue. They are attempting to meet this problem in what they regard as a marxist way. In my humble view, as a marxist, I think they have made a false analysis of the problem, and I have tried in this book to show where its falsity lies. Because it is not a purely internal problem, but one that impinges on an internationally distributed people, and because I am a well-wisher to the great experiment which the Soviet Union is conducting, and finally because I am a Jew, I have no option but to speak up. I do so in the firm belief that what I have to say will be weighed up in the spirit in which it is offered.

January 1958.

HYMAN LEVY.

Jews and the National Question

TWO FACTORS HAVE been mainly responsible for the arousal of a new interest in the old problem of the present position and the future of Jewry. One of these factors, of wide and general interest to Jew and non-Jew alike, is the emergence, during the past decade, of about one-sixth of this widely distributed people as a distinct national entity, the Israelis, in the Middle East. This most recent development is closely bound up with the terrible experiences through which Jews passed during the Hitlerian period although its earlier roots lie elsewhere. The other factor is the strange, almost unexplained, policy which the Soviet Union appears to be pursuing with regard to its Jewish population.

For centuries the centre of gravity of Jewry, and the sources of its spiritual and cultural strength have been in Eastern Europe, Poland and Russia. During Czarist times periodic pogroms have forced the "Jewish Problem" to the fore, with the result that to Jews—and also to Socialists generally—a society's treatment of its Jews has been regarded as the acid test of its level of civilisation. For this reason the eyes of Jewish Socialists have been steadfastly turned to the new Socialist Republics because of a conviction that the conscious will—and the planned and organised means available—to resolve the Jewish problem, can exist only in a Socialist society. This is based on the premise that broadly speaking the modern form of the Jewish "Problem" is, in fact, an excrescence of capitalist society, and that with the passing of this society the problem will disappear. This is precisely where the shoe pinches now for the Socialist. It is agreed, almost universally, that in the Soviet Union capitalism has in fact disappeared. Has the Jewish problem then vanished? If not — and such issues are not resolved

overnight — then what policy is being pursued in the effort to resolve it, and what precisely is the nature of the resolution sought? Since there is not available any clear and definite answer to these questions from Soviet sources even with regard to the success or failure of the Birobidyan experiment, and since, as we intend to show here, the answer, were it available, would be heavily conditioned by the first factor — the existence of a small Israeli nation in the Middle East — the whole matter takes on a totally new interest.

EARLY JEWRY

It is said that the Jews are an ancient people. This, of course, is only true in a special sense. They are no more and no less an ancient people than other people. They are a modern people who, in their time, have absorbed much culturally, genetically and biologically from their neighbours, and who have left their cultural, biological and genetic mark on many peoples. They are an ancient people in the sense that they were a very early geographically located group, economically and ideologically united. What is interesting is that the forces of history have been such as to maintain their separation into a more or less definite social group over a long period of time, carrying a continuous but changing tradition over a span of about 2,000 years. The Jews of today are a very different people from their early progenitors of so-called Biblical times, in their economic situation, in their social structure, and in their ideological outlook. Even if it were true—which it is not—that what has held them as a distinct entity has been their religion, Judaism, the fact remains that modern Judaism consists of a very different set of beliefs and values from those held by the Jews of twenty centuries ago. A Chassidic Jew, and a member of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, are poles apart. This is only one of the minor internal reflections of the variegated history of Jewry, in space and in time. A people who have been distributed so long historically and geographically, while they will differ very considerably among themselves, may still form a group, sociologically speaking, because of certain underlying similarities that they have preserved. National characteristics, in so far as Jews evince them at all, would feature among these similarities.

It is historically false to assert, as is done both in Jewish and non-Jewish circles, that until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the Jews were a compact people localised entirely in Palestine. There was, indeed, such a united group that fought tenaciously for its independence, but already, well before the fall of Jerusalem, it is estimated that more than three-quarters of Jewry no longer lived in Palestine. Emigrating from their mountainous and relatively infertile country, many had settled in various parts of the Greek Empire, and the later Roman Empire, in the islands of the Mediterranean and along the north coast of Africa. They went as sailors, traders and small bankers. Under the Roman Empire there were many Jews in Rome, but in 135 A.D. after the Jewish Rebellion in Palestine led by Bar Cochba, large numbers were carried off as captives into slavery. The Jewish Tower in Rome in which they were held is still extant. Later, with the disintegration of the Roman Empire these Jews moved up into France, thence into the Rheinland of Germany, and later north-east to what is now Poland and the western provinces of Russia. Broadly speaking the ancestors of the Jews of the Eastern European Ghettos, and therefore of most Western Jewry, were Roman captives.

There were of course earlier emigrations from Palestine in the direction of Iraq and thence through Persia into Russia. A considerable population of Persian Jews exists in Bokhara, and again in the Crimea, the latter arriving therefore by a totally different route from the remainder of the Jews of Eastern Europe. In Kerch in the Crimea are to be found old inscriptions both in Greek and in Hebrew. With the exception of these early Crimean Jews who actually settled on the land, most of these emigrants, as we have said, went as traders and small bankers in the first instance. Even if the population of Palestine tended to outrun the basic food supply one would not expect agricultural workers to leave the land to which they were already attached.

Of those Jews who came to the western provinces however, those who moved into Lithuania entered a region that was rich forest land. The sparse population lived mainly as hunters and woodfellers. In these circumstances many of the incoming Jews themselves settled as agricultural workers and farmers, and there, in the course of time, developed a high tradition of Hebrew and

Yiddish learning, with centres of religious training and scholarship that became famous throughout the world of Jewry.

As dealers in commodities however, the first Jewish emigrants, and the communities they established, were in fact carriers of *early* merchant capitalism and banking into regions where the people would otherwise have lived at the level of life appropriate to a simple user's economy, where people consumed directly what they produced. In this sense they were therefore fulfilling a progressive historical rôle, widening the range of interdependence of peoples and so deepening the meaning of society. For such reasons—it gave them a considerable social status—Roman emperors accorded the Jews a degree of autonomy in the running of their affairs, and protected them in their religious worship against local Roman and Greek priests, so that, in effect, they became almost a community within a community. Thus their socio-religious customs were preserved, emotionally linked up as they were with Jerusalem, and Palestine generally, at a time when the Jewish people itself was fiercely struggling for its independence in the homeland.

Yet there was already anti-semitism in Roman times, expressed by the surrounding peoples, and stemming presumably from the antipathy felt by an agricultural and peasant population for those who live, not by actual direct work on the soil, but by trading. Here was a distinct people, the Jews, an alien people, carrying through an alien form of economic activity, which they resented, however important it may have been historically. Naturally the resentment against the process becomes directed against its instrument, and this in its turn tended to consolidate these outposts of Jewry, and to confirm their identity as a separate people among strangers. We shall see that this situation occurs and recurs continually in the history of Jewry, as a formative and consolidating factor.

From the 12th Century onwards Europe began to undergo deep and lasting changes. In developing its merchant and commercial class on an increasing scale—and indeed on a self-competitive basis—it also saw the stimulation of local industries that produced the necessary commodities for exchange. With this came the growth of towns, and the way was open to the evolution of nationalities in Western Europe.

WHAT IS A NATION?

In his analysis of what constitutes a nation, Stalin has set out in characteristically clear fashion what he regards as the necessary and sufficient conditions to be satisfied by a social group if it is to be accorded this title. His conclusion in summary form can be stated thus—that a nation is a historically evolved stable community, territorially, economically, linguistically, and culturally, the latter expressing itself among other forms in a common psychological make-up. In this it is necessary for our purpose to note particularly the words “historically evolved” and “stable.” The former must imply that there are various stages in the development towards nationhood, unevenly occurring, so that at points prior to the achievement of “stability,” one or more of these characteristics may manifest themselves without the others having reached full fruition. Moreover “stability” must itself be relative and historically conditioned, for in the past there have been many nations which have come and gone, although during their existence they would undoubtedly have satisfied all these criteria. Several such occurred in North Africa but disappeared under Roman rule. A nation is a social entity, restricted and confined, and no nation has ever had, or could ever have, full control over its destiny. But more than this. To Stalin a nation is not merely an historical category, but an historical category belonging to a particular epoch, i.e., that corresponding to the social and economic development of capitalism. Capitalism rose unevenly — especially in its early phase of Merchant Capitalism. There were certain developments of this nature in North Africa in Roman times. Of importance to us in relation to our present problem is the fact that as we have already indicated Merchant Capitalism developed early in the Middle East especially along the land and sea highways and among the islands in the Greek Archipelago. Unless we bear these qualifications in mind we might easily slip into a mechanical or a static approach to the whole question. As we shall see in a moment, when we examine this problem in relation to the Jews, these changing historical and social factors become of considerable importance in evaluating the nature, extent and depth of their national feeling, and its outward mode of expression.

We do not *define* a nation. Only an abstraction is capable of definition, and the Jews are by no means an abstraction. They

are alive, active and virile. Any attempt to define a Jew, therefore, is philosophic nonsense. He is not a mere concept but a physical object. Nor does he simply belong to a religious sect, nor to an ethnically distinctive group that has kept itself "pure" by intra-marriage. The Jews are an historically evolving entity, and this historical entity has to be examined in space and time to discover what features it shows in similarity with, and in difference from, other such historical social groupings that now claim nationhood and are recognised as possessing it.

FIRST CRITERION OF NATIONHOOD

One of the first facts we have to recognise is that Jews today do not, by any means, all regard themselves as a separate nation, in spite of many propagandist efforts to obscure this. To take steps, as Zionists naturally do, to arouse a sense of national feeling is one thing; to examine how people actually feel about nationhood is another. The very first criterion of nationhood in fact is to test whether or not there exists, in the present, a community of feeling in this respect. What has existed in the past may in itself be quite irrelevant. Today there may be only knowledge of past feelings, tradition, social customs, and there may be historical relics of past nationhood. If the Jews were a nation today, they would feel they are one here and now, and that feeling is not created merely by assuring them that their ancestors once were a nation.

If we may be led astray by looking at the question—"What is a Nation?" unhistorically, there is a corresponding danger in treating it parochially, on the assumption, for example, that the conditions that gave rise to the birth of nations in Europe towards the end of the Feudal Period are the only ones in which nationhood may arise. The American nation is a glaring exception. It is certainly true that the rise of Arab nationalism in the Middle East today is taking place at a time when a near-feudal economy is dissolving, but this is occurring under the impact, not simply of Merchant Capitalism, as it did in Feudal Europe, but of the most advanced form of Imperialism; in a world moreover in which totally new types of state—the Soviet Union and China—have begun to make a dramatic impact on the minds and on the hopes of men. The conditions, therefore, are in many respects unique. Moreover, simul-

taneously with this, Arab national movements have arisen in North Africa within the French Empire; and Negro nationalisms are successfully emerging in other parts of Africa which, until quite recently, were under British domination. In all these areas a strong national sense has emerged under conditions very different from those in which it came to birth in Europe but not so very different in certain basic respects from the conditions under which the Jews struggled against Imperial Rome. They have almost all seen unity forged in the struggle of a people to free itself from what it felt to be imperialist exploitation. Everywhere the outsider, the foreigner, has maintained a standard of life in sharp contrast to that accorded to the native whose labour, and the natural resources of whose soil, have been utilised to this end. This reaction of the indigenous inhabitants of an area against the invader and the exploiter which develops into a bond of nationhood seems to have occurred among peoples of all colours and creeds, early and late in history, and is not necessarily confined to the particular historic epoch that corresponds to the rise of capitalism in Europe.

DIVERSITY OF CONDITIONS FOR NATIONHOOD

We are compelled then to conclude that throughout history nations have evolved in diverse ways and by uneven steps, yet with an underlying similarity in all these circumstances. Naturally in the past a struggle of this nature could be waged only by a people occupying a localised region, communicating with each other through a common language, broadly expressing in their unity of action a common set of ethical and social values, and smarting under a common sense of injustice. And since no such struggle could be waged in an economic vacuum, nations, as they have emerged, have created some semblance of an economic order in the regions they have inhabited. We can easily read, in this process, the factors that impressed Stalin in his analysis, as being essential qualities for nationhood. It does not follow by any means, however, that under modern conditions of communications, transport, and finance, and with the possibilities of arousing international public opinion on behalf of a would-be national group, that all, or even most of these factors are essential to the birth or indeed the re-birth of a nation. Stalin in his study of

the question was concerned primarily with peoples which had already reached effective full-fledged nationhood in what he regarded as a stable form, and he was less concerned, yet still concerned, with the detailed processes peoples have passed through in arriving at this situation.

These considerations begin to have special significance when we examine the rise of Jewish nationalism, and the features it has shown particularly during the present century. Especially with a distributed and diversified people like the Jews, we shall have to bear in mind the distinction we would wish to draw between those Jews who have a sharp national feeling themselves bound up with a common social and economic life localised in a particular region of the Earth, and those widely distributed Jews who, having no national feeling, nevertheless have a strong understanding sympathy for other Jews who do. To grasp the modern "Jewish Problem" therefore it has to be seen in its widely diverse forms as these have shaped themselves in different places through the successive historical phases of this people.

TWIN ASPECTS OF JEWISH PROBLEM

There is a further point to which we merely refer at this point, and to which we shall return at its appropriate stage. If there exists a Jewish problem for Jews, as seen and felt from the inside of this people, there must *ipso facto* exist a Jewish problem as seen and felt by non-Jews from the outside. This simply means that there would be an objective sociological problem which impinges itself in these different ways on Jew and on non-Jew. Only a rationally organised society can be expected to find a solution that is satisfactory when seen from either end of the telescope—the objective and the subjective ends.

HOW DID JEWRY SURVIVE?

How have the Jews managed to survive at all as a distinct social entity during the past two thousand years? How did they, for example, survive in a Europe that was so sharply class-divided as was the Feudal System, with its lords and serfs? To answer this question in rational terms, to avoid falling into the mystical concept of "The Chosen People," which the modern Jew himself would never accept, we have to discover what positive function

having survival value the Jews managed to perform in such a tight economy. As we have already pointed out, for many generations prior to the Dispersion, Jews had been emigrating from Palestine, as the rise in population had tended to outrun the productive capacity of the soil. As immigrants into neighbouring lands, into the islands of Greece, into regions along the north coast of Africa, they were strangers who naturally did not become agriculturists. Entering into almost self-sufficient economies, that is to say localised societies that lived almost entirely on what they themselves produced, their function in the first place could only be that of traders and merchants. In effect, therefore, their first movement into Europe did not basically pose a new kind of problem to a people who had already entered, to some degree, into Merchant Capitalism in the Palestinian homeland.

We must realise that every large-scale feudal society must necessarily create craftsmen — builders, carpenters, wood-carvers, workers in metal for armour and weapons of war, silversmiths and goldsmiths, lace makers, grinders and polishers of jewels. In the propitious climates of the East were spices and perfumes ready to be exchanged for the surplus craft products of the West. Europe was ripe for the transition to Merchant and then Industrial Capitalism; and here was a people who had already established a tradition in such activities. Money transactions, bookkeeping and accountancy, were a commonplace to them. These, in the first instance, were the positive functions, with survival value, that the Jews were able to perform. They became the small merchants, the book-keepers, clerks and go-between men for the barons, and so became almost a privileged and sheltered class. These Eastern people, exercising special and indeed specialist functions among an alien population whose language they had to master, to read and to write, but who nevertheless kept their own accounts in their own sacred script, were therefore marked out in a distinctive separate way, really as a small social class. In this way the preservation of their religio-nationalist feeling and outlook followed inevitably.

We have gone into these matters in order to underline the positive *survival* function which the Jews performed, and so understand why the Jews have not simply disappeared when they had no definitely localised habitation. At the same time it is

important not to exaggerate the rôle of these people in relation to the fuller development of Merchant Capitalism in the whole of Western Europe. This arose in the main from the native merchants themselves. Let us remember that the Mediaeval Church refused, on scriptural grounds, to regard usury by a Christian as anything but a heinous sin. The field of usury itself was therefore open for the infidel Jew to pursue. Severe penalties were exacted on any Christian who dared to become a usurer, even through the intermediary Jew. But the distinction between usury and banking must be clearly drawn. The usurer is not directly productive. His loans, for example, to feudal lords and to kings, were for luxuries and for war expenditure. The banker on the other hand, a later development under Merchant and Industrial Capitalism, finances commercial and industrial ventures. The usurer therefore provides credit for the consumer, the banker for the purposes of production. The usurer also lends to the peasant and artisan in order to enable him to pay his taxes and rent and in doing so takes possession of a portion of the surplus value which the peasant or artisan would otherwise have produced later in any case. The usurer is the vehicle of individual credit in the feudal period, the banker during the much more highly developed period of Merchant and Industrial Capitalism. The Mediaeval Church denied the right of a Christian to operate as a usurer, but by the time Merchant Capitalism had developed, the Church had changed its attitude, and the banker and his profession were performing a recognised legitimate function. It was as a usurer, and primarily as a usurer, that a Jew was allowed to operate, and the part he played during the later banking period was relatively trivial. The reasons for this are not far to seek. Not only would he now have to compete with the new and expanding native Merchant Class, but his social position was also now much less secure. During the earlier period, for financial reasons, the Jews were protected by kings and lords, but with the weakening of the latter's power in the later period, the Jew could by no means be certain of the continuance of his personal security, and consequently long-range investment was not likely to occur.

We can illustrate all this in a more direct way. History text-books always depict the Holy Crusades as a pure Christian mission, and it comes as a surprise to learn of the accompanying massacres

of Jews and of the confiscation of their goods and monies. But even in England at that time this was already well under way. England, lying to the extreme west of Europe, would not be expected to have in its midst a people, stemming from the Middle East, who had drifted so far afield. In fact, already in Anglo-Saxon times there were Jews in England, and according to the laws of that period Jews and all their property belonged to the King. They were his personal possession, and he protected them because of the purposes for which he could use them. They were regarded as sponges to be squeezed dry when necessary. It is recorded, for example, that in 1088, William II farmed out vacant episcopal seats to Jews in order to secure their revenue, while those Jews who embraced Christianity were compelled to return to Judaism in order that the King might still be entitled to confiscate their property when necessary. Henry II, the enlightened monarch who introduced trial by jury, sought to prevent conversion by taking possession of the property of those converted, in recompense for the consequent loss in revenue. In 1187, this same King, who alone owed Aron of Lincoln £100,000, equal to his whole annual budget, simply liquidated this debt by direct confiscation. All this is recorded history. As we have said, Jews and their property were owned by the King, and the usury which they alone were allowed to practise was merely an indirect method whereby the King fleeced his subjects, while the odium attaching to the collection of this revenue was thrown, not on the King, but on the Jew. Two years later in London, Lincoln, York and Stafford there were great massacres of Jews. This process went on intermittently throughout the whole of the feudal period. In 1264 there were anti-Jewish pogroms in London and in Canterbury, organised by the landed gentry. The climax came in 1290 when, with the critical period into which feudal society was now passing, the possibility of lending under usurious conditions had drastically declined; all the property of the Jews in the whole realm was confiscated, and these people, numbering 3,000 in all, were expelled. This was during the reign of Edward I.

It was not usury that the society now required, but money that would finance productive forms in the new emerging Merchant Capitalism. Thus by 1377 Edward III had already invited Florentine Bankers to establish themselves in London in what is

now known as Lombard Street. It is not until the period of Cromwell that the law forbidding Jews to reside in England was rescinded.

The Merchant Class expanded. Trade and shipping flourished, and the balance of power gradually shifted in Europe from the feudal lords to these merchants, who were now the new rich. The technical knowledge of ship-building grew apace, and towns began to spring up. As craftsmen grew in numbers and required to move from place to place to acquire and to exercise their skills, the old bonds that held the serf to his lord grew weaker and weaker. The foundations of feudalism were crumbling, and crisis after crisis shook its structure. It had been in this atmosphere that the younger barons, with little prospect for themselves in what was to them a decaying society, set out on their successive crusades to the Middle East. These were in effect piratical expeditions whereby the barons could enrich themselves by pillage and massacre of the non-Christian, particularly Jewish communities, en route.

But a social crisis does not exist in an ideological vacuum. It is a period of doubt and of questioning. If the social structure was crumbling, so also was the security of faith that had been used to justify it—and in this, quite obviously, the Jews were the villains of the piece. They had not merely questioned Christianity; they had repudiated it. It was therefore clearly a law of divine justice that the infidel, who had denied the Jew Jesus, should be denuded of all his worldly goods, and destroyed. Thus it was that the early waves of anti-semitism that had swept Europe at the time of the Crusades were not simply motivated by ethical or religious considerations, however they were clothed in these, but had sprung from a deeper more general source, a wide-spread social crisis. Wherever there have been Jews, recurrent social crises have left their imprint periodically as anti-semitism on the body of that people. They have indeed been the scrolls of history.

THE IMPACT ON JEWRY OF MERCHANT CLASS STRUGGLE

We have said that it is important not to exaggerate the part which Jews played in the development of Merchant Capitalism in the Middle Ages. Indeed what they did in this respect occurred,

in the main, only in the very early phase, for there were very powerful and significant forces at work that not merely excluded them from the later developments, but were responsible for inaugurating for them a long period of decline in their economic plight.

To appreciate how this happened we have to trace certain aspects of the growth of Merchant Capitalism and the alignment of forces in its development. One of the immediate consequences of the Crusades was that they gave a new impetus to East-West trade. The Crusaders returned, not simply with the rich spoils of war and pillage, but with stories of the vast wealth that lay in the countries of the Far East. This commercial revival saw the transport of exchangeable commodities along three distinct routes:

- i) By sailing ship from the original sources, up the Red Sea and the Nile River to Cairo and Alexandria and so to the Mediterranean Sea. These sources were of course China, India, and the East Indies.
- ii) From the same sources up the Persian Gulf and the Tigris to Baghdad. Thence by caravan route overland to Antioch and Damascus, and so again to the Mediterranean Sea.
- iii) The third route, which was later heavily interfered with by Turkish conquests, went almost entirely overland to Constantinople and the Black Sea.

Thus, for Europe at any rate, the Mediterranean Sea — the Middle of the Earth — was the great highway, and every year saw the Merchant Fleets of Genoa and Venice set off for Bruges and Flanders, laden with their cargoes of cinnamon, cloves, ginger, gums, dyes, fragrant woods, and precious stones and metals. It was a period in Europe when meat and fish were preserved by heavy salting, so that the demand for spices was considerable. These Genoese and Venetian merchants practically operated a monopoly, with Bruges as the western depot from which trade with Britain and Germany was conducted.

By the latter part of the 15th Century, Spanish and Portuguese merchants had already appeared as competitors for this lucrative trade in the effort to break the monopoly, better situated as they were for trade with Western Europe, but ill-placed as regards shipping from the Eastern Mediterranean. By 1487 Vasco Da Gama, starting off from Portugal, had already rounded the Cape of Good

Hope at the southernmost point of Africa, and explored the east coast of that continent. We have to realise that Europe was in the main still Catholic, and every king and duke held his throne and dukedom by the grace of the Holy See. Here then were the Catholic merchants of the Italian cities established in the Eastern Mediterranean to which the products of the East flowed in the first instance, while at the western end were their Spanish and Portuguese Catholic competitors, severely handicapped for purely geographical reasons.

It is clear therefore that when Christopher Columbus, himself a Genoese, proposed to the merchants of his native city that they should finance and sponsor a voyage intended to discover a short route to India via the west, his proposal was of no interest to them. To accept was suicide; what they did not grasp was that to refuse was also suicide. Nothing more natural, therefore, than that Columbus should move with his proposition to Spain.

At this time Spain had by no means proceeded so far as the Italian cities along the mercantile route; it had its royalty and grandee landowners, and above all a strong Catholic Church, itself one of the largest landowners. It was therefore with the backing of the ecclesiastical side that Ferdinand and Isabella financed the Columbus expedition of 1492 that resulted in the acquisition of a Spanish Empire in the Americas, converted Spain, and to a lesser extent Portugal, into a leading maritime power, and of course extended enormously the influence of the Feudal Catholic Church. Accordingly in 1493 Pope Alexander VI issued a Papal Bull announcing that Spain was being granted exclusive right over the East Indies, and lineally dividing the Atlantic between Spain and Portugal. By this act, not only were the Italians excluded from any participation in further possible discoveries in the west, but Britain and other West European countries were also shut out. The date 1492 may therefore be taken as the beginning of the Atlantic Period and marked the decay of the power of the Eastern Mediterranean. The monopoly that had hitherto relied on the maritime centres — Venice, Genoa, Hamburg, Lubeck and Bruges — as trading route and trading depots, began to shift to — Lisbon, Cadiz, Bordeaux, Cherbourg, Antwerp, Amsterdam, London and Liverpool. Hence the interests of Spain in the Low Countries, and the natural development of Merchant Capitalism in England. We can

appreciate the power of the centralised Catholic Church when we realise that almost a century later, when England was itself challenging the supremacy of the Spanish maritime traders, and repudiating the authority of the Pope over these and other matters, Spain was instructed to use its vast Armada to invade England, and tried to do so. That venture failed; and England was now set to assume the leadership in Merchant and later Industrial Capitalism.

THE FATE OF SPANISH JEWRY

This apparent digression into the history of European Mercantilism is particularly relevant to the position of European Jewry. It brings out, in the first place, that Jews themselves were in no sense a major factor in that process. The forces at work were of a totally different kind and of a different order of magnitude from what could possibly have been exerted by individual Jews or by Jewish groups. Secondly it shows that they were now to be caught up in a rapidly changing social and political situation over which they had no control. This is precisely what was meant when we warned against exaggerating the part played by Jews during this period.

But 1492 was a very significant date for European Jewry. Under the Moslem Empire in Spain, before it fell, Jews had risen to positions of high standing in the cultural professions, as writers, philosophers, and doctors, as well as merchants. With the rise of native Spanish merchants, and indeed with the interest of the Spanish Court and the Catholic Church in such matters, there was of course no place for a Jewish merchant. Indeed Alexander VI's Papal Bull of 1493 definitely and explicitly asserted that no Jew, converted or otherwise, might hold property in the new trans-Atlantic countries that were being discovered. The consequences were therefore obvious, and the Spanish Inquisition undertook its part of this task by its trials, persecutions, burning, and harrying of Jews and people of Jewish origin. Those who managed to escape fled back along the north coast of Africa to Egypt. Thence some moved on to Palestine where Safed, dating from 1500, has a population of such Jews, while another stream spread up through Turkey to Turkey-in-Europe, namely the Balkans, where to this day the language spoken by Jewry there is Ladino, the tongue developed among the Jews of Spain.

To all intents and purposes, for many years thereafter, the role of the Jew in the commercial world, now moving into Mercantilism, was reduced to trivial proportions. The effect however was to accentuate the isolation of Jewry, and to sharpen their internal sense of separateness, even to the extent of inducing many who had more recently assimilated, to return to the main body. Although the case charged against the Jews was that they were infidels and hostile to the true faith, those who had actually embraced that faith were yet refused; and this, of course, was consistent with the Papal Bull of Alexander VI. The religious and ideological case was as usual a mere reflection of totally different aspects of that socio-economic period.

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF ANTI-SEMITISM

All this is a particular illustration of a principle running like a thread throughout history, and it applies not merely to the case of Jews but to many other minorities. Until relatively recent times the basic causes of rapid social change and of crisis have not been clearly understood, and even today capitalist Governments are at a loss to know what steps to take to stem a rising tide of inflation, a mounting total of unemployment, a worsening in the relations between the governments of highly armed countries, or even a steady but quite evident drift towards war. Social stress and strain rise and fall. It is a struggle for survival manifesting itself in a thousand different ways, here on the economic, there on the ideological and ethical plane. In such a confused, unorganised, unplanned and uncontrolled society, when economic crises emerge, members of any minority group, separate and distinct from other individuals in their society, are in a particularly vulnerable position. They are likely to suffer in a two-fold way. The crisis hits them at first as it does any other member of the community; but in addition the majority of its victims tend to resent the fact that an almost foreign minority competes with them in the effort to obtain the diminishing means of survival. For example, "No Catholic to have a job until every Protestant has one" made its appearance as a slogan in the West of Scotland, during the slump of the 1930's in Britain. Thus it is not surprising that since the dispersion of the Jews among the nations, the successive social crises of the West have left their imprint in blood on the story of this people, with all their psycho-

logical and emotional repercussions. Whether it was the Inquisition with its vicious expulsion of Spanish Jews — merchants and intellectuals alike — just at the moment when the Merchant Class in the West of Europe were driven to seek a new and more secure route to the East; or whether it was the Nazis with their incinerating chambers, just at the moment when capitalist Germany was struggling to resolve her internal economic crisis by external expansion; or whether it was the pogroms of Czarist Russia during the long crisis that finally emerged in the 1905 Revolution — in all cases where a considerable population of Jews existed, a period of social stress and strain has coincided with an upsurge of anti-semitism.

Two consequences flow from this. Within the body of Jewry itself there undoubtedly exists a certain degree of hypertension, an alertness to the slightest sign of discrimination on the part of non-Jews against the Jew. In many cases, super-sensitive in this matter, they tend to see racial antagonism where none exists, but the very fact that Jews feel like this, strengthens the bond between them, and subjectively tends to mark the Jew off from his neighbour. Again, once an anti-semitic attitude has been engendered in a community during a period of social stress, who can tell how long a period of social quiescence must elapse before it is completely obliterated from the emotional and even the verbal tradition of that community? These are both what might be called super-structural or ideological reflections of an economic disorder that long outlive their immediate causes.

ANTI-SEMITISM AS SURVIVAL FACTOR

We are therefore driven back to our original question — even if there was a positive function Jews were able to perform, that made it possible for them to exist, how did they, or some at least, succeed in *persisting* in such a periodically hostile environment? The fact is of course that for Jewry, anti-semitism has itself had great survival value. As successive generations grew up in their gentile environments, and as society itself slowly and painfully learnt to struggle for justice, the younger members of the Jewish community, emotionally alive to such values, naturally tended to assimilate — to live and work in unity with their non-Jewish brothers. For this to become wholly effective takes time; it has to work against the vestiges of an old hostility that lurks like a shadow

in the traditional background showing themselves in habits of speech and in socially inherited attitudes. Long before this merging has been achieved, there has invariably come into being yet another social crisis; and, in such periods, a small community withdraws into itself for consolidation and for self-protection. It seeks safety and security in unity. For Jewry, therefore, pogroms and the lesser forms of anti-semitism have tended to keep them alive as a people. A capitalist world that could not control its own crises was not likely to witness the natural absorption of its Jews; and so they have persisted.

ROLE OF DISPERSION IN SURVIVAL

But there has been yet another factor that has had a very powerful influence on Jewish survival—and this, strange as it may seem, has been their dispersion among the nations. Between 1939 and 1945 Hitler and his henchmen reduced more than one quarter—probably nearer a third—of the world Jewish population to slavery, and then to ashes. Naturally it was not possible to make decent young Germans sink to such levels of barbarism without providing some kind of historical justification that would make it seem right in their eyes and that would, at the same time, imbue them with the desire to establish the might of Nazi Germany over Europe. Hence the theories of German supermen and Jewish sub-men. The Jews were a conveniently small minority against which to enhance German stature. It is the outstanding illustration in history of how, given the appropriate conditions, a fake theory, carried to its logical conclusion, debases the values of a whole people. Only a theory based on historical reality can enhance human dignity. To Jewry it was the greatest wound, the greatest blow that had ever been inflicted on it during its terrible history. At least five million men, women, and children perished. I am asserting, without fear of contradiction, that only a Jew can grasp emotionally what this has signified. It has left an indelible mark on the mind and feelings of every Jew. What influence could this have had on their survival? Has it not struck them a mortal blow? On the contrary it has enhanced their own sense of human dignity. It has engendered a new awareness of national feeling among large sections of Jewry, of an urgency and of a quality that did not exist before 1939. As an unconscious force for heightened

Jewish awareness, Jewish survival, and Jewish nationalism, Hitler towers head and shoulders above any Jew living or dead. In a world at war with itself it was not possible completely to destroy a people as widely distributed as are the Jews. They must always be in one camp or another; and repression in one camp merely sharpens the will to survive in the other.

RESIDUAL FORMS OF NATIONAL FEELING

The characteristics of this people today, their modern social stratification and the ideologies they express, are however vastly different from those of the fiercely nationalistic people of 2,000 years ago. They have had twenty centuries of deepening experience. It is true, as we have pointed out, that even at that time they were, relatively speaking, widely spread. Philo of Alexandria remarks that there is hardly a people in whose veins some Jewish blood does not run. To these emigrés Jerusalem was what Mecca is to the Moslems. But the core of Jewry in Palestine itself was imbued with an intense national feeling knit together with a strong religious sentiment. Their national destiny was regarded as a divine ordination as is obvious from their holy script. It is not therefore surprising that during the Dispersion, Hebrew became elevated in religious circles into a sacred tongue; but to the great majority of Jews today it has become little more than a language with which they have only a nodding acquaintance, through some elements of early religious instruction. Their natural speech is that of the people among whom they dwell, and with whom they have received their general education, English, Russian, French, and, for those who stem directly from Jewish communities in Eastern Europe — Yiddish. Every Western European nation has its Jewish writers, artists, and musicians, expressing the ideas and the values of their society in the language and the idiom of the people among whom they dwell. In the Soviet Union there are Jewish writers in Russian but also writers and poets in Yiddish. Today a new vigorous modern Hebrew literature is emerging in Israel. Thus Jewish writers and poets reflect two aspects of Jewry, the cultural pattern they have in common with their non-Jewish neighbours, and a certain complex of values that have been socially inherited from the very distant past, moulded and modified by the fears and tensions that have been engendered by a history of communal in-

security extending over twenty centuries, coupled with a certain kind of pride in their tenacity to survive. It is in these latter qualities that the Jew is marked off from his neighbours, and it is exclusively these also that are reflected for the most part in Yiddish music, literature and poetry.

It is not surprising, therefore, that wherever Jews gather together they form their communal institutions and their social centres. They set up their synagogues where their sons are confirmed and their sons and daughters married—even many of those who are vigorous opponents of religious obscurantism. Recently, when in the Soviet Union, I asked a young Jew why he, an atheist, had attended synagogue on one of the festivals. He admitted, quite frankly, that as he had not been there for years he felt that for once he wanted to be among his fellow Jews. It is not unexpected therefore, that there exists among them a keen concern about what is happening to Jews in other parts of the world. Jews in Britain, America and in Israel are avid for information about the manner of life of Jews in the Soviet Union. Jews in the Soviet Union ply visitors with questions about what is developing in Israel. When Suslov jokingly remarked, during my visit, that if the hair of a single Jew was touched anywhere a shout went up from every Jew in the four corners of the world, he was placing his finger not only on an objective fact of social significance to Governments with considerable Jewish populations, but he was indicating how sensitive to signs of anti-semitism this people has become during the course of its history. It is these modes of mental, emotional and physical behaviour, superimposed on the ordinary non-Jewish pattern of social life, that must be recognised as the vestigial and transformed remains of the old nationalist feeling of 2,000 years ago; and they are so deep and subtle that any attempt to ignore their existence by any political group interested in such questions would be the crassest stupidity. They undoubtedly exist. Scratch an American Jew one way and he shows himself rabidly pro-American; scratch him another way and he becomes fiercely pro-Jewish. There are occasions when this dual sensitiveness may become politically significant. It was so in Britain during the Israeli War of Liberation; there are corresponding aspects of the same nature to be seen today in the Soviet Union in relation to Israel and the Middle East.

A Jew looking across the frontier into the territory of a Government hostile to his own may meet the eyes of his Jewish brother.

Nevertheless it must be emphasised that today, for the great majority of these people, there is no question that their *home* is where they are, and not, say, in Israel. They may visit Israel but they return *home* to their native land, the land of their *personal* birth, and not the birthplace of their race. For reasons such as these it is quite impossible to say that the widely distributed people without a common location or an integrated economy, who are called Jews are a *nation*, a single nation. Nor are they a religious denomination. Nor are they a more or less uniform cultural entity. There are cultural differences among them, that arise from simple class stratification in the society in which they live; and cultural similarities that lie deeply rooted in their past history. Nor are they linguistically uniform from country to country. Yet they are a social group united together by a common bond, a people with a strong concern for *the* Nation, which, under most precarious conditions, has undoubtedly come into existence in Israel. This community of feeling has been re-sharpened most intensely by the Nazi and Fascist movements that sprang up during the most recent world crisis. Families and communities have been broken up, some escaping to the United States, some to Britain, some to Israel, and the remainder destroyed in the incinerating chambers of Germany. Yet there has been a new cohesion of Jewry in the international sphere, a heightened sense of unity in adversity, a stronger sympathy with that section which feels itself a nation apart.

RUSSIAN JEWISH NATION?

All this represents a sudden reversal of a process that was well under way prior to this. The nearest approach to a section of Jewry being a national entity, within the past thousand years, occurred in Russia and Russian Poland during Czarist times; although before 1941 there were Jewish regions with recognised linguistic and cultural rights in Soviet Russia in the Crimea, the Ukraine and Byelorussia. Under the Czars, Jews living as they did in Pales of Settlement or in segregated Ghettos, at a level and with a mode of life corresponding to Early Capitalism, spoke a common language, Yiddish, with a distinctive music, literature, art,

and philosophy of life. To all intents and purposes they felt themselves to be an oppressed national minority, not nearly so unified in most respects as a nation and only temporarily occupying their present habitations, since, according to their interpretation of their Holy Scripts, their eventual return to Palestine was divinely assured. This was the special ideological framework within which their vestigial national feeling persisted.

As they became the victims of successive pogroms, there took place a periodic exodus of Jews from these areas to Germany, Britain, France and America, carrying with them their specific Yiddish culture, their sense of separateness, and their national aspirations. Thus they served to keep these flames alight in the Western world, as the children of each generation of immigrants there tended to move unconsciously towards closer assimilation with their non-Jewish neighbours. From the various religious colleges which had been established over many years in the Pales of Settlement, there came a steady flow of rabbis and religiously trained functionaries with ecclesiastical authority of one kind and another, who helped to direct the course of religious instruction, and to decide, on occasion, on points of religious law. Prior to 1917 it is undoubtedly true that the centre of gravity of Jewish life in its cultural and religious aspects lay in Eastern Europe. Thus, while it is not possible to assert on any accepted criterion that Russian Jewry under the Czars constituted a distinct nation, yet as a people they did show many characteristics that would be expected to occur in a recognised national group.

IMPACT OF RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

In 1917, however, not only did the citadel of Czarism topple as a result of the revolution, but the walls of the Ghettos collapsed. Young Jewish socialists, the young intelligentsia so urgently needed at that stage of the revolution, moved out as pioneers into the new republics. They were in many ways the cream of the revolution, and they threw themselves wholeheartedly into the task of helping to build up the New Society. The Jewish contribution to Socialist history lay no longer largely pent up in the stifling and over-heated atmosphere of the Ghettos. This marked the first stage in the disruption of Jewish separateness in Eastern Europe from the almost mediaeval society in which it existed. The early

history of the revolution is rich with Jewish names, Trotzky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Litvinoff, Kaganovitch, etc., many of whom, for reasons almost too fantastic to believe, were later to disappear from the scene. In a country with a long tradition of underground conspiracy against a Czarism to whom life was dirt cheap, and where naked force was the normal instrument of persuasion, revolution was necessarily a dangerous occupation. There could be no greater mistake than to imagine that our own values, of a totally different nature, built up slowly in a totally different society with a totally different history, must or should necessarily manifest themselves under such conditions. To do so would not only be unhistoric stupidity, but would be to see an absoluteness in our set of values of a special nature, for which there could be no "justification" in reason or in any rational view of evolutionary ethics. So, for the moment, until we have examined this matter more closely, let us withhold our judgment.

It is sometimes felt by non-Jews that the presence of so many members of that people among prominent revolutionaries is a rather sinister fact. Fascists and anti-semites have seen in it all the evidence they need to establish the "fact" that the Jews are engaged in a subtle international conspiracy whose object is presumably to bring the governments of the world under their control. On the other hand wealthy and socially exalted Jews frequently do not hesitate to express their intense distaste that any Jew should be so devoid of consideration for his people (themselves) as to align himself with anything in the nature of a revolutionary movement! Brushing the last point aside as little more than a form of class nervousness, there is nevertheless a serious point to be explained that lies embedded in the charges of the Fascists. How did it arise that so many Jews were prominent in the Russian Revolution — at least in the early stages? If we can answer this in a direct rational way the further question that immediately would suggest itself is why the situation seems now to have changed in this respect. That question we can turn to later, but for the moment we restrict ourselves to the first issue.

In Czarist Russia prior to the Revolution the population was universally poverty-stricken and illiterate, except for a decadent and degenerate aristocracy and a class of civil servant whose function it was to operate the whole repressive system. Russia was

regarded as a prison of nations, and to a very large extent the system continued to function through the sharpening of antagonisms between one nationality and another. Thus it was, for example, that the Cossacks evoked a feeling of horror in the hearts and minds of the Jews. Freedom from Czarist oppression meant, therefore, freedom for these numerous subject nations, however they were unified as a totality. The Jews with their long tradition of internal education, and the high value they placed on learning, were relatively speaking a very advanced national group. They were steeped in religious and philosophical lore, and by the time the country as a whole was ripe for the overthrow of the Czarist autocracy a considerable proportion of the younger Jews were already highly sophisticated socialists. The fact that Jews were directly involved in the revolutionary struggle was therefore nothing more than was to be expected from an oppressed people. The fact that a much larger proportion of leading revolutionaries were Jews than was to be expected from their numerical strength among the general population followed directly from their heightened political awareness and understanding. After all, Marx himself was a Jew who had very definite ideas how the solution of the Jewish problem was to be achieved. This in itself would turn the attention of young Jewish thinkers to a study of his mode of approach to such questions.

IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II

The next stage in the undermining of Jewish separateness in Eastern Europe took place in World War II with the Hitlerian invasion into Soviet Russia, into Poland, into Byelorussia, the Ukraine and south towards the Crimea. These were the areas where Jewish life still persisted with quite a considerable degree of unified Yiddish culture. It will also stand to the credit of the Soviet authorities that they took immediate and timely steps to evacuate Jewry from these danger spots to regions far distant from the actual fighting front. Anyone who has set eyes on the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto, and the almost incredible bestial devastation wrought there by the Nazis, must realise the awful fate from which the Soviet Union saved their Jewish citizens. Nevertheless these circumstances were directly responsible for the final dissolution of what remained of a Jewry still

wedded to its traditional Ghetto areas. A social corpus that had for many generations inspired Jewish cultural life, and enriched Jewry through the rest of the world, was at last scattered. An epoch in Jewish history had come to an end. There was no longer a centre that could in the old sense be regarded as the focus and locus of Jewish national life.

The end of one epoch marks the beginning of another. To imagine for a moment that the underlying attachment of a people, internationally distributed as are the Jews, would automatically vanish with the dissolution of its earlier focal centre is to be quite unrealistic. The forces that compelled this dissolution themselves had a profound effect on world Jewry, as we have indicated. It was moved to its depths, and both it and "The Jewish Problem" were suddenly seen in objective relief everywhere, in a way which had never before been experienced. I have already remarked that as an unconscious force that intensified Jewish nationalism Hitler towers head and shoulders above all others. In the capitalist sector of the world, immediately after World War II, two consequences followed. On the one side, in countries like the United States, Great Britain, France, South Africa, where considerable Jewish communities existed, a tremendous impetus was given to support for Zionism, and the flow of refugees from Central Europe was steadily directed towards Palestine. Cynics have said that the main motive for this in the Jewish middle and upper classes lay in the fear or discomfort of having in their country a poverty-stricken and dependent population of émigrés. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that a wave of Jews surged to Palestine to escape from the regions in which such horrors had been perpetrated on their people. The second effect was the outbreak of a struggle in the Middle East between the Jews and the British in the first instance, and then between the Jews and the neighbouring Arab States, when Israel was proclaimed an independent State. Thus within the space of a few years we have witnessed the dissolution of localised Jewish concentration in the Soviet Union, and the formation of a new focus of Jewish concentration in the Middle East. Today the eyes of Jewry everywhere are directed at Israel, watching events in that area with anxious interest; and in the minds behind these eyes there lurks a painful memory of Holy Crusades, massacres, the Spanish Inquisition, pogrom after pogrom

in Czarist Russia, the Beilis Trial; the Dreyfus Trial and French anti-semitism, the anti-semitic outbursts of Fascists everywhere in Europe, the Nazi barbarity with its mass murder and genocide policy, and finally the liquidation of leading Jewish cultural workers in the Soviet Union during the latter years of Stalin's life. This then is the modern background against which the remains of the intense Jewish nationalism of two thousand years ago is silhouetted. It typifies in summary form the historic process that has periodically sharpened the separateness of the Jews, and so prevented their disappearance as a people.

In whatever way the "Jewish Problem" thus presented itself prior to the First World War, since that time it has taken on a totally new complexion. Today the world is sharply divided into two camps, Socialist and Capitalist, and Jew now looks anxiously at Jew across the frontiers that divide them. Many Soviet Jews direct their eyes questioningly towards the fate of Israel. Israeli Jews, British, American, Italian, French, South and North African Jews — all without exception crowd around those who have visited the Soviet Union, for information about how their fellow Jews are faring. These are simple facts which it is futile to deny.

In these two world sectors, moreover, social and ideological life is widely different. So also are the political policies pursued by their respective Governments. The Jew therefore is nervously alert to the fact that he may very easily become a political football between contending sides, a bargaining point, an object of suspicion to both, and a scapegoat on whose back is laid the responsibility for each and every social ill. But let us be quite frank about this. The use of Jewry as a political football is by no means the monopoly of non-Jews. Communities in the capitalist world are certainly class-divided, and in general, Jews, broadly speaking, adopt the outlook and political biases of the class to which they belong. There are definitely sections of British and American Jewry, for example, who consider it is just to use the position of Soviet Jewry, as these sections interpret that position, as a stick to beat the Soviet system generally. They must surely be sufficiently intelligent to realise that if their judgment of the Soviet authorities were accurate they could not expect to do anything but damage to the welfare of Soviet Jewry by following this procedure. Apparently this means little to them.

EFFECT OF COLD WAR

The damage that may be done in this way can easily be illustrated. Stalin had a theory to which he was tenaciously attached, that as the Socialist State becomes ever more firmly established, the class enemy — those who plot and scheme in conjunction with external co-conspirators to undermine the New Society — entrenches himself deeper and deeper, becoming ever more desperate. (This is the kind of situation which it was maintained had developed in that strategically important area, Hungary, in October, 1956.) When World War II came to its nominal end, the victorious Soviet Union lay torn, bleeding, and devastated. She, above all, had suffered the damage and destruction of the cruellest of invasions, to an extent far beyond the experience and the imagination of any of her allies. At this stage, with the hard-won achievements of the Revolution in ruins around her, she found herself face to face with an ally, the U.S.A., the monopoly-holder of the atom bomb, who proceeded to exercise pressure to bend her to her will. Here, as Stalin saw it, was an imperialist power behaving precisely in marxist text-book fashion. Almost the first move was to force the evacuation of Soviet troops from Persia in 1945. The efforts of Moussadeq to nationalise the Persian oil fields in 1950 were frustrated by a foreign-inspired coup — and now these invaluable natural resources have passed more fully into the control of American, and to a lesser extent British finance. This was in fact the Cold War already in operation, atom bomb politics directed towards financial imperialist interests, the first overt movement that pointed to the gathering storm in the Middle East. As was to be expected, in order that the realistic side of this might not be exposed to a naive American public, McCarthyism began to rear its head, and the mouths of American critics were padlocked.

What effect would all this be expected to have on the Soviet Union? Naturally this way and that way heads were turned to detect the intrigues of the enemy as they might expose themselves within the country itself; and on Beria, the head of the Secret Police, fell responsibility for unmasking the class enemy who, to Stalin, was necessarily at work. Here I am concerned only with one small group among many which found itself suddenly caught up in the terror and suspicion that naturally emerged in this awful atmosphere. During the war, representatives of the Soviet Jewish anti-Fascist

Committee, Pfeffer and Mikhoels, poet and actor respectively, had visited Britain and the U.S.A., anxious to win help and support for the struggle against Nazi Germany. They proved, by evidence to their Jewish cultural blood-brothers in these countries, how completely different was the treatment of Soviet Jewry from the repressive attitude of the Czarist regimes. Yiddish Press, Yiddish papers and Yiddish theatres were all flourishing. Yiddish culture was being nurtured and nourished in a way that had never previously occurred in the history of the Jewish people. Only a socialist State, it was clear, could understand the real significance and the emotional need of such cultural opportunities. They succeeded only too well in their mission, and Jews of all parties responded nobly, especially in the face of the murderous attacks on their fellow Jews in Germany and the occupied territories.

The war comes to its end, and the erstwhile allies are now split by the Cold War. Jews in the U.S.A. and in Britain, and indeed the Jewish Press of these countries, like their non-Jewish colleagues, align themselves mainly by class. Under cover of the Atom Bomb the finger of the West is pointed accusingly at the Soviet Union. She is scheming to enslave other peoples; she is anti-semitic, she threatens to invade Europe. These are the accusations, and who are the accusers? Among them are many of the people whom the poet Pfeffer and the actor Mikhoels have hailed as their blood-brothers at a moment of struggle when it was essential to sweep in every element of Jewish support possible, even capitalist and bourgeois Jewish nationalist support. So let it be. To an unscrupulous conspirator, self-seeker and sycophant like Beria, here is all the evidence required to convince Stalin—now probably almost in his dotage—that at last the class enemy has been unmasked. Sweep aside those who have pressed and propagandised on behalf of this dangerous bourgeois culture. Liquidate the leaders of this obviously subversive movement, and shut down on all avenues that exist for its expression. In judging this let us remember that we are dealing with the aftermath of a period in which countless men, women, and children have been drafted about en masse from camp to camp over thousands of miles, or simply exterminated by invasion so that the ruthless use of force for all manner of objectives is still part of the general atmosphere.

I do not assert for a moment that this is an exact description of

the course of events. Who can tell since we have little direct evidence on which to go? Silence on these questions still seems to be a matter of set policy. Nor could this be the only reason that led to the elimination of the foremost Jewish cultural workers in the Soviet Union, during the last few years of Stalin's life. It is undoubtedly the case that the bourgeois Jewish nationalism of the Zionists with their willingness to set up an Israeli State that would act as a point of support for Imperialism in the Middle East, with their persistent demands that Soviet Jews be "freed" to emigrate to Israel, was also a considerable factor.

I have diverged into this aspect of our problem in some detail in the first place to illustrate the way in which the Jews can be used as a political football. Political necessity can be a very powerful and ruthless force in the modern world. But I have another reason. Those of us who have tried to study the process of history objectively have recognised the indispensable rôle that Jewry played in pre-capitalist society. As soon as capitalism had successfully established itself it had no specific need of Jews in any special rôle. The economic basis of Jewry as such no longer existed. In this special sense therefore it is capitalism that has posed the Jewish problem, but it has been unable to resolve it simply because it has been unable to absorb them, to make them disappear. It has scattered them, but its own blind unorganised forces have resulted in a retention of much of Jewry's ancient heritage; the Jews have remained. Even the last great effort by Nazi capitalist Germany to wipe them out, once and for all, was doomed to failure simply because by that time capitalist society had spread them throughout the nations. Only a combined capitalist and socialist effort directed to total extermination could be successful, and this is clearly impossible.

It must be stated quite frankly that marxists have therefore looked with complete assurance to the socialist part of the world to resolve this question in that sector. I propose shortly to examine the manner in which I would have expected this to occur, but it has to be stated equally frankly that our expectations have so far suffered disappointment. What is significant is that precisely at this historic stage in the rise of socialism and in the struggle within capitalism this problem for Jews should have reached its climax in both camps.

*ZIONISM – POLITICAL THEORY
WITHIN CAPITALISM*

Zionism, the case presented by those who seek to find a solution to the Jewish problem on a territorial basis by establishing or re-establishing a home for a resurgent Jewry in Palestine, is, of course, a political theory, and like all political theories without exception, a child of the period in which it was born. Marxism for example, which purports to give the scientific approach to the processes of history could not have been fashioned prior to the nineteenth century, when scientific method established the correctness of its own mode of analysis. In as much as science itself, and the great advances to its credit, was clearly a child of capitalism so also was Marxism, even although the latter predicted the death of its parent. Because of this prediction and the political practice that has flowed from it, Marxism must be seen as a *reaction* to capitalism. By comparison political Zionism must in the first instance be seen therefore as a *reflection* of capitalism in the minds of those who were tortured by the sufferings of international Jewry; and these sufferings arose from a widespread malaise within the framework of capitalism itself. Between 1881 and 1925 it is estimated that nearly four million Jews emigrated from Eastern European countries to the West, and, in spite of that, the population of Jewry in Eastern Europe rose steadily. This was a period of over-production in capitalist society, which of course, since this leads to unemployment, implies also over-production of labour. Crises of this nature always occur in a society when by the very nature of its structure, it is unable to accommodate itself to a growth in the productive forces of that society. The process that was occurring during the period we have mentioned reached its climax in the great slump of the 1930's. It was therefore towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, that this widespread crisis began to show itself, as usual, in outbursts of anti-semitism in Eastern Europe, and that political Zionism therefore seized the imagination of Dr. Herzl and his fellow propagandists. It was of course presented within a framework of Jewish nationalism, emotionally heightened by the occurrence of pogroms. Zionism was therefore, subjectively speaking, a demand for justice for Jewry, with which every decent person will wholeheartedly sympathise. Objectively, it differed fundamentally from other na-

tionalist movements in the West. When nationalism raised its head at the end of the feudal period it was in effect an assertion on the part of a new rising class, the Merchant Class, for an expanded society, supported, of course, by the craftsmen. Very specifically it sought to burst the bonds that were restricting the old society. Zionism, emerging from within capitalism, did not profess to be anti-capitalist, although of course there were socialist groups among them as there are in capitalist countries in general. It simply sought to rescue Jewry, suspended as it were between Heaven and Hell, from its precarious position in a crisis-ridden capitalist society, by a direct territorial solution within capitalism. In this sense it was not a *reaction* to capitalism but the reflection of a human problem of Jews within capitalism. At best it could only be a make-shift amelioration. But it was basically much more than this. Its leadership, with few exceptions, held that it was vital to "rescue" Jews from responding to the call of the revolutionary movement in Russia and Eastern Europe. It is not surprising therefore that it looked to Imperialist Britain to take the Zionist Movement under its wing, and this they achieved through the Balfour Declaration which accorded to Jews the privilege of settling as Empire colonists in Palestine, which Britain held under mandate. By this bargain the leadership nailed the Zionist flag to the mast of British Imperialism. The Jewish problem, however, and its solution, is not one merely of territory. The world eruption which has split society into two opposing camps has thrown up nearly two million Jewish people on a strip of land in the Middle East, the hottest region of the volcanic crater. Out of a world struggle, a tiny state has come into existence with a capitalist structure, and beset with all the problems of capitalist society. This time, however, there is a crucial difference. Israel is now a nation, showing all the features of an integrated society, but born in the confusion of a self-destroying capitalism, and not out of the needs of a rising class in the expanding economy or out of a direct struggle against local imperialist exploitation.

THE IRRELEVANCE OF ZIONISM

The original tenets of Zionism are now of no consequence. The Israeli State is there, and in so far as this was the consummation devoutly desired by Zionists they are entitled to claim that their

main objective has been achieved. Whether it will now bring peace and security to a tortured people is a very different matter. The great question mark that faces every sympathetic Jewish Socialist is simply stated — How can a secure and balanced Israeli economy possibly be built up in a region that is itself so uncertain and unstable, at a moment in history when the whole of the West is in travail? What vital economic role can Israel fill that could ensure her survival in the Middle East as a progressive force? Israel like the Jewish Problem is indeed the child of a crisis-ridden capitalism.

Whatever be the past story of the Zionist Movement and the willingness of its leadership to play its part in an Imperialist set-up, if only in the process a home can be found for a nationalist section of Jewry in Palestine, the fact remains that the dynamic of history has itself swept into this area a variegated mass of Jews who have now constituted themselves very definitely into a nation. As we have indicated, this consists of Central European Jews who have escaped the fate that Hitler had in store for them, Jews of all ages who have fled from the aggressive nationalism of neighbouring Arab States, and young idealist Zionists who, trained and educated in the capitalist part of the world, have gone to Israel to help constitute a nation. Large numbers of these young men and women have flocked into the kibbutzim—agricultural colonies—there to attempt to wed modern industrial methods and machinery to an agriculture which, in the Middle East at any rate, lags notoriously behind the level of world science. In addition to this new population of Jews, there is also a considerable minority of Arabs who have remained in the land of their birth and of their fore-fathers, living under what is to them an alien Government, and undoubtedly discriminated against economically. In the neighbouring Arab countries, living under conditions of abject poverty, are the remains of those Arabs—men, women, and children—who fled from their homes in Israel on the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war. They have been left to rot.

THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

They have rotted not simply as a consequence of the fact that the Israeli Government has refused to give them back the land from which they fled in terror. They have rotted also because the

kings, sheikhs, effendis in the neighbouring Arab countries have preferred to retain a rotting peasantry lying literally idle and unsettled at the door of Israel, on land crying out for cultivation, so that whatever troubles might otherwise arise between themselves and those they exploit to their own advantage, the Jew may be held responsible. Jews know this game of old. But they rot also for another and deeper reason which is rarely faced. The world struggle, that came to a head in Europe at the time of the Second World War, saw a terrible injustice laid on the shoulders of Jewry. In fleeing to Israel, and, in effect, displacing the greater number of the Arabs whose homeland it was, they threw part of this injustice from their own shoulders on to those of the unhappy Arabs. This was clearly one of the by-products of the struggle that took place in Central Europe, and to that extent, justice demands that its resolution be found as part of the final war settlement. Those who maintain that it is the responsibility of Israeli Jewry simply to evacuate the land that they now occupy so that the displaced Arabs—or all that remain of them as a peasantry—may return to their old habitations, are blind to the meaning and to the sweep of a whole historic process. It has passed them by. They see only immediate causes. To-day Israel is a nation with a language and a literature of its own, a native music and native arts. It is a capitalist society, whose principal towns, including Jerusalem, are completely westernised. There are strong socialist forces at work within the country. There is a Communist Party with Arab and Jewish members in the Knesset. Mapam, one of the political parties represented within the coalition government, claims to be marxist and also has Arab and Jewish members in the Knesset.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DEPENDENCE

To the extent roughly of about one third Israel is dependent on American capitalist investment, one third on donations without strings from Jews throughout the capitalist sector of the world, and only to the remaining third self-supporting. Its economic position is precarious; its population more than doubled since 1948. It has its class distinctions and its colour discrimination—between Jew and Jew — but it is undoubtedly the only country in the world in which a Jewish nation can truly be said to exist. To-day it leans heavily on imported material capital from America, and intellectual

capital from Central Europe. Whether it will survive in these circumstances as an independent entity, or whether Jewry has walked from one trap in Central Europe into another in the Middle East remains to be seen. This is the stark issue that faces the whole people of Israel, and all those who maintain that Israel is entitled to exist and to survive.

AN AMERICAN SATELLITE?

As if to make confusion doubly confounded, just at the moment when the two major powers are seeking to win over the Arab peoples each to its own way of thinking, the one ultimately towards the Socialist cause, the other in order to safeguard its Middle Eastern oil interests, the Ben Gurion Government publicly announces that Israel, partially at any rate, espouses the Eisenhower Doctrine, and so takes sides in a world struggle that she is impotent to affect. It is true that, like Afghanistan, she omitted the "world Communist" formula. Had Israel wished deliberately to weaken herself and Arab support for the U.S.A., she could have ventured no better step, and no more propitious moment; nor could she have chosen a better method of arousing Soviet hostility. It added to the dangers to world peace. Moreover when one looks at the record of Israeli voting at the United Nations, the extent to which Israel appears as a satellite of the U.S.A. is obvious, although she would claim that this occurred only after the Soviet Union had adopted a hostile attitude to her. The fact is however that the Ben Gurion Government has always leaned towards the West, and turned a deaf ear to all Soviet approaches to help her.

SOVIET-JEWISH PROBLEM

As we have explained however, the fact that Israel exists in a form so intimately dependent on American resources, in the region of maximum world tension, gives a peculiar slant to the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. It is of immense importance, therefore, in attempting to assess this whole issue, that an effort be made to see it as it presents itself to the Soviet authorities. Unfortunately no official statement has been forthcoming from that source that could be quoted as final, but there are many pointers that enable some kind of coherent picture to be pieced together.

To the Soviet Union there are two questions closely linked. One deals with the position of their own Jews and what precisely is the status of such a people; the other deals with the Soviet Union's relationship to Israel as one of the nations in the Middle Eastern cauldron. Today Russian Jewry does not constitute a separate nation on any definition, Stalinist or otherwise. Nor are they now even regarded as a national minority in the strict sense of the term. It would be impossible to argue, for example, that they are a people who regard Israel as their cultural homeland in the sense that Turks within the Soviet frontier, for instance, would visualise Turkey. Nor do they speak Hebrew as their natural tongue. The fact is that they are not now accorded regular national minority rights. It seems to be assumed that their cultural unity has either broken down or is fast disappearing. The logic of this would appear to imply that they are nothing other than *simple* Soviet citizens, entitled to full rights of citizenship without discrimination of any kind. But simplicity is the last attribute that could be accorded to Jewry. How, with their complex historical record, with their periods of nomadic and of settled economies throughout the ages, with here the aloofness of the onlooker and there the fierce enthusiasm of the revolutionary or the prophet—how could the world reflect itself into their inner consciousness except in a highly complex way? All this implies that the Jew, as with every person, but with him in a rather exaggerated form, cannot but retain a certain degree of separateness and aloofness, a certain lack of complete integration. The difference from the non-Jew in this respect lies in the fact that the Jew has not only a personal but a group history, which has not consolidated itself, except in Israel, into the economic, emotional and psychological form to be found in stabilised national entities.

All this, as we have tried to explain, is the modern relic of a pre-feudal nationalism sharpened in the case of Soviet Jewry by generations of life in the Pales of Settlement, Czarist Governmental discrimination, and recurrent pogroms, almost into that of a separate nation. And this again has been further intensified by the most acute disillusionment and the destruction of their highest hopes, by the repressive policy pursued in the Soviet Union during the latter years of Stalin's life, towards the cultural life of Soviet Jewry and the physical elimination of many of their most creative

cultural leaders. It is possibly true, that if the Jews of the Soviet Union were allowed freely to emigrate to Israel at the present moment, quite a proportion might avail themselves of the opportunity. One cannot assert this with sureness. What is certainly true is that when the Polish Government removed such a ban in the case of its Jews, in order probably to cope with its long established problem of anti-semitism among its own population, large masses of Jews did emigrate. If it were a fact that once the ban on emigration were lifted, many Jews would take the chance so offered, it would in effect afford evidence of the ease with which Jewish Soviet citizens, in the present atmosphere, could change their citizenship. Their ties to other Soviet citizens would be shown to be weaker than those of their non-Jewish neighbours. Whether Israel could absorb them is quite another matter. But it would do more. It would expose the failure of the Soviet Socialist State to win the allegiance of this section of Jewry.

From the standpoint of the Soviet Union this reflects the Jewish problem. It has in its midst a less integrated people than the others; but this would be of no consequence at all except in certain very special circumstances. These arise when international tension is such as to demand an almost rigorous conformity—what is usually called loyalty—from the population as a whole, and when at the same time the cause of the tension touches on a matter that is deeply felt by this slightly alien people. Quakers and pacifists are in such a position during a war, but they do not have the emotional penchant for another nation that the Jews have. Most civilised countries, when they go to war—a contradiction in terms—make allowance for the feelings and beliefs of Quakers and pacifists. The practical problem that faces the Soviet Government is what to do about its Jews, when, because of the necessities of its external policy, their external sympathies become of importance. All this is sharpened at the present moment by the undoubted fact that the Autonomous Republics in the Soviet Union have each separately developed a strong local sense of nationalism, so that wherever the Soviet Jew finds himself his slight degree of separateness is present. In these areas he is both a Jew *and* a Russian. He is certainly not an Uzbek, or a Turkoman for example. Let us examine the implications of this problem more closely.

The over-riding issue for the Soviet Union at the present moment is that of co-existence, peace or war, the need to halt the creeping military power of American Imperialism in the Middle East, in the countries that lie near the Soviet border. The United States of America has placed atom bases in a wide circle enveloping the Soviet Union. It follows that every country—including Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania—which lies along or near the Soviet frontier is, or was until quite recently, a region of strategic importance. This is one of the important factors which must be borne in mind in appraising Soviet relations with these countries. Those who imagine that, in the present state of world tension, either the U.S.A. or the Soviet Union would allow its neighbouring countries to become mere pawns to be used by the other side in such a struggle are politically and militarily naive. The real charge against the Soviet Union in relation to Hungary is that it allowed the situation there to degenerate, under Communist rule, to a point where people were willing to rise against them instead of accepting them as the defenders of their safety. The Soviet charge, which has never been rebutted, is in substance that American agents played no small part in this whole business; and this, the Soviet maintains, is precisely what American imperialism for its own purposes is seeking to achieve in the Middle East.

Many people dislike the use of the word Imperialism because of its propagandist odour and because it seems to them to suggest that "Imperialists" exploit mercilessly, and have no sense of decency in their dealings with the people occupying a country which is at an early stage of development but which yet possesses natural resources that are of financial value to the "Imperialists." The aspect of American Imperialism in the Middle East with which I am here concerned, rests simply on the fact that there exists in that area, in Arab countries and in Persia, and to a lesser extent in Israel and in Egypt, very valuable natural oil resources, and that American oil companies (and by no means only American) are seeking to develop concessions they have received from the Governments of these areas to exploit these oil resources for their own maximum profit. For this purpose they avail themselves of the excessively cheap labour of the natives. But a modern state, such as Britain or the U.S.A., is not merely an uninterested outsider

that looks on smiling at American citizens who risk their money and their energies on such activities. It may itself be directly involved, as the British Government is in the Iranian oil fields, in that it holds shares in the company concerned and uses the profits for its own national purposes. It is not a charitable organisation, no more than any company is, but operates to make a profit. If it makes a loss, it would soon hear of it from its taxpayers. But even when it is itself not directly involved in the company it is by no means uninterested. It may be called upon to protest against any infringement of the "rights" of its citizens in such areas, engaged in these activities, by other interested parties there also seeking to squeeze profits out of the natural resources of the area and out of the cheap labour of the natives. It may have to defend them, it may finally be involved in armed conflict. A state which contemplates or even encourages this kind of venture has to give a certain degree of backing that may bring it into conflict with other states doing precisely the same thing for its citizens. The influence of pressure groups in this respect is notorious. There are states and states. Some of these, like the U.S.A., that are in the modern sense democratic, have, among those who guide national and international policy, individuals who as is well known represent special interests, say special oil interests, or more generally interests in securing "mineral rights" in other countries. These do not hesitate to exercise governmental pressure to secure their ends when necessary. We need not labour this point. In a "free enterprise" society the outward forms of democracy are not necessarily incompatible with the use of elected representatives to further large-scale private interests or with the use of the army or the air force to bomb recalcitrant natives and their villages out of existence. It is in this way that the State can stand behind Imperialist activities in the sense in which we have defined it. The American State apparatus undoubtedly stands behind American oil interests in the Middle East. Moreover where these oil-bearing countries have a landed aristocracy, kings, sheikhs, and effendis who can be provided with handsome royalties from the oil drawn from these areas the governing class can usually be relied on to work in close liaison with the State — in this case the American State — that stands behind the oil companies. The result is that the "natives", while they remain subjects of their kings, who are used as

a cover, become the victims of the most drastic exploitation of their labour.

Whatever criticism may be levelled against the Soviet Union, no one will accuse it of being a "free enterprise" society. It has no private oil companies operating in the Middle East, nor does the Soviet State act there in any such capacity. It does not directly or indirectly employ cheap native labour to acquire the products of these natural resources. On the contrary it is to the interest of the Soviet Union to encourage the economic and social liberation of these people, for these oil bearing areas lie close to the Soviet frontier, in regions that have a certain strategic importance to the Soviet Union. From the American point of view Soviet influence is dangerous. It might put ideas into the minds of the natives which might endanger the interests of the oil companies. Moreover if an international "showdown" should ever occur, American bases there would be invaluable. They would not only constitute points of direct attack, but also serve to divert Soviet counterattack from the United States itself. In Europe this is clear and well understood.

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM — ISRAEL'S ROLE?

In order to call a halt to aggressive American imperialism in this latter area, which peoples, the Soviet asks, could be her friends and allies, and which her enemies? We have already pointed out the economic and financial dependence of Israel on American sources especially at the present difficult stage in her development, the record of Israel's voting with the U.S.A. on all vital matters before the United Nations, and her public espousal of at least part of the Eisenhower Doctrine. To the Soviet Union, Israel therefore appears to behave objectively as if she were a pawn and a satellite of the U.S.A. Most Israelis would of course reply that this is in fact a measure of her desperate need of financial and economic support in constructing and modernising her State, that there are no American troops on Israeli soil, no atom bases, that adherence to the Eisenhower Doctrine is purely nominal and only partial, and that literally they have nowhere else to turn. That is a recognition of Israel's place in the world of capitalism, an admission of the nature of its birth and parentage. Unfortunately Israel is judged in such matters not by the protests of the most progressive sections of its public, but by the objective policy of its gov-

ernment, and the fact remains that to the Soviet Union "Israel is an Imperialist base threatening progress and security in the Middle East," to quote from the report in *Pravda* of 3/1/58 of the Afro-Asian Conference in Cairo with Soviet participation. Thus until Israel can take up a position of complete neutrality between the major sides in this world struggle, if that were possible, she must be treated as a potential enemy.

It is conceivable of course, that many of these considerations may sink into secondary importance in the immediate future. The sudden spectacular launching of the sputniks has faced the world — and the U.S.A. in particular — with a new fact which must finally force a complete re-orientation in the kind of political and military strategy that negotiated only from a super-abundance of strength. The sputniks in the skies reflect a great deal more than the sunlight that falls on them. They reflect the scientific and technological upsurge of a new society, and all that this means now and in the near future. If the world is to remain divided into two hostile camps then the sputniks signify that no spot on the surface of the earth will be immune from complete destruction by either side in the event of the present insanity among governments — and the infantile weakness of their peoples — moving into race suicide. The sputniks symbolise the fact that the time has arrived for a qualitative change in the level of world thinking, and new guiding minds are required that can rise far above the level of the puny political manoeuvres that has passed for statesmanship in the past. Plotting and scheming on neighbouring frontiers are drastically reduced in strategic importance, even as the danger they may precipitate heightens. For the moment, however, we have to recognise that as far as the Soviet Union is concerned, Israel does not rank as one of the peoples in the Middle East which, in the event of a catastrophe, will remain either neutral or swing over to her side. This, according to that analysis, is possible only for the peoples of the Arab States, for they have no interest in the victory of American Imperialism.

There is no contradiction, it must be recognised, between this attitude of the Soviet Union and that adopted by the latter when Gromyko made his speech at the session of the United Nations, that recognised Israel as an independent Middle Eastern state. At that stage the primary consideration for the Soviet Union,

as it is today, was to remove from that dangerous area any form of imperialist pressure. The British Mandate was one such form and to the Soviet Government the recognition of an independent State of Israel marked the end of the British Mandate. It was also a public admission, in so many words, that the civilized world owed an obligation to rectify an historic injustice that had been vented on Jewry. As I have pointed out, this obligation still lacks fulfilment in connection with the solution of the problem of the Arab refugees. Today however the Soviet Union would maintain that Israel has, in a sense, betrayed the trust in her by subsequently throwing in her lot with the new proponent of imperialism in the Middle East — the U.S.A. In a deeper sense the Soviet Union sees Israel as an obstacle to progress. Since the Arab Liberation Movement, as we shall shortly see, is largely motivated by the need to throw off the shackles of Imperialism in the Middle East and in North Africa, a small state like Israel, with a strong western orientation in an Arab environment, naturally tends to be regarded as an outpost of Imperialism, quite apart from the fact that her official policy supports that interpretation. She acts consequently as an irritant that deflects the Arabs from their main enemy, Imperialism, by turning them into specifically anti-Israeli channels.

EFFECT ON SOVIET JEWRY

It is not difficult to see that all this places Soviet Jewry in a very vulnerable and contradictory position. In the present international situation, resistance to American imperialism, in those regions where it might be regarded as a threat to the Soviet Union and its security, is seen as essential.

How dependable, the Soviet authorities are bound to ask, can their Jewish population be in an emergency if they still possess, as many undoubtedly do, this emotional affiliation to the people of Israel, whose Government, to all outward appearances, is pursuing a policy inimical to the Soviet? What attitude can the U.S.S.R. be expected to take? We have to remember, of course, that however important the Jews as a people are felt to be to themselves, the Soviet Government cannot be expected to share these same values in their international ramifications. A sense of community among a people is, at a higher level of organisation, something akin to a subjective feeling as experienced by an individual. Since the

Soviet Government cannot share this feeling, it can at best only take it into account as an objective factor in an objective situation. Israel is not a large State. Its population is some two million in an area in which forty million Arabs reside. To the Soviet Union therefore it is not a great power but a reflection of a great power. On the other hand, when it turns to its own Jewish citizens, it has inherited a situation which faces it with a very difficult problem. Can it really be asserted that the Jewish population of the Soviet Union still constitutes a National Minority, entitled therefore to all the specific rights of such a social group, after all that has happened to them — first, disrupted from their indigenous areas during the Nazi invasion, areas to which only a small proportion have actually returned; secondly, by the repressive policy of Beria during the latter part of the Stalin period; and thirdly, by the fact that a new generation of young Jews have grown up who have spread themselves widely over the Soviet lands, and have at least loosened many of the Jewish cultural ties of their parents? Taking all the facts into consideration, if it should be the case that Soviet Jewry is now on the way to complete absorption, what attitude would be expected from the Soviet authorities towards any emotional affiliations a section of Soviet Jewry may still feel towards Israel? And the answer to this question is bound to be affected by the fact that the Israeli State, entitled as it is to be respected as an independent entity, leans for its finances heavily on the United States, and publicly accepts the Eisenhower Doctrine in however diluted a form.

For the Soviet Government of course this kind of problem is not entirely new. During the late war, national minorities within her frontiers, that regarded themselves as fragments of a nation whose centre was outside the Soviet Union (Turks, Germans, Armenians, etc.), were naturally suspect, and were dealt with in some special — usually drastic — way. But the Soviet Jews are not now regarded as a national minority, and have no specific rights as such. They are simply Soviet citizens apparently who have a special interest in and a special feeling for Israeli Jews, and this happens to be of political importance to the authorities at this moment.

RIGHT OF EMIGRATION?

There is another factor, an external one, that complicates the position. Jews everywhere, including Israelis, have reacted sharply

to the Soviet attitude, and assert that Soviet Jews have the "right" to emigrate to Israel if they wish, without let or hindrance. To the Soviet this of course underlines the very aspect of the problem that worries them, this foreign assertion of the separateness of a section of *their* population. "Rights" are not easy matters to assess, and certainly are not established merely by vehement assertions from Jews in the capitalist part of the world, especially if these Jews are suspected by the Soviet authorities of being politically antagonistic to them. All we can say at the moment is that the demand is an expression of a strong feeling, and is therefore to that extent a fact to be reckoned with.

On the other hand there is an aspect of this problem which it is not easy for those of us, brought up in a capitalist country, to appreciate. At the present moment most of the countries of the west are nervously conscious of their economic situation, employers, employees, and governments. It has to be realised that the two World Wars altered the whole balance of economic power as between the United States of America and the European States. As a result of World War I, Britain and France had to sell a large part of their foreign investments to help pay for it, while the U.S.A., which had been a debtor state previously, already by 1919 had 6500 million dollars of foreign investments, the Allied Powers owed 12,000 million dollars to the United States Government, and 1500 million dollars to American banks. The end of World War II saw the United States the largest single creditor state in the world, and the greatest exporter of capital. Its allies owed it 41,000 million dollars, its private foreign investments exceeded the combined total of all other foreign powers, while the United States Government itself held 14,000 millions of dollars of such foreign investments in addition. These figures give some measure of the extent to which the economic position of other countries had become involved in that of the United States. A slump or a heavy recession in that country would have immediate repercussions on the economy of Europe so that large-scale unemployment may set in.

Now the degree of unemployment in a country indicates the extent to which that country is unable to avail itself of the creative labour of its inhabitants. If unemployment becomes especially acute, the Government in power has no alternative but to undertake large-scale State production or the planning and carrying

through of Public Works, at least until the crisis has passed. To the capitalist, such a State move is abhorrent even although he is himself unable to cope with the situation. It smells of Socialism. It is an admission in practice that his dogmatic assertion that a society can run stably and effectively on a profit-making basis is false.

In the past such crises have not been uniform or universal. Many of the home industries of an Empire, for example, may suffer a severe set-back at the same time as one of its colonies may be booming. Emigration then becomes an automatic safety-valve which relieves the home pressure of unemployment by releasing the pressure of surplus labour to areas capable of absorbing it. Every such worker, lost to the home country, is of course a valuable piece of capital, a built-up social investment, extending over the years from childhood to manhood; but in a capitalist country, since this form of investment finds no place in the balance sheet of any privately owned concern, it passes unnoticed. There are no statistics that measure the loss in capital values to a society that arises from the emigration of its skilled labour, and yet during an economic crisis it may be enormous. It is therefore not unexpected that in countries like Britain the right of emigration is never challenged, except during a war when a man's fighting capacity becomes socially important. It is not really an assertion of a man's right to freedom of movement, but a lack of interest in what he personally does.

This digression has been necessary in order that the contrast with a Socialist country may be seen clearly. There the avowed purpose of the whole society is to enable the human being to flower and develop. To this end every individual is a creative element, and the economy is planned and made to expand in a purposive way. There is not, and there cannot be a problem of unemployment or a trade recession in a true Socialist country. It follows that the whole idea of emigration is foreign to the society, and would be something abnormal. A demand for the "right" of emigration therefore would naturally be regarded as politically reprehensible, running counter to the whole social intention.

One of the commonest forms of self-delusion is that one is politically unbiased. Yet it is obvious that since every action is one of a chain with consequences spreading out in all directions in

society, every action has political significance, whether one is conscious of it or not. There are Jewish organisations in particular that assert their independence from all political matters, but nevertheless they press the Soviet authorities to concede this or that "right" to their Jewish citizens — usually on general humanistic grounds. The granting of this "right," as we have explained may have very significant political results. It follows that when such a self-designated non-political body makes a proposal of this nature it is in fact intervening on an issue that to the Soviet authorities is very sharply political. An internationally distributed people like the Jews are not insulated from politics because they are internationally distributed, but in fact touch politics everywhere all the time.

On this particular matter of Jewish emigration, Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia are rather differently situated from the Soviet Union. They have little direct contact with the Arab world, which, as we shall see, affects the issue, and they with their smaller populations are very concerned that relics of the past like anti-semitism should disappear from their midst. If therefore their Jews wish to leave no obstacle is placed in their way. They are free to do so.

ARAB LIBERATION MOVEMENT

It would be a complete stupidity to imagine that the Soviet Union refuses this concession to Jewish international feeling simply out of viciousness or ill-will. No responsible government acts on such a basis. The explanation must be sought in what the Soviet authorities regard as the political necessities of the situation. In addition to the general over-riding considerations we have just made these lie in the menace of American and indeed British and French Imperialism in the Middle East, and in the Soviet belief that the only hope for allies in this struggle rests in Syria, Egypt, Jordan, etc., all of whom without exception have begun to develop strong national movements. These, it is important to realise, have emerged out of the struggle of the Arabs to emancipate themselves from two forms of exploitation which in certain parts of the Middle East have been closely linked. Vast regions in this area are almost feudal in their set-up, with their sheikhs, effendi, etc. The level of agricultural cultivation is exceedingly low by modern standards, almost primitive, and the peasantry are poverty-stricken. The women work hard, but for socio-religious reasons are kept very

much in the background. They are in fact an exploited sex within an exploited people. Certain of these countries, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, for example, have vast sources of wealth under the surface in the form of oil for which there is a ready market in the West, and as a result of concessions granted by Royal Households, these have been tapped by various oil companies. The oil flows to the West, and the royalties pour into the coffers of the ruling families. It is therefore to the interest of these companies and of the states that stand behind them, to maintain the social status quo of these areas. The position of the Arab aristocratic landowning class becomes consolidated. In other areas again, such as Syria and Egypt for example, there is little oil, and the power of the aristocracy has drastically declined. Today these two republics have united. Seen historically the growing sense of Arab nationalism is a progressive movement, expressing as it does a widening circle of group-consciousness, a rapidly developing merchant class and a new feeling of self-respect. Out of this must finally emerge a heightening level on the economic, intellectual and social planes for a widely distributed people. In some areas this has shown itself in anti-Imperialist form, in others in anti-landlordism. For immediate historical and political reasons this movement has at present a strong anti-Israel flavour. The Arab peasants who fled before the Israeli army into the neighbouring Arab countries, on the assurance that almost immediately victorious Arab armies would sweep the Israelis into the sea, naturally regard the Israeli State as having expropriated them — expropriated by what is to them clearly a western people. As they see it, this act of piracy bears the authentic stamp of Imperialism, and the external political alignment of the Israeli Government does nothing to ameliorate this impression. By what process of logic, therefore, could the Soviet Union justify in the eyes of the Arab populations of the Middle East, the opening of its gates to its Jewish population so that they might flood into Israel? In what way could this help to mobilise Arab opposition to imperialism in that area? Thus the demand for the unrestricted and unconditional right of Soviet Jews to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Israel is seen—whatever its moral justification—to be the height of political unreality. If the Soviet Union were to change its policy on this matter, it could not only mean that it had altered its attitude internally from what we have already de-

scribed, but also its attitude to the relation of the Arab world to the inroads of American Imperialism, or to the part which Israel could then play in that struggle.

Again it would be a mistake to suppose that support for the Arab Liberation Movement by the Soviet Union, to the extent of arming Egypt in advance of a possible attack on that country, implies that the Soviet Union believes that the Movement is led and wholeheartedly supported by an exploited class. Its leaders are not themselves from the peasant class. They have other fish to fry, and a time must be expected when these fish become more important for them than social liberation for a downtrodden peasantry. The bourgeoisie, the intellectuals and the merchant class, who are much closer to the leadership than the peasants, require for their survival the *weakening* of foreign imperialism in that area and not necessarily its elimination. Both Arab and Israeli workers and peasants, however, require its *complete elimination*. In the long run the Soviet Union also requires its complete elimination, but as a first step in the present difficult state of world tension, it would clearly be happy to witness some degree of weakening.

This must not be taken to imply that Nasser, and those who stand with him, have not played a special—if historically orthodox—progressive role in the Middle East. Neguib and Nasser were the leading figures in the struggle that wiped out the power of Farouk and his reactionary aristocratic entourage. A historic blow has been struck at the whole of this set-up that tends to dominate the Middle East and to play into the hands of foreign imperialists. A measure of educational opportunity, and a certain degree of press freedom has been accorded to the Egyptian people. All this is definitely progressive. More than this, Nasser is clearly attempting to follow a neutralist policy in the Middle East, and by entering into trade arrangements with Socialist countries he is definitely encouraging the growth of the merchant class, and presently through them, the growth of industry in a country that hitherto has hardly trodden this path at all.

MARXIST ETHICAL PROBLEM

From the marxist point of view there is however a debit side to the balance sheet. If Nasser is to be supported for the part he plays in obstructing the advance of imperialism in the Middle East,

he is also ipso facto being supported in the means he adopts to maintain himself in power. Means and ends are elements of the same process and are inseparable. To retain the support of the landlords and bourgeoisie 900,000 poverty-stricken peasants have been kept landless for years in agriculturally undeveloped Arab countries neighbouring on Israel. Had the Arab Liberation Movement, and the power of Nasser himself, been based on the peasant class and their struggle for emancipation, this would have been quite impossible. After all, why should Arab landlords bother their heads about miserable peasants when they can wax fat on the flow of oil royalties? To make this festering sore bearable to its victims, the leaders of the Arab Liberation Movement, therefore, find it useful to maintain, and to sharpen, anti-Israeli feeling. One might have expected the Israeli Government to understand the source and the reasons for this. They do see that the surrounding Arab peoples outnumber the Israeli Jews by twenty to one. If that government is prepared to accept as a matter of course that relations between Jew and Arab are finally to be settled by force, then naturally time is on the side of the Arabs for they have only to prepare themselves systematically for the final showdown. By hook or by crook some accommodation must be arrived at whereby Jew and Arab peasantry and working class can cooperate to their mutual advantage. The problem is not easy of solution. The young sons of a dispossessed peasantry, lying rotting on the frontiers of Israel, are naturally first-rate recruiting material for infiltration, for raiding and for revenge. Nothing less is to be expected. That is precisely part of the problem, but a punitive expedition into Egypt suddenly conducted by Israeli forces, coinciding in time precisely with a corresponding invasion by the two Imperialist Powers Britain and France, and pre-arranged with the latter as a go-between, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as a rational method of damping down anti-Israeli feeling among the surrounding Arabs. It naturally served to accentuate precisely the effect that the leaders of the Arab Liberation Movement have sought to produce. In fact there has been unconscious cooperation between the Arab and the Israeli leadership, and the net outcome is that the Israeli working class, which has fled to Israel almost entirely in the effort to secure a safe resting place from German Imperialist oppression, is sharply split from the Arab

peasants and workers, and this persists in spite of the fact that there are political parties in Israel — the Israeli Communist Party and Mapam — which stand for Arab-Israeli unity of one kind or another. In these circumstances the fact is inescapable that the cost of holding the support of Nasser and his colleagues at the present stage of the anti-imperialist struggle in the form in which it manifests itself in the Middle East, is in practice to repudiate working class unity between Arabs and Jews, unless it is accompanied by a clear unequivocal statement that the prime necessity is the unity of Arab and Jewish workers, and that any move on either side that militates against this is dangerous and reactionary. A basic contradiction in a situation is not resolved merely by remaining silent on the subject. Silence deceives none of the parties to this matter, but it certainly has the effect of blunting the ethical edge of those who maintain that silence, and seek to justify it. All this would acquire a different complexion if the Soviet Union would state equally unequivocally that, if the Israeli working class ceased to be dominated by a pro-Imperialist government, its security and the continued existence of the Israeli State are entitled to respect.

For a marxist this is a heavy cost, and the whole situation raises a serious problem in marxist ethics. When, and to what extent is it justifiable to ignore the need for working-class unity for the sake of winning temporary allies in the anti-imperialist struggle? In this there are other considerations than mere tactics, for certain consequences must flow from it. For example once the Soviet Union silently accepts such allies, as already explained, it cannot easily agree to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel without antagonising the latter's Arab neighbours. Thus the Soviet Union is drawn into operating a policy which disturbs the feelings of its own Jewish citizens, and so sharpens what we have called the "Jewish Problem" in that country. In this way the Jewish issue is linked up with what is to the Soviet authorities a matter of first importance — the anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East.

ISRAEL'S INTERNAL ARAB PROBLEM

All this would look very different if the Israeli Government could and did pursue a policy of non-entanglement, and if its own internal policy towards its Arab population were different from what it is. For reasons of security the Arabs in frontier regions

are, in effect, confined to ghettos. To move out temporarily they require a military pass. The level of life in the Arab villages is clearly lower than that of the Jewish Israelis, and there are few indications of enlightened steps to remedy this. There are wage discriminations against Arabs; and the Histadruth, the united body of Trade Unions, does not admit an individual Arab to membership as it does individual Jews except through membership of an affiliated Trade Union. The Arab schools are notoriously under-supplied with school books and few, if any, Arab books are published. These things cry out for justice; and Jews, who more than any other people can be expected from their own experience to appreciate these matters, ought not to tolerate such a state of affairs. Contrast this attitude of Israeli Jewry with that of Russian Jewry during the Revolution, to which we have already referred. It is clearly essential to develop the cultural side of the Israeli Arab population to the maximum possible extent so that it may stand out in the Middle East as evidence of what Arabs can achieve when, even under an alien government, they are given the greatest opportunity for fulfilment.

If the Mapai leadership in the Israeli Government would take such steps to win the goodwill of its Arab population, the effect, after a time, could well be such as to induce the leadership of the Arab Liberation Movement to relax its own anti-Israeli attitude, and lead towards a rapprochement between Arab and Jewish workers throughout the area. Thereafter the situation and the forces would be ripe to impose a change in the pro-Imperialist policy of the Israeli Government, which is today largely the outcome of fear for its security in a hostile environment, and of the financial and economic pressures from which it suffers.

SOVIET-JEWISH PROBLEM

It is against this whole background that we have to try to understand the Soviet approach to its Jewish problem. That problem is not new; as we have seen it was inherited in an acute form from Czarism, but it has taken on a special aspect since the Revolution, and again since Stalin's death. Naturally Stalin's analysis of what constituted a nation was, for him, the starting point for its solution. Ignoring the historical factors to which I have referred, the obvious step was to transform the "almost-National Jewish

Minority" into a properly constituted nation, by offering it a geographical location; and the place selected was Birobidjan. This was, like Zionism, an attempt to find a territorial solution, but this time not in a capitalist but in a socialist environment. It was nevertheless unrealistic and unhistorical if intended as a solution to the Soviet Jewish problem in toto. In the main the Jews of the Soviet Union were at that time town-bred, and only in certain localities did they have any direct roots in the soil. Had the Jews of the Soviet Union been taken by force *en bloc* and sent to Birobidjan, possibly in a generation they would have adapted themselves to the new situation. Such a forced move would however have had a tremendous repercussion outside the country. In a rapidly expanding economy like the Soviet Union it was absurd to imagine that a large proportion of a people wedded to the cities, with their educational facilities, and their wide wage and salary ranges still in operation, would voluntarily make this move. Since it was possible for them to continue to live and thrive in the large towns and still remain Jews, naturally they chose to do so. The experiment was therefore unlikely to become the centre of large-scale Jewish economic and cultural life. Meanwhile their Yiddish, their literature and their religious customs persisted.

It was apparently at this stage that the Soviet authorities made an undialectical mistake. If the Jews are not willing to become a nation, centered in some special area, then they must become ordinary simple Soviet citizens. If they cannot be enticed to become the former then they must be canalized into complete identification with their Soviet neighbours. Such an *either-or* attitude, if followed through with ruthless logic, necessarily meant that all avenues of Jewish cultural expression must be discouraged, and the mouths of those who sought to develop it, or spoke on its behalf, must be closed. The either-or attitude was itself of course unmarxist. Moreover it showed a lack of understanding of the nature and strength—the quality and quantity—of the cultural background of Jewry, and its present-day attachment to old national feelings. It was evidence of a weakness in marxist theory. Suppose we ask the simple question: How long does it take for a society which has socialised its economic structure, to create a socialist system of values among its population? We are asking a question about the rate at which people change as a result of a change in their material circum-

stances, the security of their jobs, the return for their labour, and in how their work is organised and for whom. This is a basic question of a numerical nature in marxist science. We can see at once that we have no experience on which to rely to answer this, except that of the Soviet Union itself; and its experience has naturally been very exceptional indeed because it was the first country to try to make this change, and it has done so in a persistently hostile environment. More than this it had to begin with an almost completely illiterate population. The exposures of the 20th Congress have shown clearly that the time required is much longer, especially in a country which inherited the conspiratorial atmosphere of the Czars, than many had expected.

SOCIALIST VALUES

It is almost impossible for us, born and nurtured in a non-socialist society to state clearly what would be regarded as socialist values, or to lay down any criteria to enable us to decide whether a professedly socialist society was in fact engendering such values. The best we can do is to exercise our imagination, as it has been shaped and conditioned under our particular form of democratic capitalism. In the first instance therefore, the economic injustices and class discriminations which impelled us to look for a socialist way out would naturally be expected to have disappeared. If they have, this fact would immediately draw many new values in its train.

In the general population there would exist a two-way sense of trust and reliance. On the one hand an attitude of this nature by the people to the *bona fides* of its government, a recognition that it was using the most modern knowledge and the greatest degree of human understanding in a genuine attempt to handle the social problems that still remained as a heritage from the past, and the new problems that were necessarily emerging; on the other hand a clear confidence in the people, shown in official quarters, that the people were in fact with them in their efforts to help create and refine the new society. Without this understanding and mutual regard socialist values could not begin to flourish.

But all this implies a social situation, an atmosphere in which self-seekers after social prestige, obstructionists, and black-market-eers cannot exist — the kind of people portrayed by Dudintsev in

his recent novel "Not by Bread Alone". A revolution cannot in itself bring these things into existence; it can at best only place power into the hands of those who intend to do so, and that task is therefore as much part of the revolution as the original struggle for power. The detailed process whereby this task is performed, the successive steps in policy that are followed will then become factors in the formation of values in the emergent society. If it is a fact that at some stage "enemies of the people" still exist, then clearly socialist values have not yet fully come into being. This must also be the case if writers have to be instructed on where their literary duties lie, what are the important topics on which they should write, and how they "should feel" about these matters. Such an approach betrays a curious naive dogmatism. After all, creative work can spring only from native individual feeling focussed and directed through a critically constructive analysis in a social environment. "Right feeling" cannot be evoked merely by telling a writer how he should feel, no more than intellectual conviction can be engendered by physical force, or scientists be instructed in advance what they must find as a result of an experiment. Values represent a certain kind of critical discrimination and heightened awareness on the part of individual members of their own community. Some people are more sensitive than others, more alive, alert and responsive to trend and tendency. They are sometimes, although quite erroneously, referred to as living ahead of their times. On the contrary they are expressing sharply certain aspects of the growing pains of their own period and of their own society, exposing what lies beneath the surface of common feeling. Into this category fall writers, dramatists, poets, artists, musicians, and even critics and scientists. In so far as they seek to express the truth as they see it, they are sharpening the values of their people.

It follows that in an economically socialistic society freedom of expression and of emotional and intellectual experiment in these fields is vital to fullness of function and to depth of development. Since the artist paints the values of his own society, it is misdirected fire for the critic to attack him on such matters. Let him criticise the society itself, the new qualities that are being enhanced — this a mere relic of the past, that an indication of what is emerging. Let him criticise the writer's technical skill, or his

analytical power that led him to choose this subject matter rather than that as worth underlining. But the sins of the society itself must not be visited on its cultural workers, and in a socialist society such a visitation is a sin in itself. Had this been understood the Soviet authorities might have been more realistic about their Jews. They would have known that a long persistent tradition of separateness, and a haunting memory of anti-semitism and pogroms, are not wiped out in a day. They would have realised that force to the extent of actual physical elimination of Jewish cultural leaders, on whatever pretext, would certainly have the effect, as it undoubtedly did, of sharpening separateness, reviving a decaying national feeling, and focussing interest once more on Jewish cultural questions, especially among a people who traditionally have valued matters of the mind. I found in the Soviet Union that young Jews who had never learnt to speak Yiddish in their childhood were now at home with that tongue simply because the Jewish community, during the last few years of Stalin's life, had consolidated itself for mutual protection and strength. One would have imagined that the authorities would have grasped the elementary human fact that merely closing down the Yiddish Press, and refusing to print Yiddish books, would be resented even by those unable to read them. Any young person worth his salt would rise in anger against it. It would be resented by Jews everywhere, and so it served merely to arouse anti-Soviet feeling in the capitalist countries.

All this betrayed a lack of Socialist understanding and experience if it did not imply something a great deal worse — but it also exposed a lack of human imagination. Moreover it betrayed a curious belief in the efficacy of force as a means of carrying mental and emotional conviction. This is so primitive as to be almost incredible among a group of marxists who were otherwise of such high intellectual quality, and can be explained perhaps as an inheritance from Czarist society. But the main dialectical blunder lay in the false *either-or* attitude; *either* Jews are a national entity *or* they are plain Soviet citizens. In fact the Jews nowhere outside Israel are a national entity, and for reasons which I have tried to make clear they are nowhere simply normal citizens. The acceptance by the Soviet authorities of these two exclusive categories has made it impossible for them to handle this issue rationally. They

find themselves involved in a contradiction. For some purposes, with identity cards, passports and visas for example, a Jew is regarded as a member of a national minority, and has to state his Jewish nationality in this sense on his application form. For other purposes, cultural for example, he is regarded as of no national status particularly. To me all this is a denial of elementary marxism.

It must be emphasized that nothing said above must be taken to imply that the Jews, among the many peoples in the Soviet Union, were singled out in this way. Every national group has had its problems and naturally also its grievances; in such a large-scale social transformation injustices were inevitable, although not the physical repression associated with the latter part of the Stalin period. The Jews were exceptional because of their international distribution, with the result that people like myself, a British Jew, are concerned about the fate of Soviet Jewry.

Since Stalin's death a change has come in practical policy on this matter, although it still appears to be based on the same erroneous assumptions. Instead of trying to force Jews into a strict non-Jewish category by physical elimination of their cultural leaders, Jews are being encouraged to merge themselves completely by offering them almost, but not quite, every facility for integration, except in the political field, while at the same time no assistance is provided to express and encourage their own specific literary, artistic, and dramatic forms. The expectation is presumably that on this basis the Jew, as such, will vanish. Once again it must be said that there is no socialist experience that would enable such a forecast to be made with assurance, especially in a world in which the acute problem of Israel, and the fact of Israel, stand out sharply, and affect the imagination of the Soviet Jew. It is this fact, and all that it implies, that is strangely missing from these policies. It is strange because, being a fact, one would expect that a marxist policy would take it fully into account.

JEWS DISAPPEAR FROM POLITICS

Yet it is not really missing. In many indirect ways one can recognise something at work in regard to Jewry that seems to suggest a realisation of this matter. If it is not conscious and directed policy it reflects a rather strange unconscious process! It is a common-

place that a considerable number of the prominent early leaders of the revolution were Jews. Today few Jews occupy any high political positions. Mme. Furtseva in an interview last year made the astonishing statement that in some departments there had been too many Jews, in proportion to their numbers in the general population. There are, it is true, about ten times the number of Jews in the scientific and technological field than would be warranted on proportionate population alone. It may be that there are too many mathematicians also among Jews in proportion to the population, and this may account for the rumours that are prevalent that there is a *numerus clausus* in operation for entry into the University! I know of no evidence to justify such rumours. It is obvious that Jews with their special historical background are likely to find their interests and special abilities brought to a focus in special fields and not necessarily distributed everywhere in proportion to their population. It is this that makes nonsense of the implications of Mme. Furtseva's statement and makes it look like anti-Jewish discrimination. It is difficult to say with any assurance; but one thing is certain—this is by no means the classical form of anti-semitism. There is no agitation in the press or in public utterances, and any accusation of anti-semitism would be vehemently denied. It is officially illegal. On the other hand there is equally no possibility of an opportunity in the press to lay one's finger publicly on this apparent process. I know of only one possible theory that might explain this peculiar happening, and it is consistent with what I have described above as a false analysis by Soviet authorities of the Jewish problem, but it does not pretend to deal with the disappearance from the political scene of the early revolutionaries. That, I think, is a story by itself.

COSMOPOLITANISM?

Recently a kite was flown in the Soviet Union on which was inscribed the hateful word "Cosmopolitanism," the implication being that, to be infected with this disease, was to be an outcast indeed. A cosmopolitan presumably was one who did not recognise the distinction between the nature of specifically Socialist culture and that which passes for internationalism among certain progressives in the western capitalist societies. Among socialist peoples

in the new order of society internationalism reflects the new values coming to birth. Among western capitalist peoples internationalism is still basically rootless, and the expression of "cosmopolitanism" among writers in the Soviet Union would be regarded really as the reflection of bourgeois capitalist values of alien origin.

Where then do Soviet Jews stand in this matter of cosmopolitanism? There is no Jewish Socialist Republic in the Soviet Union, and Jews are not recognised as a national minority. They are to be found everywhere. Now we have already examined in some detail the particular quality that internationally links Jew to Jew, and it is something that transcends regional and indeed national boundaries. This aspect of their values, therefore, appears to smell of this dreaded disease, cosmopolitanism, although it has, in fact, little in common with it. Indeed if Scotland, for example, were a socialist country, and if all Jews were socialist, a Scots Jew would be in the enviable position of reacting to the socialist culture of the Scots, and entering, at the same time, emotionally into the peculiar flavour of certain aspects of Jewish culture elsewhere. It was Stalin, I think, who said quite correctly that a person can become expert and creative in more than one field. So a Jew can be very strongly moved both by Scots and by Jewish music — as I am myself. To suppose that these are mutually exclusive is crassly unimaginative.

I suspect that it is a lack of understanding of this which is responsible for the publicly unexpressed suspicion that Jews are more prone to the sinister disease of cosmopolitanism than other members of the Soviet community. This might of course be so, but not necessarily so. This would clearly imply that their political judgment is much more likely to be at fault than in the case of other Soviet citizens, who would not have this peculiar affinity Jews possess among themselves. What has actually happened in the Soviet Union, namely, the gradual disappearance of Jews from positions of political responsibility, would then be expected as a matter of course. During my visit last year I did not find that on the technical and technological side any such process was at work. On the contrary, if anything, Jews were in positions of quite considerable responsibility. It looks, therefore, as if it is essentially on this question of political reliability that the matter turns. But inevitably a policy of this nature must spread to other fields.

WHAT SOCIALISTS EXPECT OF A SOCIALIST STATE

What then is the policy one might expect from a marxist Socialist State on this matter of the Jews? There is an underlying principle of marxist theory and practice which points its direction. This principle asserts the unity of the particular and the general, and among its many aspects, the one that is relevant here asserts in the first instance, that while every entity in the universe is essentially unique, in certain respects it falls into one or more general categories. Thus a widely distributed social group such as the Jews, even if they are linked together only loosely in the way we have described, constitutes something unique. Indeed this is the first justification for describing them by a single word — Jew. The quality of this uniqueness manifests itself when we begin to examine what it is that has been created by these people during their checkered career — their literature, their art and their contribution to their own specific outlook on life; not only this, but because they have been distributed so long among other peoples, a variegated quality in their own social and cultural structure has been evolved. Furthermore, they have lived among other peoples and merged with them economically, socially, intellectually and culturally, and so they have made a special contribution to the general advance of mankind. One need not be accused of boastfulness if one asserts that this contribution must rank high in the judgment of history, when seen in relation to the relative smallness of the group in question. To mention only outstanding names, one does not find men of the stature of Marx and Einstein among many other peoples of this size. Jesus also might justly be included. Was he not a courageous Jewish social reformer speaking out for the underpaid and downtrodden, who drove the moneylenders from the Temple? It was the later Church, representing power and privilege, that offered the poor a reward in Heaven. Whatever the reason, perhaps it arises from some genetic factor intensified by their social habit of intramarriage, it seems to be the case that the Jews are a highly endowed people. This then is the unique group which the Socialist Soviet Union finds in its midst, and the Soviet leadership realises very well the part that group has played in the struggle to establish socialism, and how it has come to play that part.

These people are a sector of the general community of Soviet citizens, a unique sector. In a different sense they are as unique as the Uzbeks. The latter however belong to a normal National Group in the Soviet Union. They are bound together geographically, linguistically, economically, religiously, culturally. They are Moslems. It was therefore possible to subsume them into a single Socialist Uzbek Republic, and the effect on a people whose womenfolk less than a quarter of a century ago universally wore the veil, is little short of miraculous. In Tashkent, the capital of that Republic, I found that a very considerable proportion of the University staff consisted of precisely such emancipated women.

The other marxist principle, then, is likewise basic to marxist theory. The Soviet population is composed of nationalities and national minorities. No question can arise of any individual in a key position, or any group, elected or otherwise, dealing generously or ungenerously with the needs of these national entities. Such considerations do not enter. It is integral to the whole structure that these groups organise their way of life on a Socialist basis, and in the process develop their own specific cultural forms and institutions.

How do Jews fit into this pattern? Some years ago they were indeed a National Minority. These were the Golden Days of Yiddish literature, art, drama, poetry and music, and all this it was possible to hold up to World Jewry to illustrate what a Socialist Society enables a people with an harassed history such as that of the Jews, to achieve. This is precisely what Mikhoels and Pfeffer demonstrated when during the late war they visited Britain as representatives of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Today the position is drastically different. After the destruction of the Jewish centres during the Hitler invasion, and the scattering of their inhabitants, after the "Black Years" of the Beria period, after the rise of a new generation of young Jews to whom Yiddish is not their normal language of expression, however they may have reverted to it partially, can it still be confidently asserted that Soviet Jewry constitutes a National Minority? It is not an easy question to answer. Many who looked to the establishment of Birobidjan as the factor required for the persistence of Jewry in the Soviet Union, also suspected that since there would otherwise be no economic basis for the survival of Yiddish culture,

Jews would gradually disappear as a recognisable separate entity. They would be absorbed, and in this way the Jewish problem would reach its solution. Is this precisely what we are witnessing? It certainly looks as if the policy of non-encouragement of Yiddish cultural activities as such represents an acceptance of this viewpoint and action based on it. I have already mentioned what is a fact to me that such a policy is bound to create exactly the opposite effect from that hoped for, if that was indeed the hope.

The Jewish people in the Soviet Union are by no means a normal national group of course. Nevertheless the fact that they are not a single geographical or economic unit does not, as we have stressed, imply the complete absence of some degree of cultural and even linguistic unity. Only a mechanically minded marxist, a contradiction in terms, would deny this. Why then cannot there be at least an academic institute at which all matters Jewish including history, literature, language and poetry, and not merely theology are the subject of study and research? There seems to be an impression prevalent in the Soviet Union in official circles that if a visitor expresses a desire to meet Jews, as I personally did, that one wishes to meet religious Jews, as if this were the sole criterion of a Jew. As I have explained, the authorities for their own purposes, do not themselves abide by this criterion. For exactly the same reasons one would expect to find schools for Jewish children, in areas where there are a sufficiency of them, if their parents wished their children to be taught in such institutions. In fact the problems of Soviet Jewry are unique and specific, and cover a much wider field than that of religion. They are primarily of a cultural nature, and a rationally organised society would meet them if necessary through the establishment of a special State Department. A conscious marxist policy would recognise this unique kind of situation, just as a good teacher takes special cognizance of a child with a background that differs much from others in some respect, or that shows some special abilities. Thus one would expect that a socialist government, alive to such matters, would set itself out deliberately to discover ways of enhancing the particular qualities inherent in these people, and fostering their cultural expression in art, in literature, in music, in drama, and in ethical values. Such a policy would be of the essence of Socialism.

But there is a special moral case for dealing with this issue in a special way. The anti-semitic policy of the Fascists and Nazis during World War II fell with particular severity on the Jews. While it is true that they were not the only people who suffered during the Beria period, the impact of these Black Years fell in the wake of the previous trials, and no other people suffered in this double way, nor to the same extent. There is therefore, it seems to me, a moral obligation for the Soviet Union to seek, if possible, means to undo some of this damage. They may not succeed — history cannot be reversed — but at least history should relate that the human effort was made, and that it was made by a Socialist country.

WHAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD GAIN

To the Soviet Union in its present position of strength, the cost of deliberately encouraging Yiddish university studies, Yiddish Publishing Houses, a Yiddish press, Yiddish literature, theatre and drama is trivial. The return in human terms can be immense. While it would tend to maintain the differentiation of Jews from others in a positive cultural sense, the very fact of such deliberate encouragement would inevitably win from Jewry the most loyal allegiance and universal acclaim. By underwriting the differences that exist between Jewish and non-Jewish Soviet citizens and facing them frankly and publicly in a marxist way, the morale of Jewry would be strengthened, and the wide range of cultural unity held in common with the rest of Soviet society would thereby also be deepened. As we have tried to make clear there is basically no clash whatsoever in this. Indeed they reinforce each other.

But it would achieve a great deal more than this. If the Soviet Union is faced with a serious and dangerous problem in the Middle East, as it undoubtedly is, and if the present policy of the Israeli Government sharpens these difficulties, the obvious step is to win the sympathy and understanding of the world Jewish population — including Soviet Jewry. This can best be achieved by deliberately nourishing those features of Jewish life, which, for long-established historical reasons, lie deeply embedded in Jewish consciousness. These are not formal religious issues, but the kind of aesthetic matters that were pinpointed to good purpose during the war by representatives of the Jewish Soviet Anti-Fascist Committee. A world Jewry, emotionally drawn to the Soviet Union in this way,

could exert considerable influence on Israel and its policy, in spite of the almost trapped position in which that country finds itself. If "neutralism" between the two power blocs, for example, is a possible policy for Israel — and it could if it cared ring out a call to the nations in this respect — then this mode of approach by the Soviet Union could be a vital encouragement towards its achievement. It would not be the first time in history that Israel would have spoken to the nations. There can be no question but that a continuance of the present mood by Soviet authorities to its Jews, which apparently quietly seeks to absorb them out of existence while it clearly tends to elbow them out of the political arena, after what had happened prior to Stalin's death, merely has the effect of alienating a potentially valuable international ally. It provides precisely the kind of background that could evoke the worst form of nationalism. In the severe economic struggle that is being conducted in Israel on a very restricted capitalist basis, as the pressure intensifies, the relatively sophisticated Jew might easily come to believe that as a human type he was in principle superior to the neighbouring underdeveloped Arab, and that there was therefore not only an historic but also a biological and cultural justification for extending his frontiers by force. It is a short step from this to the form of the Chosen People theory as espoused by the Nazis for similar reasons. There it was the Germans who were the superior race, and the Jews who were sub-human. This could be indeed the danger in Israel. Among well-wishers in the capitalist sector of the world, the Soviet Union is a by-word for its lack of understanding of the mood and psychology of ordinary people in that sector. It does not grasp what it still has to live down in connection with the revelations of the 20th Congress; and therefore it does not understand the interpretations that will be put on its actions, and on the fact that such actions are usually not given an explanation that carries conviction, or indeed not even offered any explanation at all. It must surely know that man cannot live by faith alone, and that since the Soviet Union is regarded by many as a totally new venture in history every act of that drama has to be grasped by the world audience. A play cannot be carried on behind the scenes. Take for example the problems with which we are here concerned. After what has happened to Eastern European and to German Jewry

under the Nazis, the present leadership of the Soviet Union cannot surely imagine that its Jewish population of several millions of sophisticated and intelligent people will absent-mindedly forget that people like Markish and Pfeffer and other such writers and poets were done to death in Soviet prisons. What kind of people do they think we are? Many of the present leaders may have plausible excuses for having kept silent while these and other crimes — inhuman if not illegal — were being perpetrated, and no doubt that has left its mark on them, for good or ill; but can they really imagine that no mark has been left on Jewry? It is significant indeed that they quashed the fake trial of the doctors, many of them Jewish, for their alleged poisoning plot, immediately on Stalin's death, but there is no evidence in their history for believing that they would have succeeded in doing so had Stalin not died.

To brush all this aside as having arisen out of the Cult of the Individual is to make a cult of the Cult of the Individual. It is to pretend that marxists outside the Soviet Union are not only naive but unintelligent. Such a cult does not arise in a social vacuum. We who live in the capitalist sector of the world have had much experience of this kind of cult, and we understand its role. But we also understand that the influence of the individual on history, while it has a place, cannot be accorded a position of major importance in any understanding of historical process other than in very exceptional circumstances. What then were they here? The simple question that still remains unanswered from the Soviet end is how this cult could arise, and attain the level it did, in a society which many of us, who saw it with our own eyes, were induced to believe was not merely Socialist but on the high road to Communism. What Khrushchev publicly admitted at the 20th Congress shocked many of us profoundly because it admitted the truth of many of the charges of anti-Soviet writers and spokesmen which we had been vigorously denying over many years. It exposed the naiveté and simple-mindedness of our faith, and undermined the influence we might have exerted on others. Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress was a great event because it appeared to reflect a fundamental change in approach to the handling of many problems ruthlessly dealt with during the Stalin period. This book is concerned with one only of these, and particularly

with the policy that appears to have been followed in relation to it since Stalin's death.

All this has not merely to be lived down, but its detailed origin, persistence and development have to be explained. But an explanation of its origin will not explain it away; nevertheless an open well-founded analysis will at least prepare the minds and the feelings of socialist well-wishers for reasonable interpretations of further political actions, nationally and internationally. Today the peace of the whole world trembles in the balance. From the military standpoint at least, the new scientific discoveries in the subatomic world of physics and their reflection in the field of military strategy have to a large extent destroyed the military significance of frontiers. This is bound to have repercussions in the political sphere in relation to the political sovereignty of states, which in the past have been, nominally at least, sacrosanct. And all this becomes infinitely more complex since just prior to the period of scientific history when this revolutionary advance occurs, the world had split itself into two hostile camps — socialist and capitalist. Such a dramatic combination of events in the history of man calls for a corresponding high level of historical judgment and human understanding among all those who are called upon to make decisions of fateful importance. Those of us who are first and foremost on the side of humanity rather than that of restricted group interests that would thoughtlessly risk the future of the world in seeking to achieve their ends, must be presented with a detailed and honestly cogent case. We who live in the capitalist sector of the world do understand something about this sector, the forces that appear to direct its course, and the values that have been engendered among us. It is the other half that must now be understood — and it cannot now be taken on faith. The Cult of the Individual for example could have developed only in a society in which the fire that was to forge socialism — the means towards that end — had become more important than the end itself. One does not become a socialist except for the most compelling of humanistic feelings, and it is these which drive one to examine the problem objectively and intellectually. This examination has to be applied as ruthlessly to the socialist as to the capitalist sector of the world as they actually exist. When, in these circumstances, in the socialist sectors, *means* in their institutional form, become

ends, humaneness falls into a secondary position, even becomes an obstacle to the continuation of these institutions, and the door is thrown wide open to inhumanity.

Is this what had happened in the Soviet Union during the latter part of Stalin's life? Had the Party and its officials become the *end*, rather than the *means* for which it was instituted? Who can tell until the principle of self-criticism, so essential for a would-be socialist society, is emancipated from the level of mere soul-searching of the individual, to that of public analysis and public criticism of social means and social ends. It is only against such a background of public explanation that conviction can be carried on what appear to be much less important matters.

All this illustrates itself in relation to the topic with which we are here directly concerned. To offer as an excuse for its closure of a Yiddish Printing Press and for its lack of encouragement of a Yiddish paper or of a Yiddish Theatre (when even New York alone has several daily papers of this nature), that these ventures were not being adequately supported by the Jews themselves, is suspicious. It is the kind of answer one might expect from a capitalist-business government, when approached to support the arts; it is not its prime motive to seek to evoke the fullest and deepest qualities of a people. Under capitalism one expects to see a standardised mode of commodity — production for profit, reflecting itself in the educational system on which it depends for its success. In that society, labour, the energy output of human beings in quality and in quantity, is bought and sold on the market like a commodity. Cultural values, nevertheless, do enter into social and human relations in spite of this. The Soviet Union, not based on a commodity view of human beings, legitimately boasts of the fact that its arts are very liberally supported by grants-in-aid, and its artists, writers, teachers, scientists and cultural workers are correspondingly highly paid. What then are we to make of the excuse that has been offered for its lack of encouragement of Jewish art forms? Why is a Yiddish theatre expected to be self-supporting? Can the Soviet Union not afford to publish Yiddish poetry in the original language? The suggestion is ridiculous, and there is no escape from the conclusion that it is of set and deliberate policy. I have tried to indicate what would appear to be that policy, but since the Soviet Union does not deign to explain itself — and yet

expects the outside world and other governments to accept its *bona fides* on much more vital matters concerned with World Peace, it must not complain if a sinister interpretation is placed on its actions. The revelations of the 20th Congress in general, and the handling of the Jewish Problem in particular encourage this. To me at any rate, marxism implies that human beings and groups of human beings have a unique and intrinsic value to themselves that has to be nurtured, enhanced, and cherished. The question that presses itself to the front is whether the Soviet Union in this respect is failing to respond to one of the acid tests of Socialism. Are Jews once again being reduced to the level of second class citizens? If so is this emerging out of a false analysis of the problems of this people? And what indeed is a second class Socialist citizen? If such a status for Jews is unquestioningly accepted by non-Jews does this not automatically reduce the latter to second class level there? To raise these issues honestly and bluntly is not to betray the cause of Socialism. It is to reflect the uneasiness which is felt by well-wishers of the Soviet experiment, and to contribute by exposing to the Soviet Union itself the impact of its policy — and of the lack of clarification of that policy — on outside opinion.

It can be maintained that in my approach to many of the foregoing issues, I have been operating a double standard, one for a socialist country and another for a capitalist. That is true. This stands out sharply when one faces the question regarding the future of Jewry. Because of the basic motivation of a socialist society whose primary purpose is to create a situation in which human beings can expand and develop their capacities to the fullest extent, not only as individuals but as social groups and indeed as a whole society, I would expect the Jews not merely to survive in the Soviet Union, but to blossom and flourish, and in so doing to contribute to the wellbeing of mankind in the way in which that people has shown itself capable throughout history. A deliberate policy of absorption into the general population, and the discouragement of their special cultural possibilities, are certainly not what I would have anticipated. On the other hand in the capitalist sector of the world I have no such expectation, with the possible exception of Israel, if it survives its present disastrous political alignment, and its present unrealistic evaluation of the innate potentialities of its Arab neighbours. If the rest of the capitalist world is

entering into a period of long and deepening crisis, then of course, since past history is the only guide we have, Jews will also pass through a corresponding long period of travail. On the other hand if it should transpire, in some way that I cannot foresee, that the West will move into a period of economic expansion so that crises are avoided, the scattered Jewish communities in this area will live in an atmosphere of full freedom. There is no evidence from the past however that Jews can survive as a distinct people in a long period free of social crisis and anti-semitism. Whether it be one or the other, however, since there does not exist anywhere in the West — other than in Israel, as has already been explained — an integrated economic and social community of a specifically Jewish nature, it is not to be expected that Jewry will creatively develop a new Jewish literature, art, music or drama. At the best the old traditions and old historical and religious associations might survive for a few generations, and then gradually die away. For a geographically scattered Jewry to develop and intensify the taste and colour of a distinctive culture would demand, at the very least, very special positive planned action directed to this end by the society in which they dwelt. This is of course out of the question, and indeed beyond the capacity of Jewry itself to organise even if the desire existed. For good social reasons that possibility and that desire exists in the Soviet Union, and action directed to realize it is in my view consistent with socialist aims. Hence the double standard. The answers to these questions will later be found inscribed in the annals of Jewry where so much of world history has left its imprint.

Appendix

A CRITIQUE BY R. PALME DUTT*

This book, purporting to give a Marxist view on the Jewish question, has been written by a party member, Professor H. Levy, and published by another party member, C. Abramsky. As this might give rise to the impression that it expresses the viewpoint of the Communist Party, it is necessary to make clear that these two party members did not think fit to inform the party of their intention to publish this book on highly controversial current political questions, and did not consult the Party on its contents.

Its contents are in many serious respects, and as a whole, contrary to the recognised outlook of Marxism on the questions covered, and to the policy of the Communist Party and of the international Communist movement.

The book consists of two main parts, corresponding to what the author describes as "The Two Problems" of modern Jewry: (1) Israel, (2) Jews in the Soviet Union. The first part is a partial apologia for the ideas of Jewish Nationalism and Zionism. The second part is an attack on the Soviet Union.

LEVY'S WORLD OUTLOOK

Levy's general world outlook is revealed by his analysis of the present world situation. After describing the division of the world into "two hostile camps — socialist and capitalist", and the "catastrophic" menace of nuclear destruction, he continues:

"Yet none of the leading statesmen on either side, on whose judgment depends the maintenance of this equilibrium until such time as the world can once more move forward stably at a higher level, clearly measures up to the occasion. They do not understand what is happening in the world." (p. 7 — italics added)

Thus from the superior height of his impartial viewpoint Levy condemns equally the leaders of the imperialist camp, the Eisenhowers, Dulles's and Macmillans, who proclaim the aims of nuclear strategy and the cold war, and the leaders of the socialist camp, who strive for a ban on nuclear weapons and for peaceful co-existence. Neither side "measures up to the occasion." Neither Capitalism nor Communism "understands what is happening in the world." Such "understanding" is the private monopoly of Levy.

*Reprinted from *World News* March 8, 1958. Page references have been annotated to refer to the American Edition, see Publishers' Note, page 14.

A CARICATURE OF MARXISM

The term "Marxist" is freely scattered through the book in such a way as to give the reader the impression that Levy bases his approach on the general conceptions and methods of Marxism. Marxism is a science and Levy is a scientist. As a scientist he knows that a new aspirant in any particular field needs to have some mastery of the work already done in that field, if he is to make a useful contribution, especially if he wishes to refute work already done. Marxist theory has long given careful attention to the Jewish question and the conditions of its solution — the democratic method of its solution — and the attitude of the international working class and socialism, as opposed to the theory and outlook of Jewish Nationalism or Jewish separatism. All this previous work in the field Levy ignores.

Like Professor Duhring of old, he evolves his theories out of his own head — that is, out of an amalgam of existing current notions — and offers the result as a revised version of "Marxism." Levy makes one reference to what Marx wrote on the Jewish question (writing admittedly at an earlier stage of the question, but with significant indications of the method of approach):

"Marx himself was a Jew who had very definite ideas how the solution of the Jewish problem was to be achieved." (p. 44)

But the reader will seek in vain to learn what that "solution" was; for its line would cut right across Levy's "Marxist" theories. Before the first world war, Kautsky, at that time the recognised international exponent of Marxist theory, wrote an elaborate study of hundreds of pages on the Jewish question (*Rasse und Judentum*, published in 1914, second edition dealing more fully with Zionism; English translation under the title *Are the Jews a Race?*, published in America in 1926).

Historic battles took place between Bolshevism, representing Marxist revolutionary theory, and the outlook and theories of the Jewish Bund, Jewish nationalism and Zionism. Lenin wrote repeatedly on the Jewish question, with incisive polemics tearing to pieces the very arguments which Levy now seeks to offer as new thinking. All this Levy ignores. To have taken into account what actually were the views of Marx and Lenin on the Jewish question would have been fatal to his endeavour to pose as a "Marxist."

Levy has a perfect right, if he so wishes, to contradict and oppose the conclusions of Marxism on the Jewish question. But to do so he must examine and refute the arguments of Marxism. He has no right to present his mish-mash under the false masquerade of a "Marxist" banner.

In a revealing sentence Levy remarks that before 1917 "the Jewish contribution to socialist history" lay "pent up in the ghettos" (p. 42). From the days of Marx and Engels onwards Jewish Socialists and Communists in all countries have made an outstanding contribution to the international socialist and communist movement. But not "in the ghettos." The attempt to separate off Jewish Socialists and Jewish work-

ing class movement in a separate compartment from the general socialist and working class movement was the hallmark of the Jewish Bund, against which Bolshevism waged unceasing battle.

JEWISH NATIONALISM AND ZIONISM

Levy makes a half-hearted apologia for the ideas of Jewish Nationalism under cover of a lengthy and confused discussion of "What is a nation?", whose successive contradictions would require too much space to expose ("We do not define a nation", "the first criterion of nationhood is... a community of feeling", "nations, as they have emerged, have created some semblance of an economic order", the Jews are "an evolving historical entity" etc.). Finally he is compelled to admit that "it is quite impossible to say that the widely distributed people who are called Jews are a nation, a single nation", or that they are uniform in religion, culture or language (p. 39). But he continues to argue that "they are a social group united together by a common bond, a people with a strong concern for the Nation."

Behind this fog of metaphysical abstractions Levy ignores the real political issue of the battle — the reason why Marxism so uncompromisingly fights the theory of Jewish Nationalism as contrary to the true interests of Jewish people. Marxism fights the theory of Jewish Nationalism, that is, the theory that the Jews in the various countries of the world are not national citizens of the countries where they have lived, have been born and brought up, and have their existence, but are a separate nation, because

(a) it makes the overwhelming majority of Jews alien in the countries of their birth, upbringing and life; thus it plays into the hands of anti-Semitism, which also preaches that Jews should be regarded as aliens in the countries where they live and should move out of those countries;

(b) it cuts off Jewish people from the general democratic, working class and socialist movement, and seeks instead to unite Jewish working class people with Jewish monopoly capitalist representatives most closely associated with imperialism;

(c) the fulfilment of the theory of Jewish nationalism by the settlement of Jewish people on a given territory could, in the conditions of a world already divided by imperialism, only take place by the methods of colonial conquest or imperialism.

Zionism is the fulfilment in practice of the politics of Jewish Nationalism and its alliance with imperialism. Levy says that "the outbreaks of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe" were the reason why "political Zionism therefore seized the imagination of Dr. Herzl." This is historically incorrect. It was his experience as a reporter at the Dreyfus trial in France that led Herzl to the line of thought which found expression in modern Zionism. In other words, it was the development of *Western* monopoly capitalism to reaction that gave birth to the counter-reaction of modern political Zionism.

Previously all progressive Jews looked to the advance of democracy for the fulfilment of Jewish emancipation (already in great part achieved in the West through the English, French and American democratic revolutions). Only when Western monopoly capitalism began to turn increasingly to reaction and the fostering of anti-Semitism in alliance with the bestial anti-Semitism of the feudal or semi-feudal regimes of Eastern Europe, it became clear that the task fell to the working class and socialist movement to complete the democratic revolution, including the ending of all racial and religious discrimination and anti-Semitism; but a reactionary trend among a section of Jewish people sought to find the alternative solution in the constitution of the Jews as a separate nation on their own territory with their own nation-state.

ISRAEL

Levy conceals the decisive role of British imperialism (and its formal alliance with Zionism expressed through the Balfour Declaration) in the conquest of Palestine and on the basis of that armed colonial conquest, with imperialist financial support making possible the first mass migration of Jews into Palestine, with the consequent expanding expropriation of the Arab cultivators.

"The world eruption which has split society into two opposing camps has thrown up a small part of the Jewish people on a strip of land in the Middle East." (p. 54)

"A tiny state has come into being" (p. 54)

"The dynamic of history itself has swept into this area..." (p. 55)

"World eruption", "Thrown up", "Come into being", "Dynamic of history." All very oracular and mysterious. But no mention of British imperialism or any such sordid concrete realities. Levy admits that Israel "appears as a satellite of the U.S.A." (only "appears"), but hastens to offer an apologia for the policy of the Ben Gurion Government on the grounds that "she would claim that this only happened after the Soviet Union had adopted a hostile attitude to her" (p. 58) and that "most Israelis would of course reply... that literally they have nowhere else to turn" (p. 66). The fate of the 900,000 Palestine Arab refugees displaced from their ancient homeland by the Israeli invaders is stated to be the fault of the Arab rulers:

"To retain the support of the landlords and bourgeoisie 900,000 poverty-stricken peasants have been kept landless for years in agriculturally undeveloped Arab countries." (p. 74)

Why it is right to claim to return to a historical "homeland" of 2,000 years ago, and wrong for refugees to claim to return to the real homeland of nine years ago is not explained.

Communist support for the Arab national liberation movement is "explained", not in terms of the fight against imperialism, but of Soviet power-politics. The Soviet Union is accused of "arming Egypt in advance of a possible attack on that country"—another historical falsification. It was after the heavy aggression on Gaza and consequent massacre, con-

demned as aggression by the United Nations Commission, that Egypt sought arms for defence, for months vainly from the United States and Britain, only to be met with crippling political conditions of submission to the Baghdad Pact as the price of arms, and then finally turned to the socialist camp and received arms for defence on the basis of national independence.

"The cost of holding the support of Nasser", declares Levy, has been "to repudiate working class unity between Arabs and Jews" (p. 74). This is really outrageous. The Israeli Communist Party is the living embodiment of Arab-Jewish working class unity (of its six M.P.'s four are Jewish, two Arabs; similarly in its Political Bureau and the entire composition of its membership). It is the only party in Israel expressing Arab-Jewish working class unity. It is the only party in Israel which puts forward a constructive solution for the problem of Israel-Arab relations and the future of Israel.

But the Communist Party member Levy ignores the Israeli Communist Party just as he ignores the views of Marx and Lenin. He reserves his praise for only one party in Israel, the anti-Communist Mapam (under whose auspices he visited Israel), the coalition partner in Ben Gurion's Government, which united with Ben Gurion in supporting the Anglo-French-Israeli war of aggression on Egypt. To such lengths has Levy been brought by his hostility to the international communist movement.

ANTI-SOVIET CALUMNIES

On the Soviet Union Levy repeats the customary denunciations which have been made familiar in the capitalist and reformist press. He challenges the conception of the Soviet Union as a socialist society:

"A society which many of us who saw it with our own eyes were induced to believe, *obviously quite falsely*, was not merely Socialist but on the high road to Communism. What Khrushchev publicly admitted at the Twentieth Congress was in many respects *more akin to barbarism than to socialism* as many of us have conceived it." (p. 90 — italics added).

He admits that there is in the Soviet Union

"by no means the classical form of anti-Semitism. There is no agitation in the press or in public utterances. There is equally no possibility of an opportunity in the press to lay one's finger publicly on the apparent process." (p. 81)

He admits that in the moment of the Nazi invasion

"it will always stand to the credit of the Soviet military authorities that they took immediate and timely steps to evacuate Jewry from these danger spots to regions far distant from the actual fighting front."

But he claims that the historical miscarriages of justice which took place during a specific period — during the period of the intense struggle against Nazi penetration and cold war agents — against both Jewish and non-

Jewish individuals, against both Jewish and non-Jewish organisations, was a form of anti-Jewish persecution. The facts he has to admit contradict this interpretation. On the Soviet attitude on the Jewish question, made sufficiently clear by Lenin, he offers the most extraordinary confusion and subjective interpretation:

"I do not assert for a moment that this is an exact description of the course of events. Who can tell since we have little direct evidence on which to go?" (p. 51).

His muddle on "cosmopolitanism" (p. 82) would take too long to disentangle. He considers Birobidjan an "undialectical mistake" because the majority of Soviet Jews did not wish to go there. Of course. He misses the whole point, that Birobidjan offered the opportunity for the tiny minority of Jews who might desire to establish a territorial nation-state to do so under socialist conditions, without expropriating another population. The experiment served to demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of Soviet Jews, who had been liberated by the revolution from the ghettos, had no wish to go back to Jewish separatism, but wished to go forward as full and equal partners in the high tide of socialist creation.

On the present position of Jews in the Soviet Union he has to admit that, in contrast to the pre-revolutionary discrimination, they now have "every facility for integration"—except, he claims, in two fields, and here the full tide of insinuation and slander is let loose. First, he claims that in the political field Jews are excluded from any leading role, and in "proof" of this asserts that "today there is not a single Jew on the Central Committee." This often repeated accusation of Zionist anti-Soviet propaganda is a falsehood.

It is not customary to analyze members of a Central Committee as Jews and non-Jews (how many Jews are there on the British Communist Party's Executive Committee? Probably very few party members could say off-hand); but the role of such honored comrades as Comrade Mitin and Yudin, not to mention others, sufficiently gives the lie to this slander.

His second charge is the familiar charge of the alleged "suppression of Jewish national culture", i.e. Yiddish culture. Despite the notorious fact that the specific Yiddish cultural expression, which grew up as a reflection of ghetto conditions, is withering away also in the most advanced capitalist countries, Levy demands that the Soviet State should take steps and devote subsidies to keep it artificially alive. The Soviet State, he says, should meet "the cost of deliberately encouraging a Yiddish university, Yiddish publishing houses, a Yiddish press, Yiddish literature, theatre and drama" (p. 86), even though practical experience has shown that the overwhelming majority of Soviet Jews no longer want it and are not prepared to support it.

"Why," Levy asks indignantly, "is a Yiddish theatre supposed to be self-supporting?" There are only two theatres in the whole Soviet Union that are subsidized, the Bolshoi and one other. Why should an exception be made for a Yiddish theatre? Why artificially seek to keep alive a reflection of a past era whose conditions have passed away?

These cultural questions are questions for the Soviet people to decide without outside interference. But on this question of "Jewish national culture," whose cause Levy (who incidentally would never dream of writing his own books in Yiddish) is so anxious to espouse, it may be useful to recall the words of Lenin:

"Jewish national culture is the slogan of the Rabbis and the bourgeoisie — the slogan of our enemies. But there are other elements in Jewish culture and in the whole history of Jewry. Out of some 10½ million Jews in the world, a little more than half live in Galicia and Russia, backward and semi-barbarian countries which keep the Jews *by force* in the position of an outlawed caste. The other half live in the civilised world, where there is no caste segregation of the Jews. There the great and universally progressive features of Jewish culture have made themselves clearly felt: its internationalism, its responsiveness to the advanced movements of our time.

"Whoever directly or otherwise puts forward the slogan of national culture (however well-intended he may be) is the enemy of the proletariat, the defender of the *old* and *caste* element in Jewry, the tool of the Rabbis and of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, "Critical Remarks on the National Question," 1913, *Collected Works* in Russian, Vol. 20)

In his final conclusion Levy reaches the limit of outrage by suggesting an analogy between the position of the Jews in the Soviet Union and their position under Tsarism:

"Are Jews once again, as under Tsarism, being reduced to the level of second class citizens?" (p. 93)

To write thus of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet Union, which liberated the millions of Jews from the ghettos and pogroms of Tsarism; which by driving back the Nazi armies at the cost of millions of Soviet lives ended the long reign of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe (the example of Hungary has shown how quickly anti-Semitism can lift up its head anew the moment the hand of Communism, of the working class, is temporarily weakened); which by the destruction of Nazism has saved the life of every Jew in the world from the horrors of fascist anti-Semitism and extermination; to write in such terms of unprincipled abuse of the socialist revolution is a disgrace for any Jewish writer or for any civilized writer, let alone any socialist writer.

No wonder the most outspoken enemy of socialism, communism and the Soviet Union, the *Jewish Chronicle*, the organ of the rich Jews, welcomes Levy's book with delight:

"There are about 100 pages in this important volume, and almost every one of them is a challenge to Moscow... Although it took him rather a long time to see the truth, he now speaks out with vigour and courage." (*Jewish Chronicle*, February 21st, 1958)

With this book Levy finally parts company with Marxism.

"Jews and the National Question", By Hyman Levy, 1958

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