

# Holocaust Analogies: Repaying the Mortgage

By Tony Greenstein, in RETURN, March 1990

"Although theoretical differences can be drawn between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism", noted Jacob Gewirtz of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, at a symposium on anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, "these are distinctions without a difference...In this respect the fascists - odious as they are - have at least the virtue of candour" (1). The conflation of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism has been a primary component of Zionism's ideological armoury for over 40 years.

As a self-styled 'national' movement, Zionism claims to represent all Jews, irrespective of their wishes and wherever they live. Support for the Palestinian national struggle and opposition to Zionism, and its concept of a 'Jewish people', is interpreted as hatred of Jews as Jews, i.e. anti-Semitism. Jewish anti-Zionists are dismissed as 'self-haters' (2). For example, when Dundee Council twinned with Nablus on the West Bank, a massive campaign was waged to associate the Council's actions with anti-Semitic daubings and activity in the town (3).

It is a conjuring trick which has mesmerized many an audience, but as with all such illusions has gradually lost its effectiveness. The problem for the Zionist movement is whether the equation of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism can still be useful in intimidating its opponents.

Some, like Walter Goldsmith, the then Director General of the Institute of Directors doubted it. Speaking at the annual luncheon of the Friends of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem he ventured that "the Holocaust mortgage has now been settled and should be used less frequently as a justification for revenge and sympathy" (4). The cynicism of this ardent Thatcherite, in describing the Holocaust as a 'mortgage' - an asset to be disposed of and traded on the political market as needs dictate - would in anybody else, especially non-Jewish, be termed anti-Semitic.

Indeed the fascists too draw attention to the use of the Holocaust as a 'mortgage' by the Zionists, using this as the political basis for their assertion that the Holocaust is a myth.

This hasn't prevented some from trying to have it both ways. Gill Seidel, a prominent Zionist Feminist believes that "Whereas the Nazis and the Third Reich referred to 'Jews' and alleged 'Jewish plots', contemporary Nazis refer to 'Zionists' and 'international Zionism'...this strategic shift is a feature of post-war fascist movements. The equation of 'Jews' and 'Zionist' is not just a facile and misleading formula but part of a well-planned strategy which attracts the allegiance of non-fascists including uncritical section of the far-left" (5)

## Zionisation of the Holocaust

For over 40 years, Zionism has had a monopoly on the history of the Holocaust and its interpretation. The Holocaust has been used to prove the historical necessity of Zionism; which argues that if there had been a Jewish state in 1939, then there would have been no Holocaust. The Holocaust is portrayed as a consequence, not of the social, political and economic factors that led to the rise of fascism in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, but of the 'national homelessness' of Jews.

The Zionist movement used the plight of European Jewry in order to batter open the gates of Palestine. At no time did they call for immigration barriers to be lowered in the West, on the contrary they opposed lowering them and their attitude to the Evian Conference, called in 1938 to discuss the refugee question, is best described by a Zionist historian:

*They realised that a conference whose primary purpose was to find alternatives to Jewish immigration to Palestine was not going to do their cause any good, and it would not be excessive to say that the truly dedicated Zionists hoped for the failure of the Evian talks. How disastrous it would be for Zionism if Australia say were to agree to admit a million Jews at once! They did not want a Jewish colony in Australia, they wanted Europe's suffering Jews to go only to Palestine, and if getting them there meant a prolongation of their suffering until the political climate*

*was right, so be it. No better means of winning Palestine for Jews could be imagined than the existence of hundreds of thousands of displaced European Jews whom no other land would accept (6)*

The Zionist movement in America, where imperialism's political center of gravity, and hence Zionism, had shifted, held its most important conference at the Biltmore Hotel in April 1943 and a larger, all-American conference the following year, at which the call for a Jewish state was first explicitly expounded. When Auschwitz was burning 12,000 Jews a day, and a possible future Jewish state was irrelevant to the Jews of Nazi-occupied Europe, the priorities of Zionism were on future state-building. Some, like Nathan Schwalb, Jewish Agency representative in Switzerland, went so far as to state that

*All the nations of the Allies are spilling much blood and if we do not bring sacrifices, with what will we achieve the right to sit at the table when they make the division of nations and territories after the war? (7)*

Another Zionist historian reaches similar conclusions:

*As the European holocaust erupted, Ben-Gurion saw it as a decisive opportunity for Zionism. Just as Weizmann in the first war had realised the opportunities presented by the fluid political situation, so now Ben-Gurion above all others sensed chaos and carnage in Europe...In conditions of peace, it was clear, Zionism could not move the massed of world Jewry. The forces unleashed by Hitler in all their horror must therefore be harnessed to the advantage of Zionism...By the end of 1942 little doubt remained about the enormity of the Nazi purpose. By this time the Zionist movement itself was transformed. While hopes and efforts for the rescue of Europe's Jews continued, the struggle for a Jewish state became the primary concern of the movement (8)*

Morris Ernst, a non-Zionist lawyer, wrote that he was amazed "when active Jewish leaders decried, sneered and then attacked me as if I were a traitor. At one dinner party I was openly accused of furthering this plan of free immigration in order to undermine political Zionism..." (9)

Abba Hillel Silver, Reform Rabbi and militant leader of American Zionism declared:

*Are we again, in moments of desperation going to confuse Zionism with refugeism, which is likely to defeat Zionism. Zionism is not a refugee movement. It is not a product of the second World War, nor of the first. Were there no displaced Jews in Europe and were there free opportunities for Jewish immigration in other parts of the world at this time, Zionism would still be an imperative necessity (10)*

Yet the Holocaust was a most powerful ideological justification for the creation and survival of the Israeli state. Having politically conquered the post-war western Jewish communities, when a mood of despair arose as a result of the Nazi extermination, Zionism rewrote the history of the Jewish Diaspora from its own perspective, including of course the myth of a 2000 years longing to 'return' to Zion (11).

Yet Zionism's attitude to the Holocaust was a contradictory one. On the one hand it used the Holocaust as its legitimation, on the other hand the ideological and political framework it operated within concerning the need for 'national/racial' separation from other nations, and the obsession with demography and purity of the national entity, was no different from that of the anti-Semitic movements whose activities led directly to the Holocaust. For example the 'loss' to the Jewish nation/volk because of abortion in Israel was compared by the British Chief Rabbi, Immanuel Jakobovitz and others, to the losses sustained in the Holocaust. Similarly the 'loss' of Jews through assimilation to the non-Jews amongst whom they live, is also compared to the losses of the Holocaust (12).

## **The Holocaust Analogy Inverted**

Although Zionists consistently brand their anti-Zionist opponents as anti-Semitic, little different from Nazis (13), it (sic) has reacted with a mixture of fury and impotence when its main ideological weapon is turned against it.

During the Lebanon war, the Israeli embassy printed a pamphlet which referred to "the atrocities of the bloodthirsty depraved and evil criminal organisation called the PLO (which) should be compared to those of the Nazis", and even while Beirut was being bombed, the PLO fighters were equated to the Nazi murderers of Oradour sur Glane (14).

As Chaim Bermant, a weekly columnist of the Jewish Chronicle wrote, in an open letter to Menachem Begin, "I am aware that you have spoken of the PLO and their leaders as Nazis, but to speak in such terms is not to blacken the Palestinians, but to exculpate the Germans" (15).

For socialists, the Holocaust is an example of where racism can lead. Extermination is the ultimate, perverse logic of racism and its imperialist handmaiden. But whereas socialists locate the triumph of fascism and anti-Semitism in the defeat and division of the German working class, and the inertia of reformism, Zionism reduces anti-Semitism to the antagonism of non-Jews to the stranger in their midst.

A variation upon this theme is the (alleged) traditional hostility of Christianity to Judaism. In the publishers' preface to Seidel's book, the Beyond the Pale Collective writes that "Antisemitism can be seen as a product of Christianity. It is an ideology, a world-view, which depicts the Jew as Christ-killer and, therefore the Devil..." (16). Likewise Steve Cohen, at the time a member of the Jewish Socialists Group, argues that although:

*the ancient roots of anti-Semitism as an ideology can perhaps be found in the pre-Christian world...the development of anti-Semitism as a theory is a consequence of Christianity...Christianity transformed notions of Jewish disloyalty into a fundamentally demonic view of the entire world: it equated Jewry with a universal satanic influence. Such an equation is probably inherent within Christianity, as a theology, because of the identification of Jews with the crucifixion (17)*

Both Seidel and Cohen locate the causes of anti-Semitism, an ideology, in another ideology, Christianity. Apart from an ahistorical and essentialist understanding of Christianity and its changing attitude to Jews (today Christian anti-Semitism is confined to the fundamentalist Protestants - the most pro-Zionist Christians of all - and the most reactionary/anti-liberation theology Catholics) it allows for no strategy in fighting anti-Semitism should it reoccur on a major scale.

Seidel and Cohen are typical of what one might term the new-left, neo-feminist, identity politics Zionists. And they are also at one with traditional Zionist analysis, of the left and the right, in rejecting any materialist or class analysis of anti-Semitism that could explain the origins and changing form of anti-Semitism (e.g. from religious to racial). Cohen tells us that "anti-Semitism as an ideology has nothing to do with the behaviour of even one single Jew, let alone of all Jews. It is a view of the world based on myths and fantasies. To attempt to locate the source of such myths in Jewish life is ultimately a major concession to that ideology" (18). The obvious question that arises is, where in that case do these anti-Semitic myths and stereotypes, for example about Jews and money, arise? Why the Jews? Why do similar myths about for example the Chinese (termed the 'Jews of Asia') arise? Or the Scots as a 'mean' or 'canny' people? The irony is that Cohen dedicates his book to Abram Leon, the Jewish Trotskyist who wrote the classic materialist analysis of the Jewish question. (19).

Blaming anti-Semitism on Christianity is a favourite theme of right-wing Zionists too. Robert Maxwell funded a major conference on the Holocaust, chaired by his wife Elizabeth, where this was the dominant theme (20). The furore over the Carmelite nunnery at Auschwitz is similarly motivated.

Anti-Semitism is thus seen as above class. Cohen devotes his first chapter to proving how anti-Semitic the British working class were at the turn of the Century, and nothing at all to why those very same workers (especially the Catholic dockers of the East End of London, who should have been drunk on Crucifixion stories) joined with the Jews in the fight against Moseley. Only class, and the consciousness of class, can explain what the Zionist fable of 'eternal anti-Semitism' signally fails to. Also ignored, by Cohen and more generally the generation of Holocaust historians - Gilbert, Lacquer, Bauer et al. - is that the German working class, as election statistics make blindingly clear, remained virtually immune to anti-Semitism and gave virtually no support to Nazism (21).

This typically bourgeois version of history is that which is ladled out to German school-children today, in their American written syllabus. This concentration on the guilt of all Germans for the Holocaust, national collective responsibility, a theme of Zionism too, has allowed Schonhubber and the fascist German Republikaner, to play an extremely strong card in their appeal to the young.

## Lessons of the Holocaust

It is no wonder that Zionism fought against any generalisation or universalisation of the lessons of the Holocaust. For Zionism the Holocaust is a Jewish event. Its only message to non-Jews is for them to give uncritical acceptance of Zionism and Israeli expansion out of a feeling of guild. Whereas for socialists the Holocaust is but one example of imperialism's genocidal character - the Amerindians, Aborigines, Armenians, Guatemalan Indians, Kampucheans, Tasmanians - for Zionism there are only Jewish dead and a Jewish Holocaust. "The Holocaust was unique in its barbaric cruelty" wrote Dr. Kurzer, Vice-Chairman of the Polish Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association in a fairly typical rendition of the Zionist sonata (22).

A good example of this is Zionism's attitude to the genocide of the Armenians.

*The involvement of Israeli diplomats and American Jews in the Turkish struggle against a memorial day for the Armenians in the United States is not the first case that (they opposed) the concept 'holocaust' crossing its conventional boundaries in this case with the terrible disasters which befell the Armenian people 75 years ago...The ready answer of the Israeli representatives for such cases is that lending out the concept 'holocaust' to describe the disasters of another nation dwarfs the Nazis' deeds against the Jewish people and erases their terrible exclusiveness...The Foreign Office spokesman explained the objections to including the Armenian genocide (not 'holocaust')...by a concern for not 'harming Jewish humanitarian interests'....Israeli diplomats are ready to erase the vague concept of 'humanitarian' and to replace it with 'Israeli' (23)*

Turkey is the only state in the Middle East with a Muslim majority which has always had close diplomatic, intelligence and military relations with Israel. Zionist relations with Turkey go back to the Ottoman Empire when Theodor Herzl wrote favourably in his paper 'Neue Freie Presse', about the Ottoman treatment of the Armenians in return for sympathetic consideration of Zionism (24).

*In 1978, following a Turkish protest, Israeli television banned a documentary about the Armenian quarter of Jerusalem which included a passing mention of the slaughter of 1915...Elie Wiesel (Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner who has never once criticised Israeli brutality against the Palestinians - Ed.), Gideon Hausner (prosecutor in the Eichmann trial - Ed.) and others cancelled their participation in an international conference in Tel Aviv entitled 'Holocaust and Genocide'. They surrendered to the combined pressures of the Israeli Foreign Office and the leadership of the Jewish community in Turkey (25)*

Lucy Dawidowicz, a right-wing Zionist argues that "By submitting Jewish losses under a universal or ecumenical classification of human suffering, one can blur the distinctiveness of Jewish fate and consequently one can disclaim the presence of anti-Semitism" (26).

But all this came unstuck during the Lebanon invasion. Headlines like 'Belsen comes to Beirut', 'Holocaust: Begin style' (27) cartoons depicting Begin in Nazi uniform standing on a sea of skeletons (28) and other comparisons with the Nazis were common. Those who had remained silent when Zionism compared the Palestinians and anti-Zionists to the Nazis found their tongues.

Steve Cohen led the way in denouncing this threat to the carefully constructed self-identity of the new-left Zionists.

*The entire Left described the Lebanon invasion by invoking the language of the 'holocaust' and the 'final solution'. This use of language is itself anti-Semitic...The reason why the use of language such as 'holocaust' and 'final solution', when applied to Zionism, is anti-Jewish is because these words are no longer neutral or objective. They have a particular political significance. They refer to Jewish people. In fact they refer to all Jewish people - because it was the genocide of all Jewish people that was contemplated in the final solution (29)*

Similarly Francesca Klug of the Jewish Feminist Group argued that such comparisons mean "By comparison then all the survivors and their descendants become responsible for the horrors of the Israeli government" (30). And during the campaign around Clause 28, the JSG was unhappy at the comparisons with the Nazis' anti-Gay policies (31). Use of Holocaust imagery and analogies is apparently anti-Semitic because they have 'a particular significance'. Not only is Cohen factually wrong - the Nazis also exterminated Gays, Gypsies, the mentally and physically handicapped, and intended exterminating the slave people, the Slavs - but if the Holocaust cannot be used in order to generalise, to warn of the horrors of racism and imperialism (including those of Israel), then the Holocaust as a

component of identity becomes mere self-indulgence, a badge of distinction in the hierarchy of oppressions, a weapon against those who are oppressed.

Zionism seeks in the Holocaust a negative identity, an identity of suffering, of pain - not as a lesson for others of the evils of racism - but as a reinforcement of its own message that whatever excesses the Israeli state may perpetuate today, all can be excused by the past. The moral it draws is that Jews cannot rely on non-Jews in the fight against anti-Semitism, we can only trust our own 'kith and kin', and where Jews are a minority, strangers, in 'Exile' (Galut), anti-Semitism will prevail. The answer lies in Jewish strength in its 'own' homeland. Anti-Semitism cannot be fought. This is similar to the way the Afrikaners use the memory of the Boer War (and British concentration camps) to justify apartheid, in the process reinforcing their siege mentality.

For the Israeli funded Union of Jewish Students (UJS),

*linking Zionism to Nazis...abuses the most traumatic period in our history. The use of Shoah (Holocaust) imagery, and the equation of Zionism with Nazism, are based on lies, falsehoods and a distortion of Jewish history, which can only guarantee that the lessons of the Shoah are instantly forgotten. (32)*

UJS, which is extremely apt at equating anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, neither explains what the 'lessons of the Shoah' are, nor how one can 'abuse a period', traumatic or otherwise.

In SHOAH, Claude Lanzmann's nine hour epic on the Holocaust (33) (Shoah is the Hebrew name for, and a part of the continued Zionisation of, the Holocaust) the conclusions reached are typically racist and reactionary. The Holocaust could not, apparently, have occurred in civilised France; forgetting Drancy concentration camp, the large number of French Jews betrayed to the Gestapo, Vichy anti-Semitism and the deportation of Ost-Juden. Poland however was ready made for the extermination of Jews; in the words of Yitzhak Shamir, Poles "imbibed anti-Semitism with their mother's milk". It is forgotten that Poland suffered more than any other country at the hands of the Nazis, its intelligentsia exterminated, that the Polish working class and a section of the peasantry had opposed anti-Semitism. The Zionist movement inside and outside Poland had close relations with the anti-Semitic governments there, Begin's revisionist militia was even allowed military training facilities (34).

## **Israel, Zionism and the Holocaust**

In Israel, the term applied to refugees from the Holocaust is 'soap' - [sabon]. "The term has since become generic for cowardice and weakness" (35). This attitude is an integral part of Zionism's contempt for Jews, the 'Diaspora', outside Israel. Contempt, and even hatred, spilling over into an attitude that says Jewish communities experiencing anti-Semitism deserve all they get, that anti-Semitism is merely a form of nationalism, the non-Jewish equivalent of Zionism, and therefore equally justified. Israeli novelist, poet and Labour Party supporter, A.B. Yehoshua, articulates this tradition in Zionism. Speaking to a meeting of the British Zionist Youth Council, he described the Jewish Diaspora as a "cancer connected to the mainstream of the Jewish people" (36).

Despite the attempts, not least by left Zionists, to divorce the Holocaust from Zionism and Israel's actions today, within Israel such comparisons are commonplace.

For Zionism, the Holocaust serves not as a unique symbol of the evils of nationalism, but merely the necessity for Jewish nationalism. The trial of Demjanjuk (allegedly 'Ivan the Terrible' of Treblinka) was to reinforce the 'moral' foundation of Israel and ironically its present repressive policies.

Writing of the lessons of the Holocaust, Yehuda Elkan, Head of the Institute of History of the Sciences and Ideas at Tel Aviv University wrote of a

*certain interpretation of the lessons of the Holocaust, and by the readiness to believe that the whole world is against us and we are eternal victims. I see in this ancient faith, that is shared today by many, Hitler's tragic and paradoxical victory. From Auschwitz came out, to put it into a symbolic phrase, two peoples: a minority which claims 'this will never happen again' and a frightened anxious majority, who claim 'this will never happen to us again' (37)*

Outside Israel, 'Never again' is an anti-fascist slogan yet ironically in Israel it is the slogan of the racist right and the title of Meir Kahane's book. Yehiam Weitz wrote

*Let us not forget, that the fact that we are survivors of the Holocaust does not grant us even the slightest remission in everything concerning the commitment to the customary rules of morality (38)*

One particularly interesting contribution is that of Professor Amos Funkenstein, Head of the Faculty of History and Philosophy of Scientific Ideas at Tel Aviv University. Referring to the controversy over the refusal of soldiers to serve in the Occupied Territories, he described how

*some soldiers in the German army refused to serve in concentration camps or in places where they would be forced to accept illegal orders. They refused, for instance, to serve in extermination units or in special units and were sent to the front (39)*

And to those who ask how it is possible to compare the actions of the Nazi soldiers with the Israelis, Funkenstein replies

*As a historian I know that every comparison is limited. On the other hand, without comparisons, no historiography is possible. Understanding a historical event is a kind of translation into the language of our time. If we would leave every phenomenon in its peculiarity, we could not make this translation. Every translation is an interpretation and every interpretation is also a comparison (40).*

It is this which Zionism fights against, any placing of the Holocaust in a historical context. The Holocaust for Zionism, is by definition ahistorical, above and beyond history. Because once it is subject to history, then the rationale for Zionism itself is questioned. Funkenstein describes the comparison that the Revisionist Zionists of Begin and Shamir used to make:

*In the leaflets and publications of Etzel and Lehi, and even of the Haganah, they used to talk of the Nazi-British occupation. If so what kind of occupation are we? Sure, the situation of the Arabs in the territories cannot be compared to the situation of the Jews in Poland in 1041, when the Nazis started the policy of extermination. But between the years 1933 and 1940 or at least till 1939, the Nazi policy - the declared as well as the real policy - was to turn the Jews from citizens into subjects only.*

*In these years, the German government wanted to make the Jews emigrate, and for this purpose it was prepared 'to sign agreements on the transfer of property and money with the Jewish Agency....Moreover, between 1933 and 1938, till the Kristallnacht, the situation of the Jews of Germany was better in some aspects than that of the Arabs in the territories. From other points of view, their condition was, and generally their situation was, very similar to that of the Arabs in the territories. First they, too, were subjects and not citizens. Legal moves on the other hand were more accessible to the Jews of Germany than the inhabitants of the territories. A Jew there, in 1936, did not feel that he is totally outlawed. Only in 1938 did the Nazis break into their homes and stage pogroms, in dimensions similar to ours (41).*

## **Transfer**

In Israel today, opinion polls consistently show that up to half of the population support a policy of 'transfer' (42), the expulsion of the Palestinians into the neighboring Arab countries. Moledet [an Israeli right-wing party - ed.], which has two seats in the Knesset, campaigns specifically around the policy of transfer, and this policy is freely compared to the Nazi's transfer in sections of the Israeli press (43). The distinguished Israeli historian, Yigal Elam, wrote that those who sow Transfer will reap Genocide (44).

And there is the phenomenon of "those regular soldiers, who call some of their companions 'Our Nazis' meaning those who like to beat"

But if anti-Semitism was a form of racism, like so many others, that de-humanises the victims and ascribes to them certain characteristics, then is Zionist racism in Israel any different? Further, in what respect, if any, can the contradiction between the \*official\* ideology of anti-Nazism (46) (but not anti-racism) and repression in the West Bank/Gaza be exploited? The contradiction between a state that is Jewish, that claims the Holocaust as its moral foundation while nonetheless arming neo-Nazi juntas in Central and South America has been resolved in Israel decisively in favour of the Right.

The following extracts were recorded in an Arab restaurant in Acre, with a veteran Labour Zionist, a member of a Moshav and an ex-member of Palmach (left-Zionist shock troops in pre-State period). Referring to the Arabs, our moshavnik tells us:

*They take control here of everything...it is all the Arabs' fault. They study and advance. Today the percentage of Arabs who enlist for examinations in mathematics is relatively higher than the percentage of Jews. Look how many lawyers they have here. How many doctors. How many engineers, they seize all the positions and all the jobs in the free professions, and the Jews lose.*

"You mean" replies the journalist "there is discrimination in favour of the Arabs in this country?"

*Sure, they don't serve in the army. They behave like a Mafia. They help each other*

"But...they have thousands of disadvantages, the municipal budget in the Arab sector is perhaps 20% of the budget in the Jewish sector...Child care allowances for ex-soldiers are granted to Jews only...You are talking now like a reverse anti-Semite. Obviously, this is exactly what the gentiles said about the Jewish minority: They are like a Mafia, taking care of each other."

*I don't know what the Gentiles said about the Jews (47)*

Not only are cries of 'Back to the Gas Chambers' against anti-war/peace activists common in Israel today (48) but the use of Holocaust symbolism and imagery by one group against another is extremely common. Reference to the Holocaust, and the desire to make one's opponents suffer as Jews suffered under the Nazis, seems to mediate virtually all conflict within the Jewish sector of Israel. At times of crisis in the relations between Orthodox and Secular Jews, the latter take to daubing swastikas on the walls of and even arson of synagogues, the defiling of prayer books, scrolls and religious artefacts. Orthodox Jews do likewise to their secular counterparts and religious fascists paint swastikas on Christian churches (ironically the most pro-Zionist ones). And Oriental Jews, for whom the Holocaust was a European affair, paint slogans such as 'Ashkenazim - Back to Auschwitz' on the latter's cars and buildings (49).

In doing their utmost to preserve a monopoly on the Holocaust, Zionism has rendered itself extremely susceptible. And having compared their opponents to the Nazis for so long, in the wake of the Lebanon war, comparisons with the Nazis, especially from within Israel, have become more frequent.

## **Holocaust Analogies within Israel**

Army reservist Marcus Levin was sent to work as a doctor in the Ansar 2 concentration camp. He asked his fellow doctors what their job consisted of and was told "Our main task is to examine the prisoners before and after interrogation;" "Why after interrogation?" The reply was "It's nothing special, sometimes they have broken limbs...For example yesterday, they brought out one 12 year old with two broken legs". Levin then demanded to speak with the camp commander. Levin told him "I am not serving here. I am called Marcus Levi and not Joseph Mengele, and I am refusing, for conscientious reasons, to serve in a place which reminds me of the South American dictatorships..." One of the doctors tried to calm him down. "Marcus, at the beginning you feel like Mengele but within a few days you get used to it" (50).

Dr. Ilana Hamerman, an Israeli academic who visited Deheisheh refugee camp, remembered afterwards,

*how great is the need and the urge to close the eyes and avoid things with which one cannot deal...I fully identify with those descriptions which I have read about the German intellectuals during the Weimar Republic... (I) find many elements which can be compared. She compares in order to warn and sharpen the sensitivities...Kahanism is not only Kahane but a long process...New the 'Transfer' has become a real possibility and everyday someone uses this concept (51).*

In a fierce polemic, parodying the President of the Supreme Court, Moshe Landau, who endorsed the use of 'moderate physical pressure' against detainees, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, a Professor of Philosophy,

Chemistry and Bible Studies, at the Hebrew University and an Orthodox religious scholar, wrote that "One should distinguish Nazis and moderate Nazis, the former send boys to gas chambers, the latter bury them alive and this, in your eyes, is not a fascist state?" (52). Leibowitz recently warned:

*We have not set up concentration camps and shall not yet do so, but we do have the mentality which makes such an action possible...When the Nation - Volk in the Nazi language - and its state power became supreme values there were no restrictions on the acts of man. We have such a mentality here. We are already behaving in the Occupied Territories, in the West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon in the same way as the Nazis did in their Occupied Territories in Czechoslovakia and the West. We have not yet set up concentration camps as they did in the East but how terrible is the situation that we have to mention this fact as the thing to differentiate us from the Nazis (53).*

College Student: "Kill them, kill them all, even if you have to kill 2 million Arabs" "What's the matter with you? Do you want to be a Nazi?" "Yes, yes. I am prepared to be a Nazi. Let Kahane take over. A good Arab is a dead Arab. They are going to kill us so we must kill all of them..." The above is one of a number of conversations printed in the wake of an attack on a bus in the Negev. Olek Netser describes the above as part of the 'Kahanist Nazi attitude' and observes that 'the anti-Nazi attitude, in this case, and the rational attitude in every case, do not come from the deep memory, and do not come automatically' (54).

The greatest unspoken subject of all is the chauvinism of the Jewish orthodox religion [this does not include the Neturei Karta group - ED]. Incorporated into state practice, it has been the fount of the most virulent forms of racism. When a group of settlers were recently arrested for the murder of a Palestinian, Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg argued that 'one must recognise the fact that Jewish blood and non-Jewish blood are not the same. The people of Israel must rise and declare publicly that a Jew and non-Jew are not equal, God forbid. Any trial based on the assumption that Jews and non-Jews are equal is a total travesty of justice.' (55). Rather than recognizing the solid foundations for these Judaeo- Nazi views in the Halachah (oral Jewish law), and eradicating them, Jewish religious authorities in the West pretend that such religious ordinances, if they ever existed, are now obsolete. However amongst themselves there is no such pretence. Rabbi Goren, former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, in a closed meeting of orthodox rabbis, declared in relation to Rabbi Ginsburg's remarks "Not everything that is written in the religious law should be said in public and the man who said that there is a difference between the punishment of a Gentile murderer and a Jewish murderer according to the religious law may be right, but not everything should be said" (56).

And if the Nazi pronouncements of Jewish orthodoxy were not enough, then the final proof of how the Nazi analogy with repression on the West Bank is correct, came with the report that groups of Israeli soldiers had began identifying themselves as Nazis; 'Israeli Soldiers Called Themselves the Mengele Unit' reported various Israeli newspapers last summer (57). "They were called the Auschwitz 10" (58).

Dov Shilansky, far-right Chair of the Knesset and himself an Auschwitz survivor, initially decided to visit the 'Mengele Detachment' and then reconsidered for fear of attracting international publicity.

*The attempt of the Israeli army spokesman and factors in the Ministry of Defense to blur the shocking incidents, in which Jewish soldiers, and it makes no difference what is their number, chose for themselves the name of one of the most monstrous of the Nazi criminals is intolerable*

wrote the newspaper of the left-Zionist Mapam party (59). "The nickname was given to the soldiers in this unit following claims that they behaved with cruelty or in a specially tough manner, harassing Arab inhabitants during the Intifada" (60).

Yet if the majority of Israelis and the Zionist movement draw conclusions from the Holocaust that are both implicitly and explicitly racist, then a minority of Israelis draw the opposite conclusions. Where some identify with the Mengeles of history, others identify with their victims. Where some despise the Jews who died because of their alleged weakness, others see Palestinians.

History is neither neutral nor impartial. Zionism, with its tame historians and its client Institutes, draws conclusions that reinforce the dominant class and nationalist ideology in society. Conclusions which reproduce themselves in racism, and at certain times and under certain conditions, anti-Semitism. Our

job is to ensure that their version of history and their harnessing of the Holocaust to the Zionist wagon does not succeed.

## Footnotes

1. Anti-Semitism/Anti-Zionism - The Link. p. 24. Centre for Contemporary Studies, 1984. At this symposium, funded by Robert Maxwell and attended by Conor Cruise O'Brien, William Rodgers of the SDP, Nathan Glaser, an American neo-Conservative and Gerry Gable of Searchlight, among other ideologues of the Right, the participants reassessed the effectiveness of Zionism's tactics in the light of recent events.
2. This term was used by the Nazis against anti-Nazi Germans. It literally meant hating one's race and nation, and because for fascism, the individual is subordinate to the State, which is the embodiment of the nation/race, the individual concerned is considered psychologically, to hate himself/herself.
3. Jewish Chronicle, 27.12.81. 'Swastikas in Dundee follow PLO coup' (see also JC, 16.4.82 and 5.6.81)
4. Jewish Chronicle, 21.1.83
5. Gill Seidel, *The Holocaust Denial: Antisemitism, Racism and the New Right*, p.107, Beyond the Pale Collective, 1986. Further on she writes that 'Increasingly, anti-Semitism is being coded as 'anti-Zionism', as this is seen as politically more acceptable. This coding is to be found at both ends of the political spectrum. The extreme 'anti-Zionist' refuses to recognise the Jews as a people, the existence of anti-Semitism as a legitimate concern, or Israel as a nation.' (p.145). In fact it is precisely the 'recognition' by anti-Semites of Jewish 'peoplehood' i.e. race, that underpins the Jewish conspiracy theories. And it is not merely anti-Zionists who refuse to recognise Israel as a nation, so do all but a handful of Zionists! These assertions, unsupported by anything as mundane as evidence, are an example of the analytical sloppiness of 'identity politics Zionists' - the non-Zionist-Zionists. Planned as a rebuttal of the neo-Nazi historical revisionists, who allege that the Holocaust was a myth, the book ends up preaching to the converted, mainly quoting from secondary anti-fascist sources. In attempting to link anti-Zionists, who have documented the links between anti-Semitism and Zionism, with anti-Semites, it demonstrates the weakness of a radical/Zionist feminist analysis, juxtaposing arguments that have little relation to each other, sometimes directly contradictory. It lacks an overall conceptual framework, operating in the context of a bewildering array of different 'oppression hierarchies'. For example, while Seidel is arguing that using the terms 'Zionist' and 'Jew' interchangeably is a fascist tactic (which it is) that the left has adopted (which it has not), she fails to notice that the person she invited to provide the Introduction to her book, Michael Billig, writes that "Of course, the distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism is blurred at the best of times" pp.xxvii/xxviii. Seidel describes the Jewish Chronicle as 'liberal' (p.12) despite its refusal to publish adverts or cover the activities of Jewish gays. In attempting to defend Zionism, Seidel's book is also error-ridden. For example she describes Menachem Begin as the leader of the pro-Nazi Stern Gang from 1943 onwards, whereas he led the Irgun (p.89).
6. R. Silverberg, *If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem*, p. 175, Pyramid Press, NY, 1972. See also Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel: 1917-48*, Indiana University Press, London, 1965, pp.188-9 on the Evian Conference.
7. *Holocaust Victims Accuse*, 1977, p.27, New York, Neturei Karta
8. N. Lucas, *The Modern History of Israel*, pp.187-8, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1974, London.
9. *Ibid.*, p.334
10. *Ibid.* p.335
11. An example is virtually any film about the Holocaust - *Escape from Sobibor*, *The Wall*, *The Holocaust* - where the moral is always the desire of the escapees and the resistance to reach Palestine.
12. Jewish Chronicle, 5 Feb. 1982 'Assimilations' losses now far outweigh Holocaust toll' see letter 19.2.82. The physical death of individual Jews in the Holocaust is conflated with the 'loss' to the Jewish 'nation' through assimilation to the non-Jewish community. Likewise the failure to increase the total numbers of the people/race because of abortion is equated with mass extermination. The attitude that the individual is important only in so far as s/he serves the nation, is a classic facet of fascist ideology, as is the idea of women as breeders for race and nation.
13. See also features such as those by Jacob Gerwitz and David Harounoff, Jewish 'Chronicle, Neo-Nazism and the PLO' in which the PLO is depicted as the hidden hand of international anti-Semitism.
14. 'The PLO in Lebanon', London, 1982, citing Ma'ariv, 16.7.82. Aharon Dolev.
15. Jewish Chronicle, 16 July 1982
16. Seidel *op.cit.* pp.xviii/xix
17. S. Cohen, 'That's Funny, You Don't Look Anti-Semite', p.11 (see also pp.15,16,19,76,90). Beyond the Pale Collective, Leeds, 1984
18. *Ibid.*, p.80.
19. Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1950.
20. See Guardian, 13. 7. 88. 'Holocaust Blamed on Christianity'. Also Jewish Chronicle 15.7.88, where Professor Roy Eckhard "located 'anti-Jewishness' in the essence of Christian belief".
21. See Robert Black, *Fascism in Germany*, Steyne Publications, 1975.
22. Jewish Chronicle, 19.1.90
23. *Holocausts and Politics*, Akiva Eldar, Yediot Aharonot, 1975.

24. The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, pp.387, 1201. Herzl and Yosselof Press, ed. Ralph Patai, 1960, NY
25. Eldar, op.cit.
26. The Holocaust and the Historians, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1981, p.17
27. Socialist Worker, 25 Sept. 1982, 26 June 1982.
28. Labour Herald, 25. 6. 82. The Board of Deputies reacted by trying to get the paper prosecuted under the Race Relations Acts. This publicity stunt aimed at Ken Livingstone (who was joint editor) failed.
29. Cohen, op.cit., p.50
30. Shifra, p.15, December 1984
31. Jewish Socialist 14, Autumn 1988, Clause 28...the road to Auschwitz? The Politics of Holocaust analogies.
32. In Search of Dialogue, UJS, no date probably 1989
33. During the making and showing of 'Shoah', Lanzmann was described as a Marxist, an intimate of Sartre. Last year he was one of a minority of Jews who attended Yitzhak Shamir's Solidarity Conference, called to demonstrate Jewish support for not talking to the PLO prior to Shamir's visit to the United States.
34. Walter Lacquer, A History of Zionism, p.376., Holt Rinehart & Winston, NY, 1972. See also Lenni Brenner, Zionism in the Age of the Dictators, p. 197, Croom Helm, London, 1983.
35. Israel: Founders and Sons, Amos Elon, p.209, Weidenfeld, 1971
36. Jewish Chronicle 22.12.1989. The classic Zionist in this respect was Jacob Klatzkin, co-founder of the Encyclopaedia Judaica, editor of the Zionist Organisation paper Die Welt (1909-11) and Director of the Jewish National Fund. In a collection of essays, Boundaries (Tehumim), 1914-21, he wrote that "Galut can only drag out the disgrace of our people and sustain the existence of a people disfigured in both body and soul, in a word, of a horror. At the very most it can maintain us in a state of national impurity and breed some sort of outlandish creature in an environment of disintegration of cultures, of darkening spiritual horizons. The result will be something neither Jewish nor gentile - in any case, 'not a pure national type. Perhaps it is conceivable that, even after the disintegration of our national existence in foreign lands, there will remain for many generations some sort of oddity among the peoples going by the names of Jew". The Zionist Idea, A. Hertzberg, 1959, Atheneum, p. 323, NY.
37. Ha'Aretz, 2.3.88
38. Davar, 19.2.88
39. Ha'Aretz, 9.12.88, Ronit Matalon.
40. ibid.
41. ibid.
42. Observer, 12 June 1988, see also Jewish Chronicle 16.8.85 'Racism gaining ground' where 42% of 18 years olds and 60% of those in religious Zionist schools agree with the view of Meir Kahane.
43. See B. Michael, 29 July 1988, Ha'Aretz.
44. See Kol Ha'ir, 30 Sept. 1988
45. Hotam, 24 June 1988, Sara Ben Hillef.
46. Which didn't prevent the visit of former Nazi supporter and South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, to Israel in 1976 where he was taken to Yad Vashem, the State's official museum-memorial to the Holocaust.
47. Davar, 26 Oct. 1988
48. See 'A State of Danger' (Dir. Jenny Morgan); Committee for Freedom of Expression of Palestinians and Israelis', Open Space Film, BBC-2, 14.3.89
49. Jewish Chronicle, 19.3.82, 'Swastikas in Jerusalem', 31.12.82, 'Swastikas on cars', '20.6.86, 'Israel mourns sacrilege'. Guardian, 18.6.86, 'Synagogues burned in revenge'. Socialist Organiser, 20.1.82, 'Why Zionists are daubing Swastikas in Tel-Aviv'
50. Al HaMishmar, 23.8.88 kibbutz and agriculture supplement Ha'daf Ha'yarok.
51. Kol Ha'ir 15 Jan. 1988
52. Koteret Rashit, 10 Febr. 1988
53. 'Yeshaayahu Leibowitz On the Whole World', Michael Shesher, Keter, p.78. Hadashot, 5 Febr. 1988
54. Davar, 22 March 1988
55. Jewish Chronicle 9 June 1989
56. Ha'Aretz, 30 June 1989
57. Al HaMishmar 24 July 1989, Ha'Aretz 27 July 1989
58. Ha'Aretz 24 July 1989 and Hadashot 25 July 1989
59. Al HaMishmar 26 July 1989

