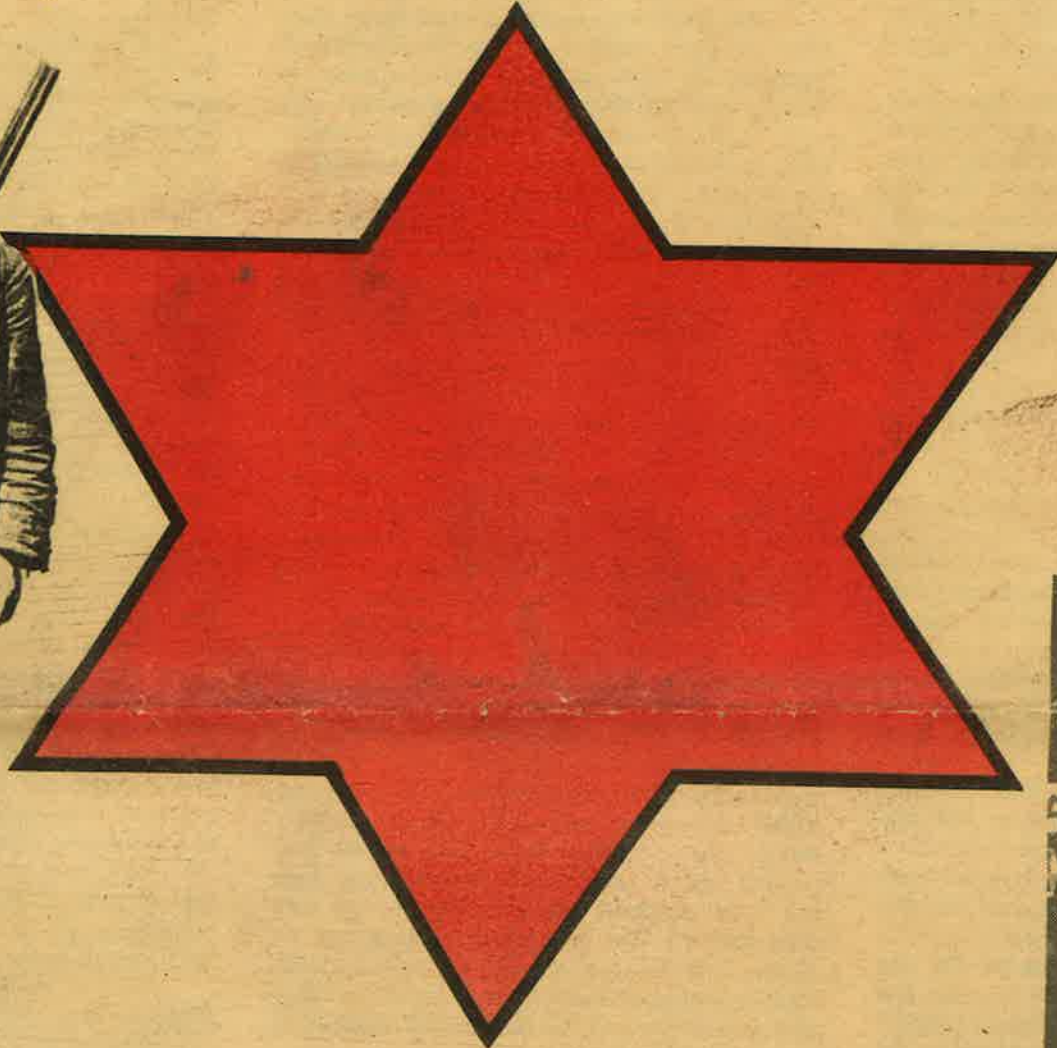


# ניצוץ

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# NITZOTZ

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Radical Zionists seem to have been quite at odds lately with Meir Kahane of the Jewish Defense League and some of his followers. Those of us who think in terms of historic processes might call it inevitable. There had been a truce of sorts, as both groups struggled towards ideological identities, and actually had a good deal of activist-orientation and anti-establishmentism in common.

But recently, conflicts began when a couple of RZA organizers were beaten up outside a JDL meeting, where they were handing out copies of the RZA platform. JDL got a lot of bad publicity as a result, and then Kahane wrote a "scathing attack" in the "Jewish Press," excerpted here. Full of distortions, it seemed to give JDL members ex post facto justification for practicing their karate on us.

Then in March, RZA composed the leaflet shown here, which we passed out on campuses in New York and in Washington, D.C., where Kahane spoke. He continued the slanderous attacks, and RZA achieved a little notoriety, including an article in the New York Post about a confrontation at C.C.N.Y.

The point of this editorial, however, is not to discuss how much we dislike JDL. Almost anyone can do that. The point is why. We're not against self-defense, nor a strong Jewish identity, nor even armed struggle, in some circumstances. It is against JDL's Jewish chauvinism, mindless activism, and reactionary politics we stand. The attitude that paints everything in pure black and white, that says: "Either you're with me or you're against me."

But the JDL is not alone in this attitude. They only say a little more vulgarly what the Jewish establishment thinks: On any issue we hear the short range view: "What's good for the Jews?" Positions are categorized: "Are you for or against?"

And those who are openly against Jewish interests are really saying the same things, only the opposite view. The two extremes, though they claim to be mortal enemies, are really playing into each others' hands. Thus the typical Jewish or Zionist establishment supporter (including JDL) would agree with the anti-Zionist "leftist" on all the following:

"One is either a Zionist and therefore supports all Golda Meir's policies, or one supports the Palestinian cause and is pro-Fatah."

"One either supports Nixon in Vietnam because it helps Israel or one is against the war, and also against the interests of Jews."

"One either says 'Let my People Go' and opposes Communism, or one is a Socialist and ignores Jewish oppression in the Soviet Union."

"One supports poorly-planned housing for poor Blacks in a middle-class Jewish neighborhood, against strong community opposition, or one hates Blacks and opposes it."

Where there is conflict, as between Jews and Arabs in Israel-Palestine, or in a changing New York neighborhood, fears run high and extremists on both sides tend to prevail. The situations become especially dangerous when Cold War politics enter the picture.

RZA emphatically denies all the above dichotomies, and insists that the issues are complex, there are basic rights on both sides of each issue. At the same time we emphasize our strong identification with the Jewish people—all of them—and underline our personal commitments to struggle here for a few years, then in Israel, for revolutionary Socialism and Zionism. We see ourselves both as the Socialist branch of Zionism and the Jewish branch of international Socialism. We call on Jews to join the struggle now, before it is too late, and we hold out our hands to true leftists from among other oppressed peoples, especially the Palestinians, if they are willing to accept us as we are them.

This is the meaning of the much overused but still valid slogan "Be a revolutionary in Zion and a Zionist in the revolution." Do you, too, agree that there is room for a middle ground between those who say that Israel and Jewish leaders can do no wrong and those who say that they can do no right? If so, maybe Radical Zionism is something you should find out more about.

page two.

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## EDITORIAL

The following is from "Israel News Analysis" by Meir Kahane, in the "Jewish Press," February 25, 1972, page 9: (Italic sections are Nitzotz editorial, to clear up factual points).

"...(RZA is) a clear threat to Jewish nationalism in its best and purest sense and a danger to the State of Israel..."

"This group is made up of individual members of such Marxist leftist groups as Hashomer Hatzair (youth group of Mapam) and Habonim (Labor Zionists) as well as non-affiliated Jewish leftists who are, for the most part, Marxist revolutionaries. Their basic problem stems from their confusion as to whether they are primarily Jewish or Marxists..."

*Confusion, we would say, is not such a bad thing.... Better to deal with your confusion than to deny its existence in yourself. Are we primarily Jews or Marxists? Yes, there is a paradox—as in the women's movement: is one primarily a woman activist or a revolutionary? We feel that the answer in both cases is that you have to be both, that it is not a real contradiction.*

"They bring into Zionism a deep schizophrenia which finds them hurting the State of Israel and the Jewish national future far more than if they had remained outside the movement within the general left (sic). On major after major issue (sic) they have taken stands that conflict deeply with the true interest of Jews and Israel precisely because they are not sure what they are. The facts of life dictate that the Jewish national self-interest will, many times, conflict with the Third World, Marxist mentality and view of life and the RZA is not prepared to opt for Jewishness..."

*We claim that Jews are basically Third World people; over 1/2 of Israel's population originates from Third World countries. As such, Jewish interests are, in the long range, definitely with those of other Third World peoples. Furthermore, if there is one thing RZA and only RZA has done successfully, it has been arguing in Israel's favor against the anti-Zionist sections of the left.*

"What did happen was that suddenly, a Zionist-funded group came out with all manner of criticisms of Israel and support for the basic position of Arabs in the Jewish land."

*Bullshit. Yes, WUJS adopted the "Arad program," calling for recognition of Palestinian rights, but also calling for Aliya by all Zionists, better Jewish education, support of oppressed Jews everywhere, etc.*

"If youth is the future, as it, of course, is—the need to create a strongly nationalist one...is obvious and imperative....The resolution carrying WUJS must be struck down."

*We are reminded of the following quote "Above all we appeal to the mighty army of our German youth. They are growing up at a great turning point, and the evils brought about by the inertia and indifference of their fathers will force them into struggle. Some day the German youth will either be the builder of a new folkish state, or they will be the last witness of total collapse, the end of the bourgeois world." Adolph Hitler.*

NITZOTZ, MAY 1972



"Thus we find the RZA picketing an Israel Bonds Dinner where Abba Eban speaks because Israel has decided to thank conservative governor Ronald Reagan for signing a bill that was of immense benefit to Israel, economically.... Thus we find the RZA demanding that there be recognized a "Palestine" people who have Arab "rights" to the Land of Israel and calling for return of the lands liberated in 1967. Thus we find RZA unwilling to accept the Zionist "Jerusalem Program" because it does not recognize the Palestinians as a people with rights to Eretz Yisroel...."

*To all this, we proudly confess.*

"Is it any wonder that they tend to support the Mapam Marxist party in Israel? If ever there was an Israeli political schizophrenic (sic) it exists within this group! Here is the party that opposed a Jewish State until it was found (sic), calling instead for a bi-national home where Jews and Arabs would have parity in politics, thus insuring an end to Jewish immigration and the building of a Jewish homeland...."

*Mapam did call for a binational state, but as Zionists, one which would insure all Jewish national rights, including free immigration. Kahane's statement is a pure lie. Reflect for a moment, how history might have differed had such a solution been found thirty years ago.*

*RZA is in no way affiliated with Mapam, nor do most RZA members consider Mapam a radical enough or viable enough party to bring Socialism to Israel.*

*Even if RZA did support every view of Mapam today, Kahane is blaming us, a 2-year-old organization, for Mapam positions of 15 and 25 years ago.*

"There is no such thing as a class struggle in Jewishness; the Jewish people are one, unified and indivisible, solving their socio-economic problems within the Jewish family...."

*See the leaflet on this page for our feelings on this point.*

"There is only one people with a genuine claim to Eretz Yisroel and that is the Jewish one...."

*Just think about it, and also see the leaflet, and other articles in the paper. Is this chauvinism, or is this chauvinism?*

*There remains the need to undo the disaster of the Zionist Congress which voted due to the influence of Jewish agency leftist officials like Mordechai Bar-On—to retain the budgetary allowance granted to the World Union of Jewish Students (WUJS)."*

*Bar-On a leftist? He is politically and personally one of Moshe Dayan's best friends, and opposed WUJS at the Congress until he saw that the winds were blowing the other way. See "Up Against the World Zionist Congress" by David Mandel in this issue.*

*"(WUJS) was set up by the Jewish Agency to create a body that would gather together Jewish students under the Zionist banner.... What did occur was, that WUJS fell in to the hands of a small group of leftists of the RZA."*

*Sometimes we wish this were true. WUJS is controlled democratically.*



Several months ago, a few RZA members agreed to begin a collective investigation of urban Jewish poverty. The Lower East Side of Manhattan was chosen because it is one of several known poverty areas in New York City which has a minority of Jewish residents, and because this area was once a poor but active Jewish community.

In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Jews from Eastern Europe and Tsarist Russia immigrated to the United States along with many Eastern European peasants. This was due to the disintegration of the feudal system in the Eastern European countries and the anti-Semitic policies of Alexander III and Nicholas II.

#### URBAN SKILLED WORKERS

The Russian, Romanian, and Polish peasants became unskilled laborers, involving themselves in various mushrooming industries in Pittsburgh, Detroit, Youngstown, Cleveland, and the Midwest.

The Jews settled in the cities and found that the industries were dominated by gentiles and the "established" Sephardic and German Jews. The Jews quickly became involved in small trade (such as pushcart vending), and also the production and repair of clothing, working as tailors in sweatshops, or in their own small shops. These Jews disliked unskilled labor. Their aim was to advance their financial and social positions by scraping everything that they could together and sending their children to schools to become professionals, such as doctors and teachers. The Jews, though they were sometimes on the border of financial collapse, shunned receiving charity, resorting to any other means of survival rather than turning to the relief agencies. Those who had no choice but to receive financial aid applied to the institutions established by the German Jews after they had stopped trying to ignore the presence of poor and "foreign" Jews, which shocked and embar-

whose residents take part in the program of the Settlement have children living in the suburbs.

A bill has been passed by the Senate to nationalize this program. It is the only program in the country at the moment which serves elderly Jews.

Some of the problems which the local elderly have in getting aid are caused by resentment in the community.

According to the director, for example, mothers resent increases in the funds appropriated to aid the elderly when they feel that not enough money is provided for programs for the local youth.

#### ESCORT PROGRAM

The Escort Program is another project of the Settlement. Participants in this program are local youth (mostly Black and Puerto Rican) and elderly. The youth escort the elderly to their various destinations (such as doctors' offices). This program has helped to dispel mistrust and fear between the two groups and has promoted some mutual understanding.

The interview which was perhaps the most informative was a short discussion with Rabbi Nissen Alpert of one of the very few local synagogues. The Rabbi described the fear and isolation in which the local Jews have lived since what was familiar to them in the neighborhood began to disintegrate and change. Recently, sages there have been muggings of Jews on the streets and vandalism in the Rabbi's synagogue and in a nearby synagogue. Most of the synagogues which were scattered throughout the area are now closed; there are only two left open. The congregants of this synagogue are frightened of leaving their apartments and many have not been able to frequent the synagogues as often as they would like. Some of the congregants receive welfare or social security, however there is no one to care for them if they should become ill. There has been no contact between this

national survey through their various local chapters to find out where these poor Jews are located, how many of them there are, and their specific community problems. Then steps can be taken to provide for the needs of impoverished Jews in each specific area. In order to obtain funds for such programs as may be necessary, the Jewish community can pressure the city, state, and national governments, and can raise funds internally. To continue to ignore this problem is to condemn many Jews to poverty, disorientation, isolation, and identity crises, and would be a crime toward fellow Jews.

#### TODAY'S SCENE

Walking through the Lower East Side one sees filth, demolished buildings, small and dirty shops selling cheap merchandise of poor quality, some pushcart peddlers, run-down tenements, and crowds of people on the main streets. There is also a large housing project which is typically unsightly because of its large, rectangular, and uniform buildings. Several blocks north is another housing project which is somewhat less oppressive looking as the buildings are not as closely crowded. The general atmosphere of the neighborhood is dark and drab, particularly about the tenement buildings. The neighborhood is an officially designated poverty area.

A new housing project will be constructed in the neighborhood soon. RZA members spoke with Mr. Ernesto Martinez, the director of the Seward Park Tenant's Association. The function of this organization is to protect the rights of local tenants who live in homes which will be torn down in order to make room for the new project and to see that they must carry out in order to obtain their apartments.

#### MOST ELIGIBLE

Mr. Martinez explained that the local Jewish tenants are among those most eligible for housing in the new project as they have lived in the neighborhood for so long. However, many Jews have not filed the forms which they are

## THE URBAN JEWISH POOR

by Rena Behar

ressed them.

#### TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

The highest concentration of the newly arrived Jews remained in the Lower East Side, which had become a poor neighborhood after the Civil War. Within a very few generations, most of the Jews were gone from the Lower East Side; they had managed to attain lower middle class status by educating their children for professional careers. This movement of the Jews into the middle class has occurred in almost all countries which the Jews have entered. The Jews were either forbidden to or chose not to become involved in the basic industries. Often this was due to the fact that Jews were not allowed to own land or have Christian subordinates in several European countries at various times.

However, not every last Jew has gone from the slum of the Lower East Side. The area is now predominantly Puerto Rican and Black. The few Jews who are left are mostly elderly. The Jewish community that once was there has virtually disintegrated and most of the old Jews feel isolated and frightened and they are very poor.

We spoke with the director of a successful program for the elderly of the Henry St. Settlement. The Program provides meals at \$.60 per meal (this price was determined by the participants in the program). The residents of the project also take part in various industrial shops and classes. The most important aspect of this program is that it provides its participants with the chance to be active, to have a sense of belonging, and some security.

#### ELDERLY JEWS

The director also informed us that elderly Jews in other areas of the country (Florida, Boston, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Chicago) are not receiving services and are sometimes almost starving.

Most of the people living in the project

congregation and agencies of the established Jewish Philanthropies. There has not been much help from government agencies such as the Community Corporation.

#### POSSIBILITIES OF HELP

It seems obvious that any attempts to improve the situation of poor urban Jews by the government or by the "Jewish Establishment" have been grossly insufficient. Not enough is known about just what should be done in order to help these Jews and, at least in this case, not much has been done to find out. The indifference of the Jewish community, or the ignorance of the fact that there are quite a number of poor elderly and young Jews in the United States is shameful and a blot upon the entire community. The first logical step might be for the Jewish organizations to conduct a

required to file in order to reserve apartments; neither have they requested that the Tenants' Association take steps to stop the planned demolition of their present apartment buildings, as it has done for other tenants in the past.

Mr. Martinez said that his organization has not had sufficient contact with the Jews to determine why they have not filed the proper forms or asked for some action of the Tenants' Association.

#### NO INTERFERENCE

The two Jewish members of the local community corporation were later interviewed by RZA representatives. They both were of the opinion that the fact that there were any Jews employed by the Community Corp. was already a positive step towards organizing and protecting the rights of the local Jewish community and that there should be no interference by outside Jewish groups in the situation.

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#### STAFF for this issue:

Stephen Raber, Wayne Karlin, Renee Hoffinger, David Mandel, Joel Grantz, Lester Arditty, Carl Goldman, Judy Moch, Spencer Seidman, Sandy Simon, Marshall Wittman, Beverly Touback, Sandy Krasnov, Jess Levine, Elissa Sampson, Erica Silberman, Rena Behar, Chaim Cohen, Dave Margulis, Clifford Wolfe, Philip E. Schoenberg, Doreen the artist, Josef the cartoonist, Ellen Cool, Gidon Eshet, and the Jerusalem police, for providing some excitement for this issue, Mitch Cohen, Aviva Zuckoff, the Hurwitzes of Los Angeles.

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Member, Jewish Student Press Service.



סְבִירֵי מִרְנָן וְרִבְנָן  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
 בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן :  
 וְשׁוֹתָהּ וּמְבַרְךְ אַחֲכָ עַל הַגֶּפֶן



## Humanism Internationalism and the Jewish Tradition

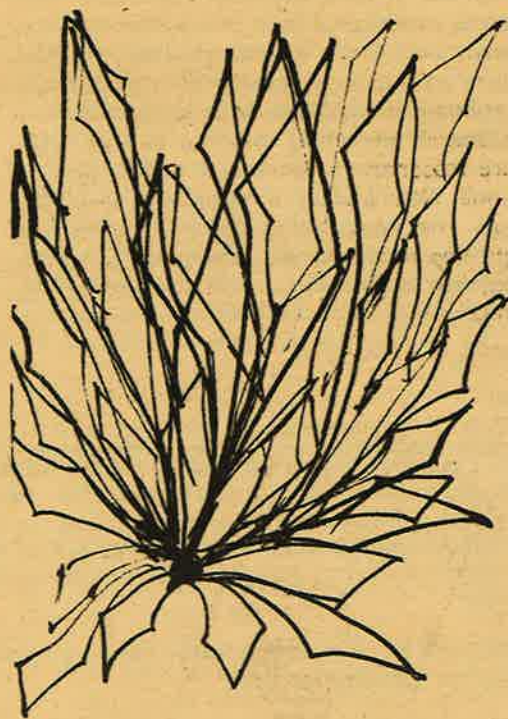
by Steven Raber

The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, is more than a historical relic to which polite reverence is paid because it is the fountainhead of three great religions. The Old Testament is a book of many colors, written, edited, and reedited by many writers in the course of a millenium and containing in itself a remarkable evolution from primitive authoritarianism and clannishness to the idea of the radical freedom of man and the brotherhood of all men. The old testament is a revolutionary book; its theme is the liberation of man from incestuous ties to blood and soil, from submission to idols, from slavery, from powerful masters, to freedom for the individual, for the nation, and all mankind. The old testament is the document depicting the evolution of a small, primitive nation, whose spiritual leaders insisted on the existence of one God and in the nonexistence of idols, to a religion with faith in a nameless God, in the final unification of all man in the complete freedom of each individual.

The oral tradition of the Jewish people, like the written bible contains the record of ideas expressed over a span of more than twelve hundred years. The oral tradition could be a second Jewish bible, of course it is not, but it would contain the Talmud, the writings of Maimonides, the Kabbalah, as well as the sayings of Hasidic masters. But what I want to show by this idea is that the old testament represents the development of ideas over a long period of time.

So it is natural that the story of the liberation from slavery in Egypt, the speeches of the Great Humanist Prophets, should have found an echo in the hearts of men who had experienced forces only as its suffering objects, never as its executors? Is it surprising that the prophetic vision of a united, peaceful mankind, of justice for the poor and helpless, found fertile soil among the Jews and was never forgotten? Is it surprising that when the walls of the ghettos fell, Jews in disproportionately large numbers were among those who proclaimed the ideas of internationalism, peace and justice? What from a mundane standpoint was the tragedy of the Jews—the loss of their country and their state—from the humanist standpoint was their greatest blessing: being among the suffering and despised, they were able to develop and uphold a tradition of humanism.

page four



# MASADA

-by Wayne Karlin ✓

*Wayne Karlin recently returned from a long stay in Israel, where he was editor of the newspaper of the American College in Jerusalem.*

The prophet sat motionless on top of a hill in the Judean desert. Both he and the hill sat alone and set apart from their surroundings. The ridges in the old man's face and the granite of his eyes grew out of the rock on which he sat. He seemed a part of the mountain, an outcrop made of harder material.

But his mind was no longer granite. He was an old man and his thoughts were scattered.

His thoughts were at different levels. Only the outer part of his being, the part connected to his senses, was aware of the magnificence of the desert. It was a desert that could twist a soul in awe, and though he recognized its appearance as illusory, it still affected him.

From his hill he looked over a vast sterility of rocks, a sterility twisting and silently screaming in sun-pierced agony. The clear, clean brightness of the rock's surfaces in the sun contrasted, as life to death, with the black gloom of their shadowed sides. It was a wilderness for prophets, a desolation clean of man.

And the wind that blew across the desert from the shining iron blue mirror of the Dead Sea was a part of the great cleanness. The wind would roar at him, then die down to an ear tickling whisper, a teasing whisper; like the half formed words of God.

His eyes fell, finally, on Masada. He stared fiercely at the stronghold, trying to see the few remaining Jews, the last zealots of the revolt.

A second, deeper, level of the prophet's mind dwelt for the moment on the affairs of men. On blood and revolution.

He thought of the beginning, when they brought freedom to the land like a sweet bride, the giddiness of those first days of independence. And he thought of the day they had retaken the holy temple mount, cleansed with their blood. Even in the joy of those days he had stood in a cold shadow of fear, a shadow as dark as these desert shadows. Israel had signed her treaties with that sprawling whore of the nations that called itself a republic, and the prophet was laughed at for his premonition of ruin. Who thought of ruin in those golden days of freedom when all the world was our friend. Oh yes, he thought bitterly, the republic that became an empire proved what a friend she was.

Empire. The word fascinated its returning generals with its promise of bloody glory, and the nation's bored masses snapped at any diversion. Then we saw its naked snapper; the foul eagle squatting obscenely on the temple mount. And our freedom, ashes in our mouths.

From his thoughts of the revolution and the odor of burning flesh and burning cities, his mind went to its deepest level. And at this level he cried out to God.

"Lord, why hast thou forsaken us?"

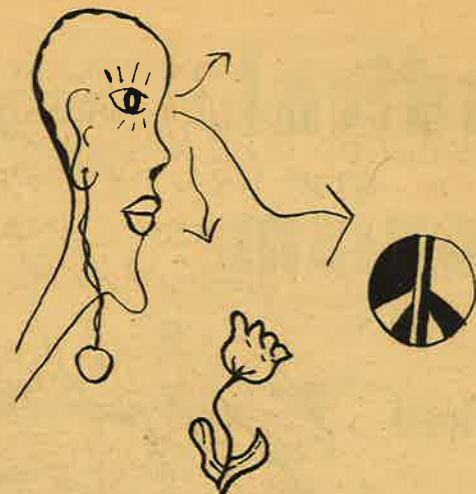
"We are Thine. We are Thy people."

"Is our salvation always to be in the blood of our children?"

A screaming roar interrupted his meditation. His face turned upwards into the sun. And his eye fell on the red, white and blue eagle on the side of the American jet, as it dived down to bomb the last defenders of Masada.



# JEWISH WOMEN'S LIB



A general meeting of anyone interested in the Jewish Women's Movement was held at the end of March at the Network loft in NYC. The meeting drew almost 100 women. The results have been the formation of several local groups including one group of gay Jewish women and another of Orthodox women. Regular consciousness raising groups were also established. Some of the women at the conference discussed the ignorance most people have about Jewish women. They decided to try and get together an anthology by and about Jewish women.

The following is excerpted from an edited version of a discussion given by Aviva Zuckoff, one of the leading spokeswomen for Jewish and Women's Liberation.

A lot of tension has developed between Jewish men and women, because Jewish men want women who are useful like their mothers and, at the same time, subservient, like goyish women. Jewish women have gotten double messages that could make even an animal crazy; and then the men complain that Jewish women are neurotic.

Jewish men began to create nasty stereotypes of Jewish women. The three most prevalent stereotypes are: the Jewish American princess, the Hadassah lady, and the Jewish mother.

The Jewish American Princess is spoiled; she thinks she's precious; she thinks everything's coming to her; and she demands. The more Jewish men want to be the boss, the less they like "demanding" women, so the stereotype is intended as a put-down. The Jewish American Princess is also "hard to get" sexually. The "sexual revolution" is a ploy to make women give up all their old defenses and become unconditionally available and compliant. If some Jewish women persist in playing the game according to the rules of the old double standard - which Jewish men still hold to, it's a defense which Jewish men obviously don't like. So again they create the obnoxious stereotype which no Jewish girl would want to resemble.

The Hadassah lady is efficient, loud, bossy and not really too bright. Jewish men don't like the idea that Jewish women can succeed so well: being successful as volunteer businesswomen, Jewish women might get ideas about going out and getting "real" jobs. To prevent such a danger, Jewish men create the Hadassah stereotype as an object of ridicule and scorn, who could not possibly be considered seriously by anyone, least of all the Hadassah lady herself.

Finally, the Jewish mother. Since coming to the American Galut, Jewish women were deprived of any kind of economic role, while their work at home shrank. ("Who needs a kosher home?") With all other avenues blocked, they threw their total energy into mothering. But, far more tragic - and dangerous - is the fact that American Jews have come to regard the traditional role of the traditional role of the Jewish woman of preserving Jewish identity and culture, as an unnecessary anachronism that should be sloughed off. This leaves us, as it were, "between roles". Because for the first time in 5,000 years Jewish women are in the process of having their programming changed. We are now being programmed to become the carriers of the assimilation virus.

Announcing a special issue of off our backs, a women's news journal, from Washington, D.C. on **JEWISH WOMEN**. Great fantastic issue appearing in February-March. Poems, songs, stories, and many articles on the Jewish woman. This will be a fine issue and one you shouldn't miss!!

\$.35 per issue: \$.25 each for packets of 10 or more. Subscriptions to off our backs are \$5.00 per year. Order copies right away and pass them out to your sisters and friends. **WRITE TO: Jewish Women c/o off our backs 1346 Conn. Ave. N.W. #1013 Washington, D.C. 20036**

Right now, American Jews are in an in-between state, not being able to decide 100% in favor of assimilation, but not really emotionally committed to Jewish identity and life-style either. They, therefore, cannot decide if the Jewish woman should retain her old (survival) role or whether programming the new (assimilationist) role should be pushed. Until they make up their minds, the Jewish woman has to fill both roles, a nerve-wracking tightrope-walking act.

Those Jews who are totally assimilationist express the most hostility toward the traditional "Jewish Mother." To the extent that she remains the life force of the Jewish people and preserves, however minimally, those patterns that were necessary for our ethnic survival, she threatens the success of the assimilatory process.

We American Jewish women have indeed come a long way: the rocky road has led into a murky swamp. For 5,000 years we were actively involved in preserving our people through the worst years of our history. It is true that Jewish women were oppressed by being forced, solely by virtue of their membership in the female sex, to take on this role and not be free to pursue the wide range of human possibilities open only to men. Nevertheless, our role had dignity and purpose; it lent meaning to the lives of our sisters for hundreds of years.

Have the Jews survived Masada and Mayence, Nemerov and Kishinev and Auschwitz, to reach the day of turning in their identity cards? Can we, as Jewish women with a proud history which we are just beginning to learn, allow this to happen? Can we be a party to such shame? Can we let ourselves lie down and be programmed to turn out a new generation of self-hating assimilationists? Because that is the alternative we face: let things slide and the Jewish people slides down the drain; resist and perhaps there is a chance. As a Socialist-Zionist and a Jewish Feminist, I do not believe these two are reasonable alternatives. There really is only one alternative: to fight the new oppression, the new assimilationist role. In this struggle lies not only our liberation as Jewish women, but perhaps also the liberation of the Jewish people as well.

Reprinted from JSP

by Aviva Zuckoff



## IN DEFENSE OF ANGELA DAVIS

This leaflet was issued in Los Angeles in the middle of April when news of Roger McAfee's interview in the Post reached the west coast. It was issued to a Jewish left gathering in the hope of building a more self-conscious understanding among Jews that support of radical causes need not and must not imply self-destruction. It is important to note that in Mr. McAfee's interview he not only expressed anti-Semitic attitudes, but also very racist attitudes toward Chicanos. Frequently, racism, if not non-discriminatory, is at least universally applied.

All progressives and fighters for Socialism denounce the racist injustice of American courts. We demand that Angela Davis be tried by a jury of her peers: black and white workers and intellectuals who are victims of American capitalism. Capitalist institutions, including the courts, oppress racial, ethnic and religious groups in America while they destroy the people of Southeast Asia who are fighting for freedom from colonialism.

We are happy that Angela Davis is out on bail and can add her intelligent voice to her own defense. We also want to hear Angela Davis' voice protest the racist mongering of Roger McAfee, the California dairy farmer who put up nearly half of his 1000 acre farm as collateral for Angela Davis' \$102,500 bail bond. Mr. McAfee is entitled to his political opinions - even though we may disagree with him.

But Mr. McAfee has other opinions which must be challenged. An interview with Mr. McAfee appeared in the March 18 "Washington Post." The interviewer states: When "McAfee talked of his disillusionment in Israel, his face reddened, his mouth tightened, and he shouted: "Hitler learned the word racism from a Jewish whore who gave him syphilis. He hated Jews from his youth because of their racism and he hated them on a racist basis, too."

Progressives and fighters for Socialism know that Mr. McAfee is not expressing principled political opinions but is mouthing vile and ugly racist and anti-Semitic charges which are not befitting "an avowed Communist."

Thus we call upon all progressives and fighters for Socialism, and especially Angela Davis - whose freedom we seek - to disavow the racist remarks of her benefactor, even as she accepts the bail bond that he made available. This is the action of a progressive, of a Socialist - and this is the action we expect from our Angela Davis.

WRITE TO ANGELA DAVIS AT THE SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA COURT HOUSE. TELL HER: REJECT THE RACIST, ANTI-SEMITIC SLURS OF ROGER McAFEE. TELL HIM SUCH SLURS EXPOSE HIS MEAN MENTALITY, THEY SPLIT THE UNITY OF PROGRESSIVES' OF THE TRADITIONAL SOLIDARITY OF BLACKS AND JEWS. THERE CAN BE NO PLACE FOR ANTI-SEMITES IN THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT NO MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY THEY GIVE TO GAIN RESPECTABILITY.

We demand freedom for Angela Davis - but we also demand that Angela Davis reject the ideas of Anti-Semitic supporters who will cause her and our movement more harm than good.

AD HOC COMMITTEE AGAINST RACISM IN THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT



# Radical Zionism

## In A Nutshell

Marx was the first of many Marxists. And he was certainly the first Jewish Marxist, followed by too many others, to misinterpret the situation of the Jews. For instead of analyzing the Jewish nation, constituting different classes and segments, Marx generalized the image of the Jewish bourgeoisie to include all Jews. Thus follows the familiar "leftist" view that the solution to the Jewish problem, assimilation, is in the interests of the Jews, and is prevented only by the existence of anti-Semitism.

by David Mandel

Here we attempt, to the degree possible, to expound basic Radical Zionist ideology in one page. This rendition is mostly based on the theoretical work of Ber Borochov, 1881-1917. In future issues, Borochov's other works and analyses will be dealt with, as well as the history of the left Zionist movement.

Assimilation is truly in the interest of a bourgeois Jew, as it secures his economic foothold in society. And organizations such as the Bnai Brith and American Jewish Committee, created by the Jewish bourgeoisie to diminish obstacles to Jewish integration, probably never would have come into existence had it not been for anti-Semitism.

But this is only part of the story. Borochov defined nationhood as unique historical consciousness rooted in common conditions of economic development. Therefore, he said, a real Jewish nation does exist, not only as a reflection of anti-Semitism. And the base of this nation is the Jewish working class, which does exist in certain unique "Jewish" roles. Borochov's analysis is based on examination of the roots of such Jewish nationhood: the economic conditions under which the Jews have lived determine the social and economic roles they play. The Socialist Zionist solution comes directly out of the analysis, aiming to transform the base of Jewish nationhood to a normal one, where real class struggle can take place.

But first the analysis: Throughout the history of the Jews' dispersion, national and religious oppression have combined with advanced and separate Jewish cultural development to place Jews in occupations different from those of the surrounding peoples. These have always been occupations farther removed from nature than most; labor-intensive as opposed to land-intensive; mental labor as opposed to physical.

Furthermore, restrictions on employment in many areas has combined with a history of being forced out of one position after another. This has led to a Jewish ethos of independence; a high value placed on self-employment. A Jew will start a small business of his own with far less capital than another person.

The point of all this can be quoted straight from Borochov: "The story told . . . is that of a people far removed from the most important, most influential, and most stable branches of production--far removed from the occupations which are at the hub of history. Instead of concentrating about the vital center of economic life, the Jews are gathered at its periphery. Obviously, the fate of society does not to any extent rest on the needle or tobacco industries (today substitute law and teaching--ed.). This superficiality of social life, which is made up of the give-and-take of finished goods, must draw its sustenance from labor in such central branches of production as agriculture, sheep raising, mining, railways, whipping, etc." (From "Economic Development of the Jews," 1916).

Jews have always jumped to exploratory areas of developing economic phases. Jews were the first mercantilists, the first retailers, the first in the communications industry, all in the past, and are now predominant in the teaching and liberal professions. Jews have progressively left all these areas as others, too, begin to get involved, and as monopolies begin to take over, requiring the Jew to sell out and either work for the larger concern or get out completely.

Thus Jews have historically been forced out of one position after another, and when the change has been unusually quick, or the anti-Semitism unusually prevalent, mass migrations have resulted. Borochov explained this, and understood that each successive reestablishment of a Jewish community in a new country contained, in its very formation as a minority, the seeds of its own destruction as a community. The Jewish communities continued to exist, but always in this abnormal way.

The only possible solutions for a Jew to end such a cycle are either total assimilation or territorial concentration in a Jewish land. Assimilation is a perfectly acceptable solution in theory, and may actually occur in a varying number of individual cases, but is impossible and undesirable as a communal solution, because the "Jews" will always remain collectively isolated. Assimilation is an individual solution, a liberal solution; Socialists should reject it in favor of a collective solution. Therefore, territorial concentration and the creation of a normal national structure is the only collective solution to the Jewish problem. Here Jews will not be a minority subject to direct national oppression; here Jews will be engaged in all areas of production; here Jews will work the land, engage in physical labor as well as mental; and most important, here the Jewish working class can develop a normal proletarian consciousness and, allied with working classes of other nations, engage in class struggle.

Finally, without going into great detail, what does this mean today, to a Socialist Jew?

The state of Israel exists, and does, in fact, have a more or less normal economic structure, but not, of course, a Socialist one. Normal class struggle must be waged--in Israel, where it will have the greatest effect on world Jewry. The one most important complicating factor is the lack of peace and recognition between Israel and her neighbors. As in all small-nation conflicts, this encourages national chauvinism and expansionist tendencies and distracts from class conflict. These tendencies must be fought--Israelis and Palestinians should be allies against imperialism, not each other's enemies. But also, the Jewish national problem is not solved as long as Jews continue to live in the same kind of abnormal positions that Borochov described--and they do, in every country outside of Israel. We must continue to point out these abnormalities, and fight assimilationist tendencies in the Jewish community (while not, of course, discouraging an individual who wants to try to assimilate). Borochov spoke of a two-step solution: National normality, and Socialism.

We are perhaps only halfway through the first step.

NITZOTZ, MAY 1972





by Chaim Cohen

*Chaim Cohen is a student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and an active member of New York RZA.*

What is really happening in Forest Hills? My explanation is a simple thesis. American Jews today are basically 'haves' in terms of America's wealth, power, and status. Consequently they can be politically left only at the expense of weakening the Jewish community.

Similarly, they can build a community only at the expense of not being politically left. Idealistically, a Jewish state is the only possible place we can build a community that is both Jewish and left. Practically, the American Jewish community may easily end up being neither Jewish nor left, but assimilated and conservative.

By 'politically left' I mean working for a society that is socially and economically egalitarian. This has been the real thrust and definition of left politics in the last 300 years. Liberals desire this egalitarianism gradually and somewhat unconsciously. Radicals desire this equality quickly and extremely.

By 'Jewish community' I mean a group of people whose particular way of life is Jewish; differing from alternative ways of life, and denying the possibility of one universal way of life. By way of life I do not mean simply one's attitude to life, but include equally all real aspects of life, from 'tying one's shoe' to worshipping one's God. Building and maintaining communities inherently involves being conservative about the past and particularistic concerning the present.

In previous history Jews were often among the 'have-nots' when it came to wealth, power, and status. Thus they were usually politically active on the left since it was in their interest to have a society more equal in wealth, status, and powers. Today American Jews have wealth, and a fair bit of status and power (although the possession of all three is more insecure than it appears). Thus, in America, it is in the interest of most Jews to be on the right, to conserve their now more than equal share of America's affluence.

And this is exactly what is happening in Forest Hills. First, the Jews of Forest Hills obviously feel a lower class, black housing project threatens the middle class affluence and security they recently acquired and are now seeking to defend. As long as America is not 'providing enough for every one', for the average Jew to be politically left, i.e. to promote more equality, is to ask him to give up something of what is now his.

Secondly, the economic and social integration of several communities (an almost necessary condition of equality) can only be at the expense of the particularness of any one community. Thus the Jews of Forest Hills are correct in sensing that physical integration will lead to social assimilation. Jews must live next to each other if they are to maintain Jewish schools, Jewish restaurants, Jewish social-gathering spots (however we define Jewish). Compare the Jewish consciousness of Jews living together in Brooklyn, with that of Jews living scattered in the suburbs. That this physical proximity is required is due to the overwhelmingness of America's mass culture, and the weakness and hollowness of the Jewish way of life in today's America.

#### THE TEACHERS' STRIKE

The teachers' strike is further proof of my first point, that to liberally or radically promote equality is to oppose the economic and social self-interest of the Jew. During the strike, Jewish teachers were simply trying to defend their more than equal share of positions, power, and salaries in the city's educational system relative to the city's Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Similar proof is the unwillingness of the suburban Jew in Scardale to pay more taxes for, and to send his children to school with, the ghetto Blacks of Harlem. Very simply, Jews today are 'haves'.

# ON BEING LEFT AND BEING JEWISH

The need today for Jewish day schools is additional proof of my second point, that a strengthening of the Jewishness of the Jewish community can only be at the expense of the social integration and agglomeration that is an almost necessary condition of equality. Public school integration probably is necessary if America is to achieve social equality. But Jewish education certainly is necessary if the Jewish community in the U.S. is to be Jewish. Our inadequate compromise of afternoon Hebrew schools only testifies to this constant, inevitable tension of maintaining the particularity of Judaism amidst the universality of America's mass culture.

Liberals and radicals try to deny the dilemma this thesis poses. Liberals, however, are not in touch with the real social position and real needs of today's Jewish community. First, most liberals are still entranced by past Jewish voting patterns, and Jewish opinions on issues not touching immediate self-interest. They illusorily believe that because Jews support liberal Supreme Court nominees and pollution they will accept low income housing in Forest Hills, and will bus their children. Liberals do not recognize that much Jewish voting is instinctive habit, vestigial from the time when Jewish left politics was self-serving. They do not recognize the fact and consequences of Jews being 'haves' today.

Consequently liberal solutions have been piously idealistic and thus politically meaningless. Liberals have asked the N.Y. teachers and Forest Hills residents to surrender 'immediate, short range' economic and social interest for the long range interest of establishing an unpolarized, socially just society free of the possibility of anti-Semitism. But this solution ignores the basic human reality that people almost never voluntarily work against their immediate economic and social self-interest. Thus today's liberals ignore the basic political fact that all the rabbis' sermons, and liberal speeches, of the past ten years have been virtually politically impotent in preventing Jews from fleeing from

Blacks. American Jews are not accepting liberal promises of a social justice and lack of anti-semitism in the future, as an answer to the present threat of increased crime and decreased property values in Forest Hills. In reality, the liberal answer has been no answer.

#### RADICAL ANSWERS

The radical Jew has tried to resolve this dilemma in two ways. Most, such as Goodman, Schwerner, Rubin, and Hoffman, have simply fled the Jewish community and their Jewish identity en masse to become foot soldiers in the American revolution. But this only testifies to my thesis that in America today one can only be left at the expense of being Jewish.

A second alternative has been the radical Jew seeking to be a Jew in the revolution. They also have fled the established Jewish community, but have done so in an attempt to establish alternative Jewish communities. Thus they hope to form a Jewish contingent in the Revolution, a Jewish version of the Black Panthers of Young Lords. This is Art Waskow's proposal.

I fear that this alternative, however, desirable is virtually impossible in America. First, because the Jews are 'haves' while the Blacks are 'have-nots', radical Jews have to flee and combat their home communities, while the Panthers can remain and work within their community. Second, the task of establishing an alternative community that embodies both the particular and the universal, that is honestly Jewish and radical at the same time, in the same person and community, is almost insurmountable. For example, there are few radical Jews today who are successfully working at the same time to free both Angela Davis and Sylva Zalmanson. Similarly, Art Waskow's Freedom Hagadah is probably more radical than Jewish, and is more a break, than integration with the tradition. It is radicalism in a Jewish vessel.

Thirdly, many radicals believe that the development of alternative ways of life, rather than a redistribution of power and wealth, is the essential definition of the needed revolution. Again, I hardly believe America to be the most conducive environment for developing radical, honestly Jewish alternatives to present Western civilization. Very simply, I fear the Jewish radical is in danger of assimilation, assimilation by the American radical culture.

To crudely summarize my thesis, I think the differences between the American and rich South African Jewish community is only one of degree. In both cases, to promote a more egalitarian society is to attack and upset the present existence of the Jewish community. Yet the alternative, a particular Jewish community in a universal revolutionary movement, seems doomed to a schizophrenic existence likely to end in a new assimilation.

A Jewish state is the only real resolution of this tension. Only in a Jewish state can one's left politics, and one's Jewishness, continually enrich and not detract from, the other. In a Jewish state the redistribution of power and wealth is a Jewish question; taking from the Jewish rich, giving to the Jewish poor. Thus the particular, being Jewish, embodies the universal, social justice. In America, this particular of being Jewish is cast adrift, and lost amidst the universal of America's ethical and political struggles. In America, the politically left Jew must struggle under the threat of becoming schizophrenic. In a Jewish state the politically left Jew can struggle under the hope of becoming whole.

The Jew remaining in the U.S. must be aware of the tension of being left and being Jewish. For only if he is aware that he is constantly making choices, will he be able to make wise choices.







# Ford Isn't A Better Idea!

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## News

### A CALL TO RADICAL GAY JEWS

Understanding and coming to grips with our own double oppression is the most difficult step towards liberation. Communication towards solidarity with others in the same situation can be a great help. Some gay radical Jews in Chicago have begun to explore their situation. They are part of a general radical Jewish community which has formed over the last few months, called the Am Chai Community. They are publishing a newspaper, "Chutzpah". If you would like to get in touch with other gay Jews and hear what they are doing, write Robbie, c/o Chutzpah; 2118 N. Clifton; Chicago, Ill. 60614.

### Highly recommended reading

The winter issue of DAVKA--a journal out of Los Angeles.

Special issue on the American aliya.

Including excellent articles by Johnathan Branlow, RZA founder, about political assimilation of immigrants to Israel, by Mike Masch of Philadelphia, a critique of radical Zionists' tendencies to romanticize their plans to be radicals in Israel, and many others.

Send \$50 to Davka, 3909 Burnside Ave., Los Angeles, Calif., 90008.

The following petition is being circulated by the Radical Jewish Union, 2736 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, California, 94704. Nitzotz is printing it for your information. The Berkeley RJU requests that if you agree with it, please send it with your signature, city, age, and organizational affiliation (if any) to them at the above address.

### TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

Because Israel's policy of civilian settlement in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank is extremely prejudicial for peace in the Middle East and justice for the Palestinian people; and because Jewish immigration to Israel is being used both to justify and implement this policy; we the undersigned hereby declare that, as committed Jews and potential olim, we cannot, in good conscience, make Aliyah until Israel halts her policy of colonization.

Signature and address:

We are aware of the importance of working for change within Israel. However, the use, in Israel, of potential Jewish immigration as an argument in support of civilian settlement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, reinforces the inherent responsibility of Galut Jews to criticize Israeli policy. We cannot allow ourselves to be used to support a policy which we oppose.

On Sunday March 19, in Cleveland Ohio, the local chapter of the Zionist Organization of America presented Congressman Gerald Ford (House minority leader) with the second annual Abba Hillel Silver Award. As was done last year when the award was given to Senator Robert Taft, chaverim of the Radical Zionist Alliance from Cleveland, Kent, and Oberlin protested the presentation, calling it a prostitution of everything Israel and Zionism stand for. Ford's voting record on matters such as civil rights and especially the war in Vietnam were two of the issues that RZA raised. Leaflets were handed out saying "This year Ford and next year Wallace?" and "Israel Deserves Better!"

Earlier in the week RZA contacted the local President of ZOA to request that he not give the award. We received a very hostile response. He informed us that if we did not act "peaceably" there would be plenty of plain-clothes police to arrest us. We asked if we could meet with him before the award. He said that he was too busy. Following this we challenged him to debate the issue before all the people who came to witness the award presentation, and to let them decide whether or not it was in the interest of the Jewish community. He told us we were "vain."

### THE GOLDEN CALF

On the day of the presentation 10 RZAers showed up with leaflets and picket signs. There was much heated discussion and everyone heard Ford speak about Israel and the U.S. One RZA member said afterwards, "The only thing he didn't do was call for Israel to become the 51st state and have U.S. military bases." RZA attempted to present Conrad Morganstern III, Cleveland ZOA President, with a home-made Golden Calf, for "idolatrous actions against the Jewish community." At first Mr. Morganstern said "No thank you, I already have plenty of awards." After the presentation to Ford, we again tried to present him with the calf but he hurriedly walked away hiding his face so that a photographer could not take his picture with the calf.

Afterwards a gentleman who identified himself as a national ZOA vice-president (his license plate said ZOA on it) said that he would take the Calf and we gave it to him.

One of the demonstrators who was carrying a sign saying "DO NOT PROSTITUTE ISRAEL" said, "Awards like this, organizations like ZOA and this obsequious attitude of having award presentations to tuchus (ass)-lick the ruling class are going to mortgage Israel's freedom and independence."

### NYU RZA ANTI-WAR ACTIVITIES

by Marshall Whitman

The escalation of the bombing in Indochina, coupled with the North Vietnamese offensive, spurred student anti-war activity throughout the country. At New York University's downtown campus RZA played an active role in the anti-war activities. Immediately following the mass strike meeting called by the Student Mobilization Committee, RZA produced leaflets, directed to Jewish students, calling for support to the strike. RZA participated in the many anti-war meetings, campus and citywide. RZAer Marshall Wittmann spoke at an Israeli Independence Day rally in Washington Square Park, speaking on the relationship between Jews and the war. RZA participated in a forum sponsored jointly by Lucha (an Espana student group) and the National Caucus of Labor Committees. Carl Goldman represented RZA at this forum directed to the relationship between the working class and the war. NYU RZA also helped build the Radical Jewish Contingent in the April 22 march.



# Ford Isn't A Better Idea!



## ews

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The following literature is available from RZA:

#### Free leaflets:

- Borochovism, by Murray Zuckoff from the Jewish Liberation Journal
- My Jewish Problem and Ours, by Sol Stern, From Ramparts
- RZA Platform
- El Fatah, a Critical Analysis
- The Meaning of Homeland, by Amos Oz
- Zionism in Question
- Socialist Zionism and Palestinian Liberation

#### FOR FIFTY CENTS:

- Collection of Essays by Ber Borochov
- Never Before RZA Poster
- Ber Borochov in the Library Poster

#### FOR TWENTY-FIVE CENTS:

- 'Buttons: Israeli Panthers need your help.



# INTERVIEW: WITH AMOS KENAN

What today, comprises the left in Israel?

There was once a left in Israel. Until five, six or seven years ago one could consider Mapam the Israeli leftist party. Since then Mapam has become part of the Israeli establishment; and now not only is it part of the establishment and a member of the government, but it is directly responsible for every single act of the government. So there is a vacant place where the left should be. This vacant place is somehow filled with the dissidents from Mapam. This is Siach the New Israeli Left. It was founded by young dissidents of Mapam who were unhappy with their party's attitude. They are today not only the most, but maybe the only militant leftist group in Israel. I can't tell you what their real force is. It's not much, but they have an impact because they are young intellectuals, and they form the body of the Movement for Peace and Security; they are the body of everything which is opposition in Israel.

**What about "Haolam Hazeh," Uri Avneri's party?** "Haolam Hazeh" has a seat in the Knesset but no movement behind it. It's a kind of tactical arrangement for the elections. People voted for Avneri for so many different reasons that you can't put them together. Some liked the idea that there should be some new blood in the Knesset. Some thought it a good thing that a Knesset member be serious and precise and accurate and never miss a session. It sets a good example for the other Knesset members who don't frequent the house. Some think that Avneri's big campaign for free transportation for soldiers was a very good idea. Some also agree with his political ideas. But altogether there are just some, not many; Avneri did not attempt to create a movement.

**What about parties like Maki and Matzpen? Are they doing anything on the Israeli left?**

Maki is now the legitimate Israeli left -- for exportation. Matzpen has no power in Israel and does not represent anything; it's an army in which the generals are abroad and some true soldiers have remained in Israel.

**That means the only left party with any force in Israel is Siach?**

Well, not only; there is the young section of Mapam which has emerged recently almost in open opposition to the party. I don't think they will become dissidents but Mapam is not a big, happy family. The younger generation is in open revolt against the leadership.

**What have groups like Siach and Young Mapam been doing about Israel's social and economic problems?**

First of all, they are becoming conscious of these problems, trying to develop an ideological attitude and join in the struggle. I mean, whenever there is anything happening with the Black Panthers, those people participate and help. They don't even want to become a party. They are a debating club, but when it comes to action, they also act.

**Is there any unity in the Israeli left? Are they forming some sort of united pressure group?**

No, nor is it advisable. You see, the Israeli establishment would do anything possible to identify Siach with Matzpen. But actually, they are quite different, because Siach is Zionist and Matzpen is not. Siach, of course, not only recognizes the right of Israel to exist, but is made up of people who are good Israeli patriots, in their own way. There is no question about their Zionism. But Matzpen doesn't accept the right of a Jewish state to exist. Matzpen is now

*An interview of Amos Kenan, prominent leftist Israeli journalist, by Sidney Nestel of Network. A Jewish Student Press Service feature.*

divided into three main factions. There are the Maoists, the Trotskyites, and the authentic Matzpen, none of whom accept the idea of a Jewish national state. The Israeli press, the establishment, and the mass media make every possible effort to identify Siach with Matzpen. When the Black Panthers first started they did everything possible to connect the Black Panthers with Siach and Matzpen. They said that

the Black Panthers are manipulated by this bunch of crazy, leftist intellectuals, and that they are traitors to the state, to the people and to the nation. I think, therefore, that if Siach and other opposition groups want to help the Black Panthers, they should do it in a discreet way, to avoid the impression that the Panthers are manipulated by anybody. That would be the end of it. **What about the Movement for Peace and Security? Have they formed an alliance with Siach?**

The Movement for Peace and Security is a commodity. It's the only place where people from different parties could meet. There are members of Mapam, of the Labor Party, of the Liberal Party, and even some members of the Religious Party. And Maki, of course. It's a non-party organization where people are supposed to meet. But they are only supposed to meet; the parties involved prevent it from taking any extreme anti-government positions. The Mapam and the Labor Party delegates in the Movement of Peace and Security wouldn't allow for such a position, so that the Movement, for all practical purposes, doesn't exist. From time to time, it comes out with a declaration or something; and if they sponsored a demonstration, no Mapam, no Labor Party, no Liberal, no Religious, nobody would come to this demonstration. Then they would need Siach, and Siach would come.

**You mentioned before that the Israeli establishment does everything in its power to stop these new opposition movements from growing by identifying them with Matzpen and anti-Israel forces. To what extent do you think the Israeli establishment is repressive toward society in general? Is it a repressive society, as some people say?**

Yes, it is, only in a very subtle and discreet way. But there is social repression in Israel.

**Could you be more explicit? Could you give some examples?**

It's very simple. You see, from the age of 18 until the age of 55 the Israeli is a soldier. So suppose you are 45. Suppose you are 50. You are somebody. You are a professor or a bank manager, or whatever you like to be. From time to time they call you to a military office, just to check. Just to sign your name. But that's enough. The moment you enter the military office you are no longer a professor or bank manager. You are nothing. You are a soldier, and that's all. You are under military jurisdiction. Even if it's only for 15 minutes. For 15 minutes you are again a soldier as you were when you were 18. And that's enough to put you in your proper place. You don't need more than that. You don't need more apparent means of repression. That alone puts you in line.

**Would you say the Israeli army is more similar to a professional army, as in Canada or Great Britain, or closer to the Chinese model of a "people's army"?**

It's neither one nor the other. It could be adequately described as a popular army. Only the picture is not so nice because there are classes in Israel; there is an upper class and there is a lower class. The professional or standing army is the upper class; the reserve army is the lower class.

**What about dissent within the army, such as the big outcry from within the army itself about the brutality in Gaza? Was that typical or an exception?**

It's not an exception. They try hard to maintain certain values, certain humanism. It becomes harder and harder to maintain, but a decent effort is made.

**What about inflation? I understand that in the last year or two inflation has skyrocketed in Israel. How is this affecting the Israeli working class? Are they reacting to it in any way?**

They are reacting, they are revolting, but they still don't make any connection between war expenses and the state of war, and the terrible economic situation. They just don't see that it's one thing.

**Is that because no one has spoken to this issue, or have people tried to speak to this issue in Israel?**

Nobody would dare say it in Israel. Nobody. Nobody would dare raise the question. It's a sacred thing, security. Nobody would dare touch it.

**Not even Siach or the left?**

Nobody.

**What about racism in Israel -- toward Oriental Jews and toward Arabs. Would you call it racism, or something else?**

It's not racism, it's class struggle. The class configuration of Israel is this: You have the upper class, which is either European, or Israeli-born from European parents; then you have the Oriental Jew; then you have the Arabs as the lowest class. I think that in history, races and communities played the roles of social classes. The Oriental Jew plays the role of the proletarian, which is what he is. It is not the kibbutz which is the proletarian class. The kibbutz belongs to the upper class. It's the Oriental Jew who is the cheap labor power for the kibbutz. The kibbutz is the manager and the Oriental Jew is the worker. And the Arab is the even lower worker.

**What about the advent of the Black Panthers? Do you consider this the beginning of a serious class struggle in Israel?**

That's the only serious class struggle. There is no other serious class struggle. I think that it will mark the coming years in Israel. It will become more open and more violent.

**Do you think it will follow the pattern of the struggle between blacks and whites in America over the last ten years? Do you think it will get that violent and that hopeless, or is there more of a feeling of good will in Israel?**

There is not much good will and I'm afraid that to a certain degree it will follow the American pattern. And I think that the authorities have decided to crush it. The Panthers are bitter and they are desperate. They are young, inexperienced, illiterate, and uninformed -- but they have a good instinct. They feel that they are being pushed and they don't want to be pushed. And they don't want charity. They don't want it slow, they want it quick, immediate; and all of it -- not part of it.

**Have the Black Panthers and their constituents realized the connection between the war and inflation? Are they speaking up against the war at all?**

No, they don't and they wouldn't dare.

**Could you call the Black Panthers leftist? In America, one hears that the Panthers, or at least elements of the Panthers, are controlled by Gachal, and that the Oriental community has very strong sentiments toward Gachal.**

I don't think so. I think that in the next election every single party in Israel will try to have its own brand of Panthers. You will hear maybe hundreds of organizations saying the same things, but at the service of each particular party. And of course everybody will give more representation in the Knesset to the Oriental Jews because there is strong pressure in that direction. But, it's just that. I don't think that the Black Panthers themselves are leftists, but they have a class instinct.

**Do you think they'll be pushed into a leftist position by the coming struggles in Israel?**

Yes, they are being pushed left because the

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# Up Against the World-

by David Mandel

*Okay, folks, here it is: Our one really long article, for those of you with the patience, and who still care what the world of establishment Zionism is doing, as seen by one who recently battled it.*

*For those of you who missed it, David Mandel was RZA's delegate to the World Zionist Congress, held in Jerusalem in January (RZA entered into a coalition with Americans for Progressive Israel-Hashomer Hatzair for the so-called elections to the Congress, and as a result, David and Marty Salowitz represented us).*

*So here we have a frank account of the kishkush (a nice Hebrew word to know—best translated as bullshit, that went on inside the Congress hall. David was also involved in the demonstrations taking place outside, organized by the ad hoc committee called the Independent Socialist Zionist Voice, together with the Israeli Black Panthers. The story contains all the exciting elements we associate with Chicago of August 1968, including busted heads, mass arrests, police, press, and government lies, and even the absurd accusation that the conspiracy was conducted across state lines by Palestinian terrorists in cahoots with a few hundred disorganized radical Zionists in Jerusalem.*

*This article was sent out through the Jewish Student Press Service.*

I had been warned—that the World Zionist Congress was a joke, another superfluous voice of the establishment, at best a useless exercise in futility, at worst a trap; somehow I still expected that it would be useful, at least as a forum, with room for dissent, and maybe, eventually, change. But it fulfilled the worst warnings—it was in part, a joke, superfluous, futile, and a trap; in all—a nightmare, only it was really happening: this is what has become of the Zionist movement, the grand social and national liberation movement of the Jewish people? The Congress's only possible usefulness we concluded, was as a stage, to be played upon by those meaning to create a renewal of a true Zionist liberation movement; but even in this regard, we are weak, and our inability to effectively use the Congress to such ends only added to the horror of the nightmare. There were some minor victories, yes, but we are up against a lot more than a ten-day spectacle in January, 1972: We are up against a whole outlook that has captured most of the Jewish people. This has been created by a web of lies perpetrated by an undemocratic Jewish establishment and now resulting in the sustenance of an equally undemocratic bureaucracy and one of the most conservative in the world, centered in our homeland, Eretz Yisrael. And all too often we become lost in the fog of this bureaucracy, and our own struggle for self-liberation falters in its first steps.

## IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning, the Zionist movement was an independent political force within the Jewish communities. It struggled and propagandized for its goals, operating on political, social, educational and economic spheres, proclaiming that the solution to the Jewish problem was the territorial concentration of our people in Israel as a first step towards a normal existence. There always were, as there continue to be, differences within the movement: right and left, religious and secular, but before the creation of the state, there was a more or less democratically arrived-at consensus, based on the need to realize the national goals: self-determination and ingathering. The first was achieved, the second not. But then the Zionist movement became the organ of the state it had created—and statehood, with the responsibilities of government, war and development, under unusually difficult conditions, was a different story altogether than a united front for a national liberation. Aid was a necessity, and the most reliable source was the Jews of the world. And the most money was to be found among the Jewish bourgeoisie, whose real interests were the exact opposite of the original goals of Zionism—they were interested in the preservation of the Jewish status quo: Zionism would be acceptable only if it was converted into a philanthropy for Jewish refugees. And that is exactly what happened: the Zionist movement sold out.

## THE SELLING OF ZIONISM

The World Zionist Organization today reflects the politics and policies of the Israeli government. The parties in the power positions are identical to the Israeli political parties. The controlling element in both cases is the labor bureaucracy. Herut and Mapam, the traditional Zionist left and right wings, are both represented in the about it. But neither could dream of making a meaningful attack on the center, where the real power obviously lies.<sup>1</sup> The rationale behind decisions and policies of the "Zionist" leaders today seems to be not what will help solve the Jewish problem most quickly, or even how to solve the dangerous problems of the war, and poverty and discrimination within Israel, but rather, what is good for the immediate interests of the Israeli government.

And this rationale, one oriented towards the status quo in Israel, leads nicely into collaboration with those Jews interested in preservation of the status quo elsewhere. The functions of the Zionist organization outside Israel are primarily fund-raising and pro-govern-

ment propaganda—and they are run by the non-Zionist Jewish plutocracy of the welfare federations and the defense organizations. The recent expansion of the Jewish Agency executive to include such people was merely formalization of an accomplished fact. In other words, the Zionist movement has spread itself so far to gather support of all Jews, that it has lost all independence, and meaning as a political force with defined goals.<sup>2</sup> Even within Israel, where the public is by no means leftist or even ideological, the standard reaction to the Congress was one of ridicule. The Israeli is much more impressed by deeds, and does not fully appreciate the real needs of fund-raising and propaganda abroad; on a very gut level he does not understand what kind of Zionist leaders these are who are often honored for such things as "40 years of service to Zionism in New York."

## INSIDE THE CONGRESS

So what actually happened in this Congress? We were told that one of the most important things about a Congress was the dealing, bargaining and conspiring for jobs, titles, and budgets; it all happened, I suppose, though we "youth" who are supposed to have all the idealism and save the Zionist movement from extinction had nothing to do with it.<sup>3</sup> Then there were the speeches—we had been told that this Congress was to be dedicated to ideological debate, presumably with serious decisions resulting. Well, most of the time was plenary sessions, and maybe 90% of the plenary sessions were taken by prepared speeches by most of the cabinet ministers and big shots of the Jewish Agency and the WZO. They spoke not to each other, and not to any general questions, let alone specific ones; and with a few exceptions, they were incredibly boring. Delegates (90% of whom were just party hacks anyway) could not just speak. It all had to be scheduled through the party caucuses, and there was very little time available (for instance, the first speaker from the group of thirty-three Mapam delegates was not until the seventh day of the Congress. They were good enough to let Eric Tucker of Hashomer Hatzair take the fifteen minutes available and he gave an excellent talk touching on many issues.) There were a few cases where delegates raised points of order to try to insert what they felt were more relevant issues into the proceedings. Response to the occasional point of order was very interesting: in a few cases, where the delegate was older and from the political center, he was automatically allowed to raise his point. When Meir Kahane's supporters asked that he be allowed to speak, the question was brought to the floor and he was "democratically" denied the right. When I tried to raise the issue of police behavior the day after the demonstration (see below), and later when other young leftists tried to raise points, they were automatically denied, and we were forcibly evicted from the room when we tried to press the points.

The committee sessions and resolutions were little better. Of course the committees were dominated by the same political blocs, and they were presented with long resolutions all written in advance. A committee would go through the resolution, perhaps make a few changes, and send it to the floor. On the floor it would be read, and a minority report could be made and voted on. It was here that issues were finally raised in the plenum, as the right and the left continually made their minority proposals. Of course very few came near passing, and it all took place on the last day, when everyone felt rushed for time. So, mostly, the long resolutions, which said almost nothing, were passed.

## WUJS

One more story about the inside of the Congress is worth telling: the struggle of the World Union of Jewish Students, because it is an example of how the establishment demands conformity, and punishes those who do not conform, by trying to destroy them, and if that is not possible, making life so difficult that all their energies must be devoted to survival, rather than political action. This is essentially what happened to WUJS: given large-scale funding over the last years, it greatly expanded its operations, held conferences, published excellent material, and served all Jewish student groups with communications and information. But at its Arad Congress in summer, 1970, there were a majority of independent-thinking radical Zionists who passed the "Arad Program," a radical Zionist program, threatening the whole basis of conformity within the WZA. At which time an incredible campaign of slander against WUJS was begun, and a plan was formed to cut WUJS's funding at this Congress and replace WUJS with separate student organizations affiliated with the Israeli political parties, all nicely within the accepted boundaries of conformity. So in order to save their organization, the 20 or so WUJS people at the Congress, who were mostly good Radical Zionists, were forced to buckle under, try to avoid mention of the Arad Program and any other real issues, and lobby: solid, plain, dirty lobbying. And they did it well. The WUJS issue turned out to be the only one other than the Aliya resolution where parties were split other than the usual way. The solid right was against WUJS because they were convinced that WUJS

was in cahoots with El Fatah, and Mapam supported them because they liked WUJS's politics, more or less. The rest of the vote split according to how much of a party hack the delegate was, as he voted. This meant that WUJS managed to get a lot of support from Hadassah and ZOA types, who pride themselves on their independence from Israeli political parties. So instead of a 100% anti-WUJS resolution, a 50% anti-WUJS resolution was passed, and it remains to be seen exactly what will come in terms of funding. Meanwhile, the WUJS people could not do anything constructive, like raise important issues or visit the Jerusalem jail.

## MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE CONGRESS

During the weeks before the Congress a number of people subscribing to the view of the Congress outlined above began meeting to discuss how such Socialist Zionists could express themselves; in, to, and around the Congress. Even to those who felt ideologically outside the Congress it was obviously a focus of World Jewish opinion, of the press, and of the Israeli public, and we felt we should address ourselves to it. The ad hoc committee, which began calling itself the "Independent Socialist Zionist Voice," had a number of handicaps. There was no precedent, no previous organization to take on activities that could attract all we wanted to attract, and the various members of the groups involved had not even worked together before. It included Israelis, some from Young Mapam, some from Siach (Israeli New Left), some independent. It included Radical Zionists from dozens of countries, who had arrived in Israel over the last few years. These groups became aware of each other's existence and worked together for the first time; there were language barriers, disagreements, and different outlooks, but such continued cooperation is essential if any such independent Socialist Zionist movement is to develop in Israel.

The group proposed a basic four-point program to a mass meeting at the university attended by about 200 people two days before the Congress opening: 1. Our Zionist movement must be totally independent of the government, the Jewish Agency, and any of the existing parties. 2. Every Zionist must emigrate to Israel. 3. Zionism as a national liberation movement must, as an essential part of its program, recognize the equal right of self-determination of all peoples, specifically the Palestinian people, alongside Israel. 4. Zionism should not only be a national movement, but a social liberation movement, whose aim is to change the character of the Jewish people by creating a just state, without poverty and discrimination; a Socialist state. Based on this program the meeting prepared leaflets, slogans, and banners, and approved a program of action to bring the point of view before the public.

## THE BLACK PANTHER DEMONSTRATION

The Black Panthers, a militant "Civil Rights" organization of poor Sephardi Jews which created shock waves in Israel last year, had called a demonstration for the opening night of the Congress, to dramatize the poverty and discrimination they face. The mass meeting voted to support the demonstration, not as part of the Panther organization, and not as individuals who happened to support them, but as a group of committed leftist Zionists with our own slogans, leaflets, and banners. And so, at 7:00 PM, one hour before the opening of the Congress, about 200 people, including only 30 Panthers (Panther leaders had been arrested earlier that afternoon, and others were planning to meet us at the Congress Hall) set out from the university, about a 20 minute walk from the Congress. A permit for the march had been refused, as the police had announced that none would be allowed. It soon became clear that the word had come down from the establishment that their gala opening night was not to be spoiled by any opposing views.

As the group passed a dark section of the road about halfway to the Hall, a force of about 100 policemen suddenly appeared on horses, cars, trucks, and foot. The demonstrators were walking quietly on the sidewalk when, with no warning, provocation or even request to disperse, the police attacked with sticks and water cannons. As far as I know, no arrests were made at this point, but the crowd quickly scattered in all directions. Some gave up and left, but most continued in twos and threes to the Congress Hall, hoping to regroup there. Here the arrests were made. I was walking along the sidewalk with two others, not carrying or doing anything, when we were grabbed and thrown into the wagon, about 100 meters below the Hall. David Dubier, a recent immigrant from Dror Labor Zionist Youth was walking alone up the hill when a policeman came up to him, said "Black Panther!" and jabbed him in the stomach. David turned to walk away and the policeman clubbed him on the back and arm, breaking his elbow; then he arrested him. In this manner 36 people were arrested, and those not in public view, beaten. All were arrested in similar situations: after the march had been broken up but before the demonstrators had regrouped across from the Hall, while individuals were walking on the sidewalk towards the Hall, not doing anything. Thus



# -Zionist Congress maybe if we ignore it next time, it'll disappear...



Which way to the World Zionist Congress, please?

about 10 of the 36 had nothing to do with the demonstration altogether, proving the circumstance of the arrests. Those hundred or so who made it to the Hall regrouped across the street, not in anyone's way, where they were again pushed, shoved, and attacked with water and sticks. Here some of the delegates were also struck or sprayed, and it is here the police claim that rocks were thrown at them and explosives set off (a couple of firecrackers seem true, rocks or anything else, doubtful), after the demonstration had been attacked and the arrests made.

Meanwhile David Dubier and I were released when the police received messages that it might be too embarrassing if delegates were in jail. He was driven to the hospital, I to the Hall where I met Eric Tucker, who had just been thrown down the stairs inside the hall in a small demonstration there. We walked around looking for as many reporters as we could find. The 34 in jail were held the legal limit of 48 hours without charges, and without their names released. After two days, those who had nothing to do with the demonstration were let out and the others brought before a judge. They were still not formally charged, but the police explained that they were a group of violent Matzpen (a small anti-Zionist group) crazies out to destroy the state and that their release would be a threat to security, especially since explosives and hand grenades were found in other parts of the city. And the judge ordered them held 10 days for "investigation."

#### THE ISRAELI PRESS AND THE LEFT

Then maybe the most distressing part of the whole experience. After blatant denial of the democratic right of peaceful protest, after 34 people were held in jail for no reason for 2 to ten days, we tried especially hard to get the story to the press. Immediately after the demonstration we found that the Israeli press was singularly uninterested in hearing what had happened. The "Independent Socialist Zionist Voice" called a press conference for later that night, attended by several members of the press, where the true story was explained. But sure enough, every single paper except the Jerusalem Post printed, the next day, a version more or less like what the police told the judge (see above). An unfortunate fact of life about Israel is that for 90% of the population, if a person is a member of an anti-Zionist group, Arab or Jewish, that gives the police the right to do absolutely anything they want to him or her. Matzpen is a tiny anti-Zionist group that had nothing to do with the planning of the demonstration. Matzpen could never organize such a demonstration, but the government and the press do it for them all the time.

Somehow the establishment considers it expedient to slander all criticism, to create a threat that will scare the

public when such a threat does not exist. The same tactic is used against the independent Zionist left, against the Panthers, against WUJS, and even sometimes Mapam. And the worst part is that the press reports it as truth, and the public believes it.

This time, however, the police had gone a bit overboard, attacking us in front of delegates (Mapam and the young Labor condemned the brutality). A few days after the demonstration some of the papers began to question the excessive force and the ten day "investigation" of those arrested. It was very mild criticism, but it intimidated the police enough so that when the "Independent Socialist Zionist Voice" requested a permit for another demonstration six days after the first, it was granted. A fair amount of student support had been gained on the issue of democratic rights, and the demonstration of about 400 people came off peacefully, with full cooperation from the police. The rally was held right in front of the Congress Hall, from which 30 delegates walked out to join the crowd. There was even fairly decent coverage by the press; all were quick to mention, however, that members of Matzpen were present (there were maybe 6) and that one even spoke on the question of democratic rights. The other speeches and banners were Zionist, much like those of the first night.

#### WHAT NEXT?

The final event was a teach-in on the renewal of Zionism, as outlined in the four points above, held at the university the last night of the Congress. It was not very well organized, partly because of the confusion of the demonstrations, partly because many of the Israeli leftists were not very concerned about continuing the cooperation between various groups begun before the Congress.

They were hectic, nightmarish weeks in January, with many disillusionments, almost no concrete accomplishments either in or out of the Congress, but a few small victories. The issues became clearer. I, for one, was convinced that the most productive work to be done is that of building new communities in Israel, with new political structures independent of the present Zionist Organization, but strongly Zionist and strongly Socialist. It is hard to believe how really dead the Zionist organization is without actually seeing it in action, or rather, inaction, as we saw it at the Congress. But the future is wide open. More and more committed radical Zionists are comprehending the situation, and beginning to plan together the renewal of independent Socialist Zionism.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Except on the quirk issue of Aliya, where, with 2/3 of the delegates absent, a coalition of Mapam, Herut, and

nearly all youth passed a resolution requiring Aliya of every Zionist. Such a requirement is obviously necessary for a return to ANY type of ideological Zionism, but the establishment is not interested in any such return. They "freaked out" and ruled such a requirement unconstitutional. This was perhaps the most significant event within the Congress, since no other political stance can be meaningful without commitment to complete the national aspects of the Zionist struggle. But alas . . .

2. A noteworthy side-effect of this process is that an automatic bias is created against leftist Jews, when the representation within the American Zionist Federation is determined: The vast majority of left-tending Jews, and there are many, are by no means against Israel's existence. But except for those few of us who are Zionists, most want nothing to do with the Zionist establishment, since they are not interested in Aliya. There is no mass-based "Friends of the Israeli Left" organization, and most leftists will not affiliate with one of the large Zionist movements, which would be more descriptively called "Friends of the Israeli Center." When Zionism becomes defined as fund-raising and pro-government propaganda, there is room for Jacques Torzcyner in the Zionist Organization but not for Art Waskow, and neither one is really any more of a Zionist than the other. There would be two ways out of this bind: A strict Aliya requirement for Zionists or absolute inclusion of every Jew in Zionist elections. I would not be against either, but I can promise that neither will ever be done.

3. If I could, I would once and for all destroy the myth of the "youth." Most of the delegates must have been, at one point, asked whether they were pro-youth or anti-youth. I am not sure what this means; it seems that for most of the delegates, except those who were absolute pigs, the whole "youth" issue is a form of ritual masturbation in which the "youth" question the validity of the organization, the "establishment" makes a symbolic struggle of repression, and it all ends happily with a compromise, where the "establishment" gives up some of its power and the "youth" are bought out. Well, I don't dig it. As much as I would like to see a great upsurge of idealistic youth struggling against the establishment, the fact is that most of the 200 "youth delegates" (defined as under 40!) are miniature party bureaucrats on the way up, willing to play the establishment game. At the Congress, this was true especially of the Israelis, of all parties. Youth caucuses were held, but there was little to talk about, since the only agreement was on the issue of Aliya, and the fact was that most of them were interested in a little larger piece of whatever cakes were being cut up. And even that was not really accomplished.



This letter is written, almost involuntarily, in response to a chapter of Elie Wiesel's book "One Generation After," entitled "To a Young Jew of Today." Unfortunately, i was only able to touch upon a very small part of the many relevant questions and answers presented in the book, not all of which i accept, none of which i can reject totally. In beginning this piece, i had hoped to write a sort of book review, but realized after one paragraph that i could neither evaluate nor reword what was already said all too well. Rather i could only express my own reaction to one particularly relevant part of the book that concerns me directly, to the point where i felt myself holding a conversation with the book.

Elie Wiesel says both what we are most anxious to hear and what we have perhaps been waiting all our lives to hear. He does it regardless of whether or not we want to hear it, yet always sensitive to our response, always treading carefully and yet relentlessly into our innermost fears and desires.

But enough. Much has been written already praising Wiesel's ability to fulfill his obligations as a witness and more. As i flip through the pages of the book, there is much more i would like to say. But he has said it as i cannot. Perhaps i am afraid. i too am left with the dilemma - how is one to speak of it, how is one not to speak of it. And so i speak, and so i will stop speaking, before i as a writer grappling with the theme of the holocaust inevitably burn my fingers.

Yes i am seventeen and confused. Yes i am Jewish without knowing why, without knowing what being Jewish means: my friends are not and my parents barely are. i am not religious and yet i fast on yom kippur and even t'isha b'av. I identify with the left, yet reject their anti-Israel line. Marxism attracts me by its messianic vision, while Jewish messianism, although it doesn't, as you say, leave me indifferent, is beyond me - i know nothing about it. Real and for the most part, apparent, my contradictions trouble me and yes, i was asking you, Elie Wiesel, acclaimed Jewish prophet of the twentieth century, to help me entangle them.

In short, you say, i ask, what does being a Jew mean in these times and to what does it commit me? These are questions i've been asking myself long before i expected an answer, from you or elsewhere. And yes, i would like to know.

At the risk of disappointing you, i must confess three things. 1. "I am Jewish because I am Jewish." To be a Jew for me means first to choose my destiny as a Jew and then to accept it. To you, accepting came first, for me the choice, i could not accept until i had chosen, but perhaps they are the same in the end. 2. i do not fear god. i fear man and i fear myself as one with mankind. i blame god for nothing, i cannot blame what i cannot know, nor can i fear it. It is man, as i see it creating the good and the evil of this world, and i fear his power, my power. 3. i cannot even believe in, let alone obey the commandments, until "Though shalt not kill" is followed by "Thou shalt not be killed" and after that . . . well i think that is enough for now. Maybe too much to ask.

Yes, the Jew and his questioning are one, but i always thought man and his questioning to be one. Perhaps, when and if i have lived long enough i will know differently.

You say "Push interrogation to its limits and beyond and you will do what the Jew has been doing for centuries." Whether or not this is so of the Jew, it must be so for man. . . We must all start anew. We must all "ask a thousand questions." I once thought all questions began with 'why?' I don't bother with 'whys' anymore. They are beyond me. i think they are beyond you too, from what you say. It's how, and only how, that we must all ask and answer. "Why" may have no answer, but how must. Not "why survive in a universe which negates you?" but "how?"

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# RESPONSE



by Erica Silberman

Because of the way i've grown up, the way i've lived, what you ask of god, i ask of man. You say that without god the attempted annihilation of European Jewry would be only another episode in another inhumane war. And yet, i see this attempt as the epitome of man, his greatest beauty and most base evil, his most frighteningly unanswerable mystery. Not because of god, is it different from all else in history, but because of man - he outdid himself as he never dreamed possible and thus does he require a "total revision of seemingly axiomatic values and concepts." Remove its Jewish aspects, you cannot do, but deny the godlike aspects of Auschwitz and it is still a mystery as is the whole history of the relationship of the Jew to the non-Jewish world. God or no god, these nightmares remain a reality beyond man's understanding of reality, but also man's responsibility.

No i do not replace god with any other word or presence, not even man. i prefer no substitute. i prefer not to address myself to 'why,' and 'how' comes only from within each of us.

i am a young American Jew of today, i call myself a Zionist and a socialist, and these are only words. And yet with that same material, words, you concern yourself with the relationship between the individual and the com-

Erica Silberman is active in New York Habonim and in RZA.

munity - the relationship of the Jew to his people. And you concern yourself in such a way that i can only thank you for saying what i felt but couldn't say, not knowing how. And this alone, perhaps is why i felt a need to respond to your "letter," because i can say things now that i dared not say before. i was waiting to hear it from you. You have given me the right to feel what i have felt, while fearing i had no right to feel. You have done so by saying:

" . . . you too have lived the holocaust. You were born after? No matter. One can step inside the fiery gates 25, 50, years later. Do you know Uri-Zvi Greenberg: that Israeli poet and visionary tells the story of a young Jew in King Herod's time who left Jerusalem to Rome. He had taken along a pillow which remained with him always. One night, as he slept, the pillow caught fire. That very same night the Temple burst into flames in Jerusalem. Yes one can live a thousand miles away from the Temple and see it burn. One can die in Auschwitz after Auschwitz."

Always, when i thought about, read about, tried to write about being Jewish, i would become obsessed with the holocaust. i would immerse myself in a world that is a total contradiction to the world of my own experiences. I, born with the silver spoon, with one

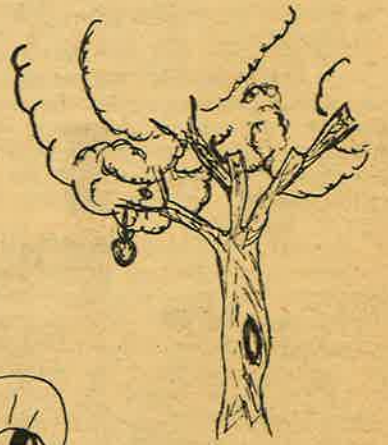
real problem in life - to come to terms with myself - the pastime of modern youth. And yet, in my mind, the world of Night was very real, and i would scold myself, warn myself that this was only a childish fantasy - how could i dare to put myself in a place that existed 10, 12 years before i myself became a reality?

Yes, as a Jew, as a person, i was obsessed with an obligation to transmit what i see, feel, and fear. But how could i transmit what i have not seen, could not begin to feel and cannot understand or even believe enough to fear?

And yet as a Jew today i do testify with joy, tainted with sadness by aiding Israel. In raking over the ashes of the holocaust i do not testify, though, with anger, free of or drenched in sterile bitterness. i only react with confusion and a determination that defies that confusion.

And this, to testify with this joy, that which you call universal project, i have felt to be the very essence of Jewish existence today. i felt it and not i can try to say it

And now perhaps it becomes a little more possible that there is more that i can say and do. There is much that we all must do. Perhaps the biggest, most encompassing question we share today is "Can it be done?"





# Am Haolam

by Clifford Wolfe

*Clifford Wolfe is a student at New York University and an active member of New York RZA.*

Jewish revolutionary groups have often been accused of espousing revolutionary ideas, while ignoring their own Judaism. But this has not been true with every radical Jewish group. One can look, for instance, at the resistance of the Maccabees, who struggled against the Hellenistic oppressors without shedding their identity as Jews. However, since the development of Marxism, Jewish revolutionaries have often found it difficult to combine the religious dogmas of Judaism with revolutionary Marxism. One group did manage to merge the two.

The mood to migrate from Russia to America in the 1880's took hold of so many people that it moved two Hebrew teachers in Odessa, Bakall and Herder, both Maskilim (enlighteners) to conceive a plan for a movement of agricultural settlements in the New World. They gave it the symbolic name of Am Haolam (Eternal people). Herder was the older of the two and more practical, but Bakall was a rare type of idealist, a charming and captivating personality. Their ideas attracted many followers. In a short time, more than 200 people were enrolled, all of them ready to start life anew by tilling the soil in America. Most of them were simple men and women: workers, small traders and shopkeepers. However, several months later a number of students joined the Am Haolam. Before very long the more articulate students took over the leadership. They turned the Am Haolam into circles of intellectuals and semi-intellectuals.

The name caught on. The press gave it wide notice and it spread from city to city. Youth in other cities, also ready to emigrate, adopted the same name. The Odessa committee established connections with other points in the country and with prominent people abroad. While they could not succeed in directing the migration of all their groups, they were able to map out the routes and to provide financial assistance.

The tumultuous propaganda waged by the Am Haolam gained the attention of the Jewish organizations in Europe. In Russia, opinions among influential people were sharply divided. The rich, headed by Baron Ginsburg, of St. Petersburg—the only titled Jew—considered this precipitous flight as a potential injury to the rest of the Jews. In their timid minds arose the perennial question: What will the government say? At a conference called in the capital, the baron and his friends attempted to influence the delegates from the Pale to do their utmost to calm the frightened population and to prevent them from migrating. But those who were closer

to the people, whether they favored immigration to Palestine or to America, regarded with approval this determination to leave Russia. Instead of trying to restrain the wanderlust, they proposed to bring a semblance of order out of the chaos. Committees were organized in all the larger cities of Russia as well as in places abroad through which the immigrants had to pass.

The Am Haolam groups, only a handful compared with the mass of people on the move, occupied a position far beyond their numerical strength. They were organized and possessed the means to carry them to their destination. They attracted wide attention abroad and fared much better than the rest of the emigrants.

N. Alenikoff, who came over with the first party of the Am Haolam, later gave the following description of their reception:

*The news that a party of students was going to America to establish communistic colonies ran ahead of us. Throughout the entire way, Brodi, Lemberg, Breslau, Berlin, etc., committees of Socialist-minded students were organized to assist us. Among those who took part in our reception were persons who are now prominent Socialists deputies in the Austrian Parliament. In Krakow, we were presented with a copy of Das Kapital, by Karl Marx. In Lemberg, orthodox Jews gave us a Torah and a large banner with the inscription "Degel Machne Yisroel" (Banner of the Army of Israel).*

*Our journey from Brodi to Berlin was one continuous ovation. In every city we were met with a big reception.*

*It was the morning of May 30, Decoration Day, 1882, when the train brought us from Philadelphia to New York. We formed lines, took out the Torah, unfurled the banner and, with Russian revolutionary songs on our lips, marched to Castle Garden (immigration center—ed.). Suddenly we heard music. We thought that America had also prepared a welcome for us . . . Very soon, boys from the streets started running after us, throwing stones.*

*Then we understood that America had not prepared any reception for us. We put back the Torah, folded up the flag, and found our way to Castle Garden, where we stretched ourselves out on the grass to get some rest.*

Excerpt is taken from "Jewish Labor in the United States of America," Epstein, Melech, Ktav Publishing House, New York City, New York, 1969.

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police, the government, and every authority is behaving in the classic pattern and they push them -- they label them left so they force them to become left.

**Do you think that any constructive social change can occur in Israel as long as there is tension on the borders? Or do you think they have to work first for peace and then for internal change?**

I think we have to work for peace first. Nothing is possible as long as there is a state of war.

**What about the Arabs in the occupied territory? Is there anything being done about them or are they being kept in a state of limbo?**

Nothing is being done about them.

**Are any forces on the left speaking to that issue, or doing anything about it -- going into the Arab communities?**

It's no use speaking with them because they are an occupied population. They wouldn't speak to us as long as they are in this state. They are controlled by the Israeli occupation. That's all. If it were in your power, what would you do with the occupied territory?

I would give them political freedom. I would let them resurrect their political life -- the freedom of speech, the freedom of gathering, of forming political parties, things like that. And I would engage in dialogue with them.

**Are you talking about setting up an autonomous Palestinian state on the West Bank?**

I think that we should recognize the Palestinians and leave them the choice; whether they want to have a separate state on the West Bank or a Palestinian state which would be composed of the West Bank and Jordan is an internal Palestinian affair.

**Do you think the present government, meaning Golda, Dayan, Allon and the others, recognize the internal and external problems of Israel and are trying to do something about it, or are they just trying to sit tight and maintain the status quo?**

I think they want to stay tight and that's it. They were somewhat surprised by the violence of the social feeling in Israel. They were frightened for a moment, but they won't give up, they

won't change their position; for them the best situation is the status quo. Just to go on like that -- no peace, no war, no solution, consolidating the occupation, making it an accepted fact, just that.

**Are there any people in Israel within reach of power who could be considered progressive?**

Yes, there is a section of the Labor Party who is more liberal, less right wing, which is more open socially and more dovish than hawkish. This is a section. You can call Pincus Sapir an Israeli Dove. Pincus Sapir would give back every single inch of the occupied territories. Socially, he is not progressive, but politically he is. There are people like Ben Aharon, secretary of the Histadrut, who is a political dove and socially progressive. There are people like Bubyia Eliyav, ex-secretary of the Labor Party, who is in the same view, and many others, not in the government, but in the Knesset and in the party.

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NITZOTZ, MAY 1972



**RADICAL ZIONIST ALLIANCE:** Formed at a conference in Palmer, Massachusetts, in February, 1970 at which a number of radical Jewish groups which had sprung up across North America were represented. These groups were the vanguard of a new Jewish consciousness movement, in reaction to the 6-day war, to the "ethnicization" of American radicalism, and to the sudden anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism of the left, where most of the people had their roots. RZA's first large activity was answering such left criticism, declaring that it was possible to be a leftist and for Israel's existence, even if against some of her government's policies. In this RZA enjoyed the strong support of the Jewish and Zionist establishment, who needed some leftists to say the things they could not say. Enthusiasm was high, as such feelings were cropping up in tens of places; many people set out to start chapters, newspapers, and campus activities. The youth movements Habonim, Hashomer Hatzair and Dror all affiliated, and RZA began to stress strongly the need for anyone who calls himself a Zionist to actually immigrate to Israel.

This strong emphasis on Aliya-immigration was made in common with the Jewish Defense League, which had meanwhile emerged as the most vocal of all the new Jewish groups--it came into existence for the same reasons RZA had, and the two groups shared many views: against the Jewish establishment, for better education, and strong Jewish identity. There were some contacts between the groups, and talk of common action. In 1970, Kahane said that the second best organization of American Jews was RZA. But it soon became clear that what JDL was offering was only a militant version of the status quo--a chauvinist Jewish nationalism instead of a progressive national liberation movement. The difference became clearest when it came to issues of Israel. JDL took stands with the expansionists and the racists of the Israeli right wing and religious parties, while RZA, also critical of the Labor bureaucracy, stressed the need for a new left movement. Kahane now calls RZA the most dangerous of all Jewish movements.



But problems began to set in for RZA as Radical Zionists took themselves seriously when they said that they were critical of the Jewish establishment and Israel. Jewish federations were taken over. RZA organized demonstrations when the Israel government or Zionist organizations gave awards to American pigs such as Rizzo in Philadelphia, Taft and Ford in Ohio, and Reagan in California. Golda Meir fumed at a now famous confrontation in October 1970 where one RZA member after another questioned her on support of the war in Vietnam, and about Palestinian rights to exist alongside Israel. Meanwhile, the left's attacks on Israel declined considerably, and Radical Zionists were no longer "necessary" to answer them. Left activism of all sorts declined on campuses, and before RZA had the chance to achieve the results of its initial energy, it deadened. Its name was larger than any organizational capacity it displayed.

RZA did commit itself strongly to radical Aliya; many more people than ever before began talking about joining or starting kibbutzim, and trying to re-involve that movement in the struggle for Israeli Socialism and peace. Others began to devise plans for urban collectives in cities and development towns, pioneering a new lifestyle and providing closer proximity to the Israeli proletariat. By now, most of RZA's original leadership already live in Israel, but these lifestyle forms have not been created yet. RZA has had serious communication and organization problems, as a result of no money, and as a result of trying to do many of the right things at the wrong time and vice versa. It has been under constant danger of cooptation or destruction, a tricky balance. If it is to succeed, it must regain the trust and support of those who accept the basic principles of Independent Socialist Zionist Organization, provide them with educational materials, and help organize them into the many exciting possibilities of the radical American Aliya which we are all awaiting.

We have put together this new newspaper because we want to answer a defiant YES! to the question Will RZA survive? There is a crying need for a Zionism of Humanitarian Socialism, a Zionism which recognizes the equal rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, a Zionism which declares its independence from the so-called "Zionist" establishment, now only an arm of the Israeli government and the American "philanthropists."

But the real answer is up to you, the people, because this paper is not funded on an ongoing basis by anyone, establishment or otherwise. There have been a handful of Socialist-Zionist oriented newspapers in the last few years, some of them quite good. Most, however, have folded, due to either cutting off of funds or dissipation of the group putting out the paper. Our solution to the second problem is that Nitzotz will not be the product of an isolated group but of a whole movement that has already existed for two years; not a strong movement, but a movement nonetheless, with a well-known name and contacts in almost every town and campus in North America. Many of our members are already in Israel, and in the next few years we expect to see the introduction of new alternatives for collective radical lifestyles in towns and cities, as well as kibbutzim. The struggle against the American Jewish establishment continues--Nitzotz will provide investigative reporting and analysis of all relevant actions, events, and programs, as well as an open forum for opinions within the Radical Zionist community. In other words, the newspaper will not be appearing in a vacuum, but in the context of a movement which intends to accomplish something.

The other problem, funding, is more difficult to solve, and this is where we need you. Even if some establishment organization were willing to continuously fund Nitzotz we have decided that we do not want to rely on such support . . . we have seen how easily it can be cut off. This means that from now on, not a single issue will be able to be given away. PLEASE, PLEASE, BUY A SUBSCRIPTION. Without it we will not be able to continue.

And even more important, if you are on a campus, or in a community, sell subscriptions and individual copies to others. Use your initiative to get your library to buy a sub, get your local Jewish establishment to buy your group 20 subs; USE YOUR IMAGINATION, HELP SAVE RZA. Write us saying how many copies you want. Remember: You keep 25 cents for each \$2.00 subscription you sell, and 5 cents for each individual paper. Make money! Therefore enclose 20 cents a copy for bulk orders!

Apologies for anything that sounds too capitalistic, but we gotta survive. So--right now before you forget, take out \$2.00 and send it in. Then get out of your hole and help us to reach others. SOCIALIST ZIONISM LIVES!

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Make all checks payable to Association for Progressive Zionism (tax-exempt), an educational organization which publishes this newspaper and other educational material.