

ANTI-SEMITISM  
AND THE  
JEWISH QUESTION

By  
I. RENNAP

With an Introduction  
by  
WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P.

LONDON  
LAWRENCE & WISHART LTD

*First published July 1942*  
*Reprinted September 1942*  
*Reprinted January 1943*  
*Reprinted August 1943*

*To the Hackney*  
*Study Group*

## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	7
I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND . . . . .	13
(1) Jews in Antiquity. (2) Jews in the Middle Ages. (3) Jews in the Bourgeois Order. (4) Jews in the Epoch of Imperialism. (5) The Jewish Contribution to Human Progress.	
II. SOCIALISM AND THE JEWISH QUESTION . . . . .	34
(1) Nationalities in the Soviet Union. (2) How the Jews were emancipated. (3) The Question of Jewish Territory. (4) Biro-Bidjan: A Jewish State Unit. (5) From the Border States of the U.S.S.R. (6) The Jewish Question solved. (7) The Nazi Invasion. (8) Marx and the Jewish Question.	
III. JEWISH NATIONALISM AND ZIONISM . . . . .	67
(1) Jewish Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century. (2) Zionism and the Imperialist Alliance. (3) Arab and Jew in Palestine.	
IV. THE MENACE OF ANTI-SEMITISM . . . . .	87
(1) In Conquered Europe. (2) Jews in the Western Democracies: (a) The U.S.A.; (b) Britain. (3) Conclusion.	

Printed in Great Britain  
By The Camelot Press Ltd  
London and Southampton (r.u.)

## INTRODUCTION

By WILLIAM GALLACHER

THERE is no subject on which there has been so much discussion and so little knowledge as that of anti-Semitism and the Jewish problem. The most violent anti-Semites, the Hitler-Streicher school, shriek about the Jews as sub-human, as biologically inferior to Aryans; while, on the other hand, I have heard certain violent apostles of Zionism going to the other extreme, and if not openly proclaiming at least leaving it to be inferred that there is a biological difference between Jew and Gentile, but to the advantage of the Jew. This, of course, is utter nonsense; but the idea persists and finds expression in a thousand ways that, somehow or another, the Jew is different.

Of course, there are certain historical differences between Jew and Gentile, but these are of themselves unimportant until the evil forces of reaction set in motion a vicious spate of anti-Semitism; then, any difference, however slight, may be exploited to the full. We have seen how superficial differences have from time to time been exploited in Liverpool, Glasgow and Northern Ireland, when the dying embers of religious bigotry have been stirred up into fires of bitter hate.

The peculiarity of the Jew arises from the peculiar economic position he occupies in society and the consequent social relationships arising from that. There is no "biological" reason why a Jew should not work down a mine digging coal, or in an engineering shop as a mechanic, or on the railways driving locomotives, or on the land producing food. In the Soviet Union they do all these tasks, side by side with their Gentile brothers. But they do not usually do them in capitalist countries; they are not usually part of the basic industrial army of capitalism, but merely auxiliaries (e.g. in the secondary industries of the furnishing, clothing and jewellery trades, etc.) or camp-followers (petty traders).

It is history, not biology, however, that has determined this and placed them in this peculiar position. Only a Marxist can properly understand this and explain it. The author of this book is a Marxist, and he brings a clear understanding to the problem. He shows how in the earliest times, before the Christian era, the Jews were in the unfortunate position of "buffer" between warring empires; and then later on, after the second dispersions, of "buffer" between warring classes—the feudal barons and the rising merchant class. In the *Merchant of Venice* we get Shakespeare's opinion on the "biological" difference and a clear indication of the true, unhappy, and tragic situation of the Jew. Listen to Shylock:

"I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?"

Then follow the tragic story to its inexorable end, the crushing of Shylock between the feudal Duke and the powerful merchant Antonio.

Had the Jewish people understood this, fewer of them would have been led, as so many have been, along the dangerous and utterly illusory path of Zionism. Britain's ambiguous "promises" were no guarantee that Palestine would be given to the Jewish people; yet the leaders of Zionism fooled thousands of splendid young Jewish men and women that it was on the point of being secured. For them, the Arabs, not the imperialists, were the enemy; and so, as our author rightly says, they brought "the age-long curse of the Jews into Palestine." Once again they became a "buffer" between two opposing forces, the British imperialists on one side, who were deliberately using them, and on the other the Arabs, struggling to free themselves and their country from the shackles of imperialism.

When urged to make an alliance with the Arabs to secure independence for Palestine, the Zionist leaders fiercely opposed such a proposal. They did not want independence for Palestine while the Jews were a minority. They had seen what this meant in every other country. Here again the failure to understand Marxism prevented them from seeing the fundamental difference between a "peculiar" minority in a capitalist country and a "peculiar" minority in a backward country like Palestine. As has already been observed, the "peculiarity" of the Jewish minority in a capitalist country is that they are not a part of the main industrial army. It is a minority that follows on behind the main army. In Palestine the position is completely reversed. The "peculiarity" of the Jewish minority there is that, because of its experience in modern science and Western technique, it is right in the vanguard, and could form the economic, social, and cultural leadership of the Arabian peasant masses. What an opportunity the Jews have there yet, if they will but see it! They could write a page in Jewish history greater even than that in Spain, when they co-operated so brilliantly with the Moors and did so much to bring back light and learning to the benighted countries of Europe.

But there is a further lesson to be learnt that this book brings out clearly. It is a lesson for Jew and Gentile. Fascist reactionaries use anti-Semitism to disrupt and destroy working-class and progressive organisations, and to crush the masses of the people under the heel of the monopoly capitalists. Wherever anyone gives encouragement of any kind to anti-Jewish sentiments, he is thereby assisting the Fascists in their evil plans for disrupting the working-class movement. The lessons of Germany must never be forgotten. The reactionary pro-Fascist character of those, in this country and America, who are behind the anti-Semitic propaganda should be obvious to all. Anti-Semitic propaganda is anti-working-class propaganda. Just as the working class and all progressive organisations must thoroughly understand this, so also must the Jewish people. Terrible blows have fallen upon them. Anger rises in a fierce flood at the sight of such

unmerited, such appalling suffering. But those blows are not aimed at the Jews alone. They are aimed at all progressive mankind. Therefore all progressive mankind are the allies of the Jews. This book shows the connection, the living historical connection between the Jewish people and all progressive movements. No one understood this better than the mighty Lenin; no one has done more to liberate the Jewish people from the "buffer" curse than his great disciple, Stalin.

Every Jewish man and woman, young or old, must be a convinced, unbreakable anti-Fascist. Those who make any qualifications on this are enemies of their own people. This determined opposition to Fascism, to reaction, constitutes a bond of unity between all Jewish people. On this there should be no divisions. But they cannot face Fascism alone. They must have allies. These the progressive organisations alone can provide.

Understanding this, the Jewish people must give whole-hearted support to all progressive movements. Not only as individuals, participating in those movements, but as a people, united to destroy Fascism, through the advance to a better and brighter world.

It is often said that, if the Jewish people sit back and say nothing, if they "behave" themselves, the Fascists will not be hard on them; that if they submit quietly to the demands of reaction and thereby appease Fascism before it comes to full power, its blows will not be so hard and heavy. History has exposed the "appeasers," whether of the Jew or Gentile variety. There is no escape through appeasement. Neither is there escape by denying Jewish character or Jewish association. "I am not a Jew. I am a Socialist." But he who is opportunist enough to deny his own people will not make a very good or a very loyal Socialist.

Then there is the other "Oh, but I would not be much good trying to work amongst the Jews. My education, my whole upbringing has fitted me more for association with and work amongst the English people." This will not do; and it will not save them. Will they really be accepted among worth-

while English people (except, of course, in certain circles while they have money to burn) or trusted by them, unless they have already won the confidence of their own people? However a Jewish man or woman has been educated or brought up, if they are not loyal to their own people, their loyalty to others will always be in question.

The author of this book is a Jew, a Jew who loves his own people, who suffers when his people suffer. A Jew who would give all he owns in life and life itself to free his people from the curse that has followed them through the centuries. Because he is loyal to his own people, with a clear Marxian understanding of their problem, he is a good Communist, one of our best, most trusted and valued comrades. Here in this book he has shown the road that must be travelled by Jew and Gentile alike.

Unity of all Jewish people in the fight against Fascism. Unity of the Jewish people with all progressive and working-class organisations. Unity of all—Jew and Gentile—with the mighty Soviet Union, for victory over Nazi Germany. With that victory, new wide horizons will be opened up for the Jewish people, but not for them alone—for people seeking freedom everywhere.

May this book, which so effectively unearths and exposes the evil roots of anti-Semitism and so brilliantly presents the problem that confronts the Jewish people, together with its only solution, may it speed the day when exploitation of man by man will be no more, and Jew and Gentile will work together in peace and brotherhood to fashion for all mankind a better world than we have ever known before.

LONDON,  
April, 1942.

*Chapter I*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

(1) JEWS IN ANTIQUITY. (2) JEWS IN THE MIDDLE AGES. (3) JEWS IN THE BOURGEOIS ORDER. (4) JEWS IN THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALISM. (5) THE JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN PROGRESS.

**(1) Jews in Antiquity**

THE Jewish problem is not a modern phenomenon. It has existed for centuries. As a result anti-Semitism has a character and tradition entirely of its own. No other "racial feeling" has such a long tradition behind it or is so widespread.

Because of this, many have thought that the Jewish question is something very special and peculiar, quite separate and distinct from the general economic and political problems which have arisen in the development of society. Nothing could be more mistaken. The Jewish question has arisen throughout the ages from certain social conditions. The Jews have been part of society for some 3,500 years, and their history and problems are inseparable from those of society in general.

To trace the origin of these problems, one must go back to antiquity. A great deal of the ancient history of the Jews is unclear and semi-legendary, but enough is known to show us that it was not because of any special characteristic, such as being a "chosen people", that they survived through the ages and that there came into existence a Jewish problem. The people of the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel pursued their occupations and worshipped their national deity much as did the peoples of neighbouring countries, and the reasons for their survival and for the origin of the problem we are considering will have to be sought elsewhere.

Ancient Palestine, into which the earliest Hebrew tribes wandered, was the centre of the trade routes of the then known world. It was the strategic and commercial highway through which passed caravans laden with the choicest

products of India and Arabia. Thus, trade and commerce became an important factor in the life of the inhabitants of ancient Palestine. *This was to be one of the decisive forces in the future development of the Jews.*

Further, the Jewish kingdoms were situated between the warring imperial powers of antiquity: Egypt, Assyria and later Babylonia. In their clashes the small Jewish kingdoms were caught between hammer and anvil.

In the latter part of the eighth century B.C. the Kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria. Its ruling class was taken into captivity, and Israel vanished from history. Early in the sixth century B.C., Babylon conquered the remaining Kingdom of Judah, whose upper classes of merchants, land-owners and artisans were likewise exiled. In Babylon trade was fairly well developed. So the Jewish captives, who, according to all accounts, were mainly traders, participated in the trade and commerce of the Empire.

After a short period in exile, a number of Jews returned, it appears, to Palestine to build up a new Jewish State. They found a country which had suffered as a buffer State between warring empires. After centuries of such wars, it was desolate and wasted. Moreover, it had long ceased to be the great commercial highway and caravan route of earlier days. New trade routes had arisen around the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, away from Palestine.

There were many Jews outside this small resurrected Jewish State. By the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., not so long after the new State had come into being, flourishing Jewish communities had arisen in the great commercial cities around the eastern Mediterranean. In Antioch, Alexandria, later in Rome, the dominant elements within these strong and powerful Jewish communities played an important part in the extensive trade and commerce of the period, while the poorer Jews engaged in petty trade and handicraft. Doubtless, with the shift of the trade routes away from Palestine, numbers of Jews, merchants and traders by occupation, had followed the new trade routes and formed these communities.

This scattering of Jews over the then known world has been treated by Jewish bourgeois historians as the cause of the Jewish problem. We shall see, however, that so long as trade and commerce were expanding the Jewish communities fitted into the order of things, and the Jews constituted no problem. Later, when trade and commerce dwindled, and the ancient society declined, a problem began to appear.

To be sure, the competition between the Jewish traders and their Greek, Phœnician and other rivals must have caused a certain amount of friction, especially as the Jews had been longer at the game and were probably more successful. Nevertheless, there are no records of crude, violent and extensive anti-Semitism when the world was being opened up in this period of antiquity.

When the conquests of Alexander extended the known world, with his armies went traders, Jews among them. Commerce as it expanded began to link the farthest ends of Alexander's empire. In this the Jews played a big part. It is no accident that at this time more and more Jewish communities were springing up in every corner of the empire, the process of dispersion of the nation into scattered communities being accentuated. Alexander was quick to recognise the value of the Jews and to give them special privileges.

Later the Romans, too, were to recognise the great importance of the Jewish merchants. The Jewish communities had by this time increased tremendously in wealth and power and were to be found in every commercial centre which was under the domination of Rome. They had already penetrated into large parts of south-eastern Europe and the Iberian peninsula. Their wide network of commercial and financial institutions was a necessity, since it helped to promote the trade and commerce of Rome with her far-flung territorial possessions. Moreover, the Jewish bankers made big loans to the Roman emperors. The Jewish communities were thus socially necessary to the Roman ruling class, and because of this they received special privileges, just as they had done under Alexander.

So long, therefore, as the Jews were socially necessary, were of importance to the ruling classes in the countries where they were situated, there could not have been and there was not a Jewish problem.

With the decline of the Roman Empire, however, new conditions arose. Trade and commerce dwindled. The sufferings of the masses increased as the already decadent Roman ruling class increased its exploitation of the people. Discontent grew, and a scapegoat was needed to divert this discontent. Further, within the ruling class there were those who were debtors to Jewish merchants and bankers. Now that trade and commerce had come almost to a standstill, the Jews were no longer indispensable, *no longer socially necessary*.

As a community, they were an unprotected and, therefore, a vulnerable minority, easy to attack. The Roman lords could use the Jews to appease the hungry and rebellious people and at the same time wipe off their own debts to the Jews without paying a bean. So, during the decline and disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West from about the first to the fifth centuries A.D., pogroms on Jews became a common feature.

Josephus, the Roman Jewish historian of antiquity, gives an account of a horrible pogrom in Alexandria in A.D. 38. Later, emperor after emperor encouraged every kind of incitement against the Jews and issued decrees which deprived them, not only of the special privileges granted to them earlier when they were so useful, but also of their ordinary rights and liberties.

Thus in the course of history arose the Jewish problem. Not simply because the social conditions of antiquity had broken up the Jewish nation into scattered communities, but because the intense class struggles and social conflicts which arose during the disintegration of the old social order based on slavery made it necessary to find a scapegoat, a form of diversion. In the scattered Jewish communities, no longer useful to the ruling class as formerly, the means to deflect discontent and mass rebellion was at hand.

The Jews had finally ceased to exist *as a nation* with the

destruction of Judæa in A.D. 71. A process which had been going on for about four centuries had been completed, and antiquity bequeathed to posterity scattered compact Jewish communities, and a big Jewish question. This question, as we shall see, was to continue to hold tremendous problems for the Jews, the more obvious victims, but also for the main mass of the peoples, whose struggles were to be diverted from their proper objectives.

Though the Jewish nation had ceased to exist, the cohesion and compactness of the dispersed communities was one of the factors which enabled the Jews to retain their identity as a people; arising from social conditions, it was reinforced by the national religious ideology, Judaism. For by the time they were subjected to exile by the Babylonians, the Jews had already developed a strong national feeling, developed from their previous oppression by the warring empires. The Exile could only intensify this. The national ideology reflected their misfortune and helplessness. It expressed itself in a passionate attachment to the national deity. In Babylon, Ezekiel had "never tired of explaining the destruction of national life as the deserved chastigation of an erring people. But he always held high the hope for a speedy restoration. Soon, very soon, the exile would be ended, a theocracy would be established, the Temple would be restored, and a chastened people would again bring sacrifices to the ever gracious Yahweh. . . . He encouraged people to plan with him as if the return were to begin tomorrow. And they ceased to be depressed exiles; they became hopeful builders."<sup>1</sup> Rich and poor among Jews shared a common danger of attack by the mob, incited by rulers in periods of social stress. Thus the already well-developed national ideology and the continual common danger interacted to strengthen their cohesion.

Moreover, who can doubt that the links which bound the Jews together within their communities, and the links between the separate communities, were of great use in the commercial enterprises of the Jewish merchants and traders?

<sup>1</sup> A. Sachar, *History of the Jews*, New York, 1930, p. 80.



A very powerful urge was thus provided for the continuance of the Jewish way of life.

One often meets the suggestion that the Jews isolate themselves, keep themselves to themselves, and that this is an important cause of anti-Semitism. Mr. H. G. Wells, for example, though he does not for a moment wish to support or justify anti-Semitism, is addicted to the view that Jews can hardly expect much better than they receive, because they have insisted on surviving as a people. As we have seen, however, it was a history of oppression which helped to make them cling together and retain their identity. It was not simply a matter of choice.

Yet it was not cohesion that *determined* the survival of this persecuted people. Had trade vanished, the Jews and the Jewish problem might have gone with it. But a new and higher form of society arose: the feudal system. The commercial function of the Jews was again a social necessity. It was this that kept the Jews alive. They were a people performing a necessary function in the social system.

## (2) Jews in the Middle Ages

After the Moslems had encircled the Mediterranean with their conquests in the seventh and eighth centuries, and feudalism, based on self-sufficient agricultural estates, had arisen in Western Europe, the commercial development of the more backward region (namely, feudal Western Europe as a whole) was carried out from the older centres. Jewish and other merchants flocked from East to West. Coming largely through Moslem Spain, they first followed the Rhine and the Seine, the waterways around which the new feudal kingdoms had arisen.

These merchants traded the choice goods of the East for the surplus of the feudal lords. The Jewish merchants, however, benefited, not only by their longer experience, but by the fact that their communities were on the one hand so widely dispersed and on the other so intimately bound

together by the common national, family and religious tradition; the trade of this early period tended to come more and more into Jewish hands, so much so that the terms "Jew" and "merchant" became nearly synonymous. "Judeus and *mercator* appear almost synonymous," says Pirenne,<sup>1</sup> referring to the ninth century.

Trade was still primitive, feudal production being mainly for consumption and not for exchange. The small ruling class of feudal barons, owing allegiance to the monarch, who was the landlord-in-chief, exploited the peasantry, the vast mass of the population, from whom they extorted a host of services in exchange for the right to work the land. Part of the agricultural products of the peasantry was taken by their feudal lords, in the main for consumption by themselves, their retinue and soldiers, only the surplus, a small proportion, being exchanged for arms and goods from abroad.

In these conditions, naturally, there had not yet arisen a large native class of merchants and usurers. But the feudal lord or monarch needed tax-gatherers, experts to manage the finances, primitive though they were, of the period, loans for wars against his neighbours, the means of indulging his more varied tastes, and later, as we shall see, of taking part in the Crusades. Thus the Jew was the merchant, tax-gatherer, accountant and financier. Rich Jews became the confidants of kings and princes, while the poor Jews engaged in petty trade and handicraft. Some (a small minority) were even permitted to settle on the land. Jewish merchants and financiers promoted the trade between Charlemagne's empire and the Moslem world. William the Conqueror brought with him his Jewish finance experts, who had his special protection.

Thus Jewish communities sprang up in Western Europe under the protection of the ruling feudal castes. As strangers in a foreign land, they naturally tended to herd together. For centuries they had lived in compact communities; their religion and their commerce could best be practised in this

<sup>1</sup> *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, p. 11.

way, so that they continued to live in groups apart from the mass of the population.

Hence, as before, the Jews were socially necessary; and yet they had no place within the basic relations of feudal society, either as members of the ruling class or as peasants. So long as they satisfied a need, they received the protection of the ruling classes so served. In the circumstances, their role was a progressive one, in that they helped to develop early feudal economy to a higher level. Anti-Semitic excesses and pogroms were not a marked feature of the earlier mediæval period. The well-known scholar and historian, Dr. James Parkes, says of the Jews during this period: "they lived the lives of ordinary townfolk, shared in the privileges and responsibilities of their fellows and were distinguished from them only by their religion."<sup>1</sup>

The growth of trade, commerce and population in eleventh century Europe led to a search for new territory for exploitation. The seaports of Asia Minor, and therefore the trade routes of the Eastern Mediterranean, were in the hands of the Moslem, and the drive for control of these trade routes, with the search for new territory, provided a strong impetus within feudal society. The feudal lords sought to extend their landed possessions; the merchants of Venice, Genoa and other trading cities wished to control the seaports of Asia Minor; and the Church saw new power and wealth in the conquest of "infidel" lands. Here lay the material basis of the Crusades, which helped to unleash those forces inside the feudal order which began the decay of feudalism. The Crusades were to become a commercial fertiliser of Europe; further impetus was given afterwards to trade by the desire of returned crusaders for the new and rich foods and adornments of the East.

Jewish merchants and usurers helped to finance the Crusades, but this did not prevent the fanatical crusaders, whipped up by their priests, from sacking whole Jewish communities on the way to the Holy Land. The Jewish communities, however, were among a whole host of others

<sup>1</sup> *The Jew in the Mediæval Community*, 1938, p. 40; cf. A. Sachar, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

which suffered in the general process of pillage and plunder.

Meanwhile, the development of exchange and trade following the expansion of feudal society, had led to the rise of a native Christian class of merchants and usurers. But the feudal lord did not dispense with his Jews, for borrowing from the Christian usurer involved political concessions to the rising burgher class, which aimed at extending its political power, while to the Jew no political concessions were necessary. Consequently, the Jew was placed in the position of a buffer, used by the feudal ruling class to frustrate the political needs and aspirations of the rising bourgeois class, and hated by the burghers, not only as a competitor, but as an obstacle to their increased power.

The peasantry also grew to hate the Jews. With the growth of money economy had grown the tribute exacted from them by their lords. They saw, not the poor Jewish pedlar or artisan, but the rich Jew, prominent as the tax-gatherer and servant of a master who sucked his peasants dry. Further, the Jew had a strange religion, to which he clung tenaciously, and he was associated with mysterious financial dealings, which the peasant could not understand; in his eyes, the Jew was akin to the devil.

By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when social conflicts and intense class struggles were arising, the feudal ruling class often deflected trouble from itself on to the Jews. The Jews, isolated minorities, hated for the reasons already indicated, were no longer indispensable, and the feudal aristocracy was glad to wriggle out of paying its debts. This period was marked by mass expropriation and wholesale expulsion of Jewish communities. In England, when the Lombards could advance money to the king, the Jews were expelled in 1290. From France they were expelled in 1306, and later from many parts of Germany.

Where could these Jewish refugees go? A factor which contributed enormously towards preserving the Jews from extinction was the difference in the level of economic development in the various countries of Europe. In Western

Europe the rise of the native merchant class had broken the monopoly of the Jews, who could be dispensed with. In Eastern Europe, however, feudal economy was at a lower level. No native middle class had yet arisen. The merchant and usurer class was needed, as earlier it had been in the West. The Jews could once again fulfil this function.

Large numbers of Jews wandered from the West into Poland, Lithuania and parts of Russia. On the whole, they were welcomed and granted special privilege. Casimir the Great of Poland (1333-70), says Dubnow, "could not but welcome the useful industrial activity of the Jews with the liveliest satisfaction . . . and was equally quick to appreciate the advantages which the none too flourishing Royal exchequer might derive from the experience of Jewish capitalists."<sup>1</sup>

Before long in Eastern Europe Jewish merchants had the monopoly of various commodities; others became artisans, while a few settled on the land. Flourishing Jewish centres soon arose all over Eastern Europe. Later, with the development of native merchant and artisan classes in these countries, the Jews' position again deteriorated.

The rise of craft and merchant guilds in the feudal period completely broke the Jewish monopoly of trade; Jewish merchants and craftsmen were barred from the guilds; the Jew was more and more forced to practise usury. Then, with the expansion of trade and commerce and the consequent increased demand for loans, the practice of usury by Christians, once forbidden by the Church, developed. In the Italian city republics, the Lombards and other ecclesiastical mediæval bankers enjoyed the protection of the Church, whose coffers received some of the profits of the trade. For with the expansion of trade the Church could not remain indifferent to new conditions, and its theoreticians were able to adjust their principle so as to distinguish between usury which was sinful and usury which was "moderate and acceptable." Thus even the Jewish monopoly, or virtual monopoly, of usury was broken.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, Philadelphia, 1916, Vol. I, p. 51.

In the period of the decline of the feudal order, when Europe was shaken by peasant revolts which were ruthlessly crushed, the hanging and quartering of the rebels was accompanied by savage attacks on the Jews. Religious superstitions and fears were cunningly utilised by the feudal lord and priest. The Jew, with his peculiar religion and his dealings with large sums of money, was made responsible for the bad harvest, the plague, the poisoning of wells—for all ills of society! The feudal State crushed the uprisings; its fellow, the feudal Church (the biggest landlord with the biggest stake in the feudal system), did its share in diverting the seething rebellious feeling of the masses away from those really responsible, towards the Jews. These anti-Jewish excesses were fundamentally a perverted expression of social revolt—the dark fury of the backward populace suffering untold agony as a result of the decadence of the social order and desiring to strike at those responsible for their suffering. Again the Jew was wedged in as a buffer, to receive the blind, ferocious blows really due to the feudal exploiters; just as centuries later in Tsarist Russia the ruling class was to use the Jews as a buffer between itself and the revolutionary masses, deflecting through bloody pogroms the rising revolutionary tide away from itself to the Jews.

Similarly with the national revolutionary wars waged by the Hussites in the fifteenth century in Bohemia against the Roman Church. These national rebellions of a rising bourgeois class against feudal autocracy were crushed with terrible bloodshed. But in the process of stamping out rebellions against feudal "law and order" whole Jewish communities were massacred as well. Outstanding among those who "crusaded" against the Hussites was the Dominican monk, St. John of Capistrano, who also earned himself in these "crusades" the title of "Scourge of the Jews."

Such "crusades" against the progressive movements of that time have had their counterpart in those more recent "crusades" organised in Britain and in France against the young Soviet Republic, with the aim of restoring the butcher

régime of the Tsars. The pogromists, Denikin, Kolchak, Petlura, the darlings of the City of London, were "crusaders" for the restoration of the Tsarist knout and gallows who earned themselves, like Capistrano, the title of "scourge of the Jews." And just as the slow break up of feudal society engendered sharp social conflicts and tremendous suffering among the masses of the people, which in turn evoked violent Jew hatred, so to-day, as the present order of things is shaken by Fascism's war on liberty and freedom, anti-Semitism and Jew hatred become rampant. The apologists and upholders of feudal society, particularly the Church, were as vociferous in their concern about the Jewish problem as the reactionary theorists of to-day.

Where the Jews in a particular country, instead of only serving the interests of the feudal princes, had been strong enough to share in the general progress of the merchant class of the country itself, the feudal ruling caste, headed by the Church, was not slow to strike with increasing ferocity at an important constituent sector of the class whose power it wished to curb. This was strikingly demonstrated in Spain, where at the end of the fifteenth century there took place the biggest and most cruel expulsion of Jews the world at that time had ever known.

The Spanish Jews, who had lived in Spain for over twelve centuries, had become an important element of the merchant and artisan class. A number were tax-collectors and finance experts serving the monarchy. The Jews on the whole occupied an important position in the commercial, financial and industrial spheres. They made immense contributions to the arts and sciences. Among them were outstandingly wealthy persons with a great deal of influence. But in 1492, after a long period of oppression and persecution, they were expropriated and finally expelled (together with the Moors). At a time when peasant revolts and social conflicts were occurring in Spain, attacks on the Jews well served the purpose of the feudal ruling class under Ferdinand and Isabella, and the interests of the Church; persecution of the Jew not only diverted the energies of the masses, but also

crushed a bourgeois element inimical to the feudal state and weakened the rising middle class. Thus the Spanish feudal ruling class and the Church expelled an "element which formed the backbone of Spanish commercial and industrial life . . . the sinews of the middle class."<sup>1</sup>

The persecution, of course, took on a religious form, for throughout the Middle Ages the Church occupied a dominant place in men's lives: "It guided all the movements of men from baptism to the burial service, and was the gateway to that life to come in which all men fervently believed. The Church educated children in the village parishes—where the mass of the people were illiterate—the parson's sermon was the main source of information on current events and problems. The parish itself was an important unit of local government, collecting and doling out such pittance as the poor received. The Church provided them with entertainment and shows. It took the place of news and propaganda services now covered by many different and more efficient institutions—the Press, the B.B.C., the cinema, the club, and so forth."<sup>2</sup>

Many Spanish Jews, to escape persecution, embraced Christianity, but even this did not save them from the wrath of the populace in periods of intense social stress. The Marranos (as these baptised Jews were called) were the "new Christians." They were accused of usurping the posts and positions of true Christian believers (just as Jews and "non-Aryan" Christians have been accused of usurping the positions of "true" Germans). They were not "genuine" believers. Violent attacks were made on these "new Christians" in periods of intense unrest. Few were saved by baptism from the uses to which the ruling class put their unbaptised brethren. Large numbers of Marranos suffered torture and execution at the hands of the Inquisition.

Many of the Jews who left Spain went to Turkey and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, at that period in process of expansion. There the Jews were needed, and once again

<sup>1</sup> A. Sachar, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *The English Revolution*, ed. by Christopher Hill, 1940, p. 15.

their utility brought them freedom and privileges. They followed their commercial, professional and other occupations and contributed much to the development of the Empire.

### (3) Jews in the Bourgeois Order

The dominance of the bourgeoisie brought gradual emancipation for the Jew, in so far as he *had an important part to play in the new society*. This did not mean that anti-Semitism automatically died out in the countries where merchant capital developed, but its most horrible and crude forms began to disappear.

In Holland and her Empire (where numbers of the Jewish refugees from Spain went) and later in France, England and in America, Jewish merchants participated in the commerce of the period. The new dominant merchant class recognised the value of the Jews to the bourgeois State. To be sure, it did not suddenly become Judophile. Cromwell did not allow the Jews to return to England after an absence of three and a half centuries because of a great love for the Jews, but because he recognised the value of the Jewish merchant and banker to the bourgeois English State. Thus where bourgeois State power was complete, the ghetto walls were gradually broken down, and the Jew could emerge and live on peaceable terms with his neighbours.

The rise of industrial capitalism at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries tended to break up the cohesion of the Jewish groups; large-scale industry drew the Jews into the vortex of capitalist development. To a large extent they were broken up into the classes corresponding to capitalism. Class formations began to appear sharply among them.

The Jewish big capitalist fitted quite normally into the capitalist ruling class. To some extent, the poorer Jews also fitted in to their corresponding class, but not so thoroughly as the bourgeois Jew. The mediæval guilds in Western Europe had barred the Jew from handicraft. Feudal land tenure had

in the main kept him off the soil. There were few Jewish peasants. Since the modern industrial proletariat was formed from declassed handicraftsmen unable to compete with large-scale industry and from peasants bereft of their land, there did not arise among the Jews in Western and Central Europe a broad layer of Jewish proletarians. Only in Eastern Europe, where the power of the guilds had been weaker and where Jewish handicraftsmen were more numerous, did a relatively small Jewish proletariat come into existence. But a comparatively large proportion of the Jews were still traders, of various kinds, belonging to the lower middle classes rather than the proletariat.

Nevertheless, rising industrial capitalism did, albeit incompletely, tend to integrate the Jews within itself. In industrialised Western Europe and the U.S.A. the Jews had won equal political rights and equality of citizenship by the middle of the nineteenth century. But anti-Semitism did not completely die out. It still existed, in a weak, sporadic or latent form. Pogroms and violent physical attacks on Jews, however, became a thing of the distant past. Many people even began to think that a Jewish question had ceased to exist.

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, particularly in Tsarist Russia, where capitalism was weak and where feudal relations still existed, the conditions of the Jews were to a large extent similar to what they had been in the Middle Ages. The Jews were barred from the land. They were overwhelmingly concentrated in trade and in small handicraft. The growing poverty of the peasantry undermined the position of the small Jewish trader. The development of large-scale industry ruined the Jewish and non-Jewish handicraftsmen. The declassed non-Jewish artisan could enter the large factories as a proletarian, but the declassed Jewish artisan, for the most part, found himself barred from large-scale industry by anti-Jewish legislation. Hundreds of thousands of Jews and their families were thus reduced to a state of starvation. Politically, the Jew had no rights. The Tsarist ruling class cold-bloodedly organised pogroms

against Jews in periods of intense social conflict and revolutionary unrest so as to deflect away from itself the rising anger of the exploited masses. The great emigrations to the West began (p. 35). The more developed West, and, particularly, the growing industries of the U.S.A., absorbed hundreds of thousands of these Jews, transforming them into bitterly exploited proletarians who quickly learnt to fight side by side with their fellow workers on the issues which affected the working class as a whole.

Once again in the process of historical development the Jew had found a place in society; "liberal" industrial capitalism, with its democratic institutions, appeared to have solved the Jewish question.

#### (4) Jews in the Epoch of Imperialism

The development of capitalism into its imperialist stage brought the Great War of 1914-18 and the world economic crisis of 1929-32: the decline of capitalism, the opening of more intense social conflicts had begun. A sixth of the world was torn away from the capitalist sphere to become the first Socialist State. The most hardly pressed of the capitalists were compelled to resort to every kind of diversion to sidetrack the struggles of the workers and to disrupt their forces.

Learning from the past, they encouraged and fostered Jew-baiting and the most violent race hatred. As Hitler remarked to Herr Rauschnig, the Jews "are a valuable hostage given to me by the democracies. Anti-Semitic propaganda in all countries is an almost indispensable medium for the extension of our political campaign. You will see how little time we shall need in order to upset the ideas and criteria of the whole world simply and purely by attacking Judaism."<sup>1</sup> From 1933 onwards began the worst excesses in the lands of Goethe and Beethoven, where Fascism, for years financed and supported by the big industrialists and bankers, became the weapon with which

<sup>1</sup> *The Voice of Destruction*, by Dr. Rauschnig, New York, 1940.

the ruling class attempted to crush the revolutionary mass movement of the workers and their allies. Here, side by side with Krupp and Thyssen, were Jewish bankers and industrialists, one of whom explained to Edgar Mowrer that "he would assist the very devil, could the latter be persuaded to lead a fight against that most ruinous influence in the contemporary world, Marxism."<sup>1</sup>

Big Jewish capitalists and bankers had been integrated with the dominant class. But, owing to the relatively late development of modern capitalism in Germany and Austria where the Jews had lived and undergone persecution for centuries, and also to the strength of the big agrarian interests and military traditions of the semi-feudal Prussian Junker caste, the middle classes in these countries included a relatively large proportion of Jews engaged not only in commerce but in all the liberal professions, the sciences and arts. Economic competition in these spheres could only intensify the comparatively large hang-over of anti-Semitism which persisted with extensive survivals of feudalism. One of the uses of anti-Semitism was to clear out large sections of these middle classes at a time of extreme political and economic crisis by eliminating Jewish doctors, lawyers, scientists, traders, etc., thus reducing economic competition and the spread of dangerous ideas. Its main use, of course, was to divert mass struggle against capitalism into mass persecution of the Jews: the Versailles Treaty, with its burdens on the German people, Germany's defeat in the last war and the inflation that ensued—all the evils of capitalism were put to the account, not of capitalism, but of the Jews.<sup>2</sup>

The victory of Fascism in Germany, made possible by the

<sup>1</sup> Edgar Mowrer, *Germany Puts the Clock Back*, Penguin Special, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> "We German doctors demand the exclusion of all Jews from the medical treatment of our fellow countrymen." Reichstag Deputy Dr. Ruppin, *Gross-Berliner Aertztblatt*, May 20th, 1933. "Admit the nature-healers to the panel. Throw all Jews out of German medicine!" (Article in *Deutsche Volksgesundheit*, quoted by *Angriff*, April 18th, 1935). "100 Jewish dispensing chemists as well as a number of Jewish assistants have been eliminated at one blow" (*Angriff*, November 5th, 1937).

disunity of the working-class movement, began the main offensive of Fascism against the working people throughout the world and rallied to itself the most reactionary elements in every country, including Britain. The working peoples responded by intensified struggle to regain or to preserve their hard-won democratic liberties. Under conditions, first, of general economic crisis, inter-imperialist rivalry and intensified social conflict, and, finally, of world war, a wave of anti-Semitism has arisen whose equal has not been seen in Europe for centuries. Once again "*the Jewish problem*" has come sharply to the forefront; once again anti-Semitism is a weapon of the ruling classes and is making headway even in countries like Britain which are at war with the leader of world anti-Semitism.

To these urgent problems of to-day we shall return in our final chapter (p. 87).

### (5) The Jewish Contribution to Human Progress

Class society has made a scapegoat of the Jew; but civilisation owes much to the Jewish people. As a result of their peculiar social development, they reached a comparatively high level of intellectual development. They have made very great contributions to the arts and sciences of the ages. Just as the arts and sciences of the Middle Ages were enriched by Jews in countries where they enjoyed a large measure of political freedom (Moslem Spain and, for a period, Catholic Spain), so capitalist society created conditions where the Jewish people bequeathed more than a full share to the scientific and cultural heritage of mankind. Maimonides, Spinoza, Heine, Karl Marx and Einstein—these are but a few of mankind's greatest thinkers and scientists who were Jews. As individuals who have enriched the scientific knowledge and culture of mankind, their names are immortal. They will be remembered and revered when Hitler will long have been forgotten.

There arose also from the Jewish community many who were among the foremost fighters for freedom and social

justice in every progressive and liberationary movement. In the period of reaction that followed the Napoleonic wars, many Jews played a prominent part in the progressive bourgeois liberal movement. Heinrich Heine, the great poet, was hated by reactionaries of his period as a fighter for freedom. His younger friend, Karl Marx, who came from an old German family of rabbis and brilliant Talmudic scholars, was to be the father of scientific Socialism, the man who was to revolutionise the progressive thought of the nineteenth century and to point the path of victory for the proletariat. In the Hungarian insurrection in 1848, led by Kossuth against Hapsburg autocracy, there were special Jewish battalions. Many Jews laid down their lives for national freedom in this bloody revolt and its even bloodier repression.

In the revolutionary movement against Tsarism and in the ranks of the International Brigade in Spain, 1936-38, numbers of Jews played a prominent part side by side with their non-Jewish comrades. To-day many thousands of Jews are among the foremost and best fighters in the Labour and progressive movements of all countries.

Because they were themselves members of a persecuted race, many Jews tended to ally themselves with all progressive classes and groups and to fight side by side with them for the freedom and emancipation of all, including the Jewish people. What must not be overlooked, however, is the highly ethical and progressive element which (despite a large mass of petrified ritual and taboo) runs like a red thread through the culture which the Jews throughout the ages have developed among themselves. The ancient Hebrew prophets thundered against the oppression and exploitation of the labouring people by the landowners and wealthy aristocracy of their time. Their aspirations were for a better and nobler world. Maimonides, the great Hebrew scholar and philosopher, who introduced the progressive elements of the Græco-Arabic philosophy into Jewish thought, also influenced the humanism of the Middle Ages. The Yiddish literature which arose in Russia in the nineteenth century was permeated with a spirit of militancy and hatred of

exploitation and oppression. These are but a few examples from Jewish cultural development indicating the ideological factor which helped to bring so many Jews into the forefront of every struggle for freedom and social justice.

When the Dominican monks decided, towards the end of the Middle Ages, to burn the Talmud in public, this was not mere religious fanaticism. These faithful watchdogs of the Catholic Church were jealous defenders of clerical feudal privileges against the humanists, the progressive spokesmen of the rising merchant bourgeoisie. The humanists criticised the dogmas of the Catholic Church, and its ever-tightening repression on the progressive freedom of thought and learning which developed with the rising bourgeoisie and undermined the social order supported by the Church. The Talmud was one of the great intellectual springs from which liberal humanism drew its sustenance; to the Church it was therefore a dangerous and seditious document. In Germany it was ordered to be burned in the fifteenth century.

Johann Reuchlin, the greatest of Germany's mediæval humanists, came out fearlessly in defence of the Talmud against that coarse and ignorant spokesman of feudal reaction, Pfefferkorn, and by so doing rallied around him all the young liberal humanists. Many of them knew not a word of Hebrew, but they supported Reuchlin in opposition to the decrees of the Church and the Emperor Maximilian. To them the defence of the Talmud against the Church and the Emperor was the defence of all that was great and progressive.

The genius of Lenin was quick to recognise this tendency which runs like a red thread through Jewish culture. It was he who pointed out the "great progressive and universal characteristics of Jewish culture, its internationalism, its receptivity of the progressive currents of the Middle Ages." It was he who drew attention to the fact that the proportion of revolutionaries among Jews was higher than that of any other nationality in Tsarist Russia, giving this as another important reason for the organised pogroms of Tsarism, in addition to the need for a scapegoat.

This historic element in Jewish cultural development, its influence on the progressive groups and on their spokesmen in the social struggles of the past, must not be overlooked or minimised; it is something which the Jewish people may justly be proud of and from which they can still draw inspiration. Its obvious lesson for the Jew of to-day is that if he is to be true to his great progressive traditions and culture, his place must be alongside all those who are fighting the Fascist monster and thus paving the way for the victory of Socialism.

It is to be deplored that this revolutionary element in Jewish culture, as well as the fact that Jews have been amongst the foremost fighters for freedom and social justice through the ages, is glossed over by many of our Jewish bourgeois historians and leaders. They try to present the meek, mild and persecuted Jew, who is never a rebel, but merely wants to be left alone in peace.

It is also to be deplored that there are still Jewish Socialists and revolutionaries who are either ignorant of or indifferent to the rich, revolutionary tradition in Jewish history and culture. That Lenin, a non-Jew, should have perceived this is a mark of his genius as one of the greatest masters of revolutionary strategy; it proves also his deep understanding of the position and problems of oppressed minorities and groups. That there are still Jewish progressives who think that this revolutionary element in Jewish history and culture is not worth bothering about, who see no necessity for working among the Jewish people and using their rich, progressive tradition as a means of rallying them in the struggle against Fascism and for social progress as a whole—this is an unfortunate example of narrow sectarianism. Indeed, it is precisely this outlook which makes some Jews remark that Jewish revolutionary fighters struggle for the emancipation of all oppressed peoples except their own.

For the non-Jew the history of the Jewish problem is a history of diversions and stumbling blocks placed in the path of social progress. For the Jew it is not just one of bloodshed, persecution and tears, but also one of noble struggle for a



better order. The struggle of humanity to progress includes of necessity the struggle against anti-Semitism, the tool of the tricksters and barbarians, of the enemies of the peoples and of the freedom of nations.

## Chapter II

### SOCIALISM AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

(1) NATIONALITIES IN THE SOVIET UNION. (2) HOW THE JEWS WERE EMANCIPATED. (3) THE QUESTION OF JEWISH TERRITORY. (4) BIRO-BIDJAN: A JEWISH STATE UNIT. (5) FROM THE BORDER STATES OF THE U.S.S.R. (6) THE JEWISH QUESTION SOLVED. (7) THE NAZI INVASION. (8) MARX ON THE JEWISH QUESTION.

#### (1) Nationalities in the Soviet Union

THERE have been many attempts to solve the Jewish question within the existing order of things. The Zionist effort to solve it in Palestine (which we shall discuss in Chapter III) is well known. But the way the Jewish question has been tackled in the U.S.S.R. has not received the publicity and understanding it deserves.

Tsarist Russia was a prison house of nations. Of the population of the Russian Empire, only 43 per cent. was Great Russian, while 57 per cent. consisted of oppressed and subject nations, representing almost 200 different nationalities. If the labouring people of Great Russia, the vast majority of them peasants, suffered economically and politically, living in abject poverty and misery, the numerous minorities, who were the "colonial slaves" of the Empire, were doubly oppressed. They suffered as workers and as members of an oppressed nation. In 1921 Stalin said of these Ukrainians, White Russians, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Circassians, Karelians, Yakutians, Jews and many others:

"The policy of Tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, towards these peoples was to destroy every germ of statehood among them, to cripple their culture, restrict the use of their native tongue, hold them in a state of ignorance, and, finally, as far as possible to Russify them. The effects of the policy are reflected in the low level of development and the political backwardness of these peoples." (*Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 94.)

Within the dominant Great Russian nation there existed hatred of the smaller nations, and among these oppressed peoples there was bitterness and hatred of the Great Russians. Racial antagonism and chauvinism among the national minorities were fomented by the Russian ruling class: to take only one example, the incitement of the Georgians against the Armenians. By the encouragement of all forms of racial antagonism, the peoples were divided, and their struggle for national freedom was diverted into paths of inter-communal conflicts, thus enabling the Tsarist imperialists to exploit and enslave them all the more effectively.

The Jews under the Tsar numbered roughly five and a half millions. They were segregated into a "pale of settlement." Barred from the land, large-scale industry and higher education, the majority of them eked out their livelihood in petty trade and small handicrafts. Their economic condition was in the main one of poverty; they had no political rights; they suffered terribly in the pogroms which the ruling class organised. Between 1881 and 1910, more than 1,100,000 Jews left Russia for the U.S.A., and large numbers migrated to Britain, seeking a freer life.

The Revolution of February, 1917, which brought about the abolition of Tsarism, did not put an end to national oppression. The Kerensky Government proposed continued participation in the imperialist war, and its attitude to the subject nations is seen clearly in its dispersal of the Finnish Diet and its suppression of the cultural institutions which arose in the Ukraine immediately after the Revolution.

With the Socialist Revolution of October, 1917, however,

the bondage of these many nations ended. The Bolshevik Government at once proclaimed self-determination and the right of secession for all parts of the Empire; the class which had defeated the power of capital and was replacing production for profit by production for common use could have no interest in maintaining the servitude of subject nations. In the new Soviet State the conditions from which national oppression arose had ceased to exist.

The workers and peasants of the oppressed nations participated in both revolutions, contributing largely to the final victory gained over the armed opposition of their own capitalists and landlords, who desired national "freedom" only to set up their own capitalist rule. It was the Socialist alliance of the workers and peasants of *all* Russia which defeated the Tsarist ruling class and the capitalist would-be ruling classes of the various nationalities of the Tsarist Empire, and successfully resisted the intervention of the imperialists of Western Europe.

The Bolshevik Party, which led the revolution, held that the victory of the working class could not be a lasting one and that socialist society could not be established unless the oppressed nationalities became emancipated.

"Real (and not merely juridical) equalisation of nations, helping and encouraging the backward nations to raise themselves to the cultural and economic level of the more advanced nations,"

was seen as—

"one of the conditions necessary for securing fraternal co-operation between the toiling masses of the various nationalities" (Stalin, *op. cit.*, p. 115).

The practical policy which followed from these facts and considerations involved working out and putting into effect practical measures in relation to:

- "(1) The study of the economic conditions, social life and culture of the backward nations and peoples;
- "(2) The development of their culture;

- "(3) Their political education;
- "(4) Their gradual and painless incorporation into the higher forms of economic life; and
- "(5) The organisation of economic co-operation between the toilers of the backward and the advanced nationalities" (*ibid.*, p. 116).

The peoples outside Great Russia were to be helped, as Stalin put it, to develop and consolidate their own Soviet State system in forms consistent with the national character of these peoples; to organise their own courts, administrative bodies, economic organs and government organs functioning in the native language and recruited from among local people acquainted with the customs and psychology of the local population: and to develop a Press, schools, theatres, clubs and cultural and educational institutions generally, functioning in the native language.

Out of the application of the national policy we have described there arose new *Soviet* nations with new national cultures. With the assistance of the Soviet Government, the economic life of the peoples was rapidly organised and developed on the most modern lines with new industries and large-scale agriculture. In the cultural sphere, the Government encouraged the use of the national languages in the schools and the administrations as the medium through which the nations should develop their specific cultures on Socialist lines. Where few or no schools had previously existed thousands of elementary and secondary schools and numerous universities were built. Theatres and other cultural institutions of all kinds were opened. The languages of the most backward and primitive national groups, who lacked even written alphabets, were closely studied and alphabets were provided, so that no hindrances should exist to national development through languages.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thus the Evenks, Nentsi, Hantsi, Mansi and other small national groups in various districts of the Soviet Arctic were utterly illiterate. They had no alphabet, or even writing symbols. The Academy of Science provided an alphabet, opened schools and published grammars and primers. This was also the case in respect of the Khirgizians. See "Culture and Leisure," *The U.S.S.R. speaks for Itself*, Vol. 4, pp. 62-5.

In the new national cultures in the different languages, traditional folk-lore and cultural activity were richly developed by poets, novelists and artists, themselves brought into being by the new, free, creative life.

The national cultures have a common *content* in the Socialist economy in which the new life is rooted; they differ in *form*, in the peculiar cultural characteristics of various nations.

"The period of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. is a period in which national culture, Socialist in content and national in form, blossoms. . . . The development of national cultures is bound to proceed *with a new impetus* when universal elementary education in the respective native languages has been introduced and has taken root. . . . Only if the national cultures develop will it be possible to secure the real participation of the backward nationalities in the work of Socialist construction. . . . This is the very basis of the Leninist policy of assisting and supporting the development of the national cultures of the peoples of the U.S.S.R." (*ibid.*, p. 261).

The national cultures are rapidly developing and in the life of creative labour all peoples are becoming permeated with the idea of Socialist construction. They feel that their fatherland stretches beyond their own territories to the furthest borders of Soviet lands. Every citizen of an autonomous republic or region knows that he is as welcome and as useful in any other part of the U.S.S.R. as in his own particular State unit. To-day the unity of the Soviet peoples in defence of their land has become manifest to all.

In such a society there is no place for racial hatred; in that society the Jews now breathe freedom.

## (2) How the Jews were emancipated

During the 1914-18 War, and in the period of the Civil War and intervention by the capitalist Powers, the Jews had suffered greatly. Much of the fighting on the Eastern Front during the four years' war occurred in the western

territories of the Tsarist Empire—in Poland, Lithuania, White Russia—where millions of Jews lived, and almost the whole of the Pale was within the zone of military operations or its immediate vicinity.

"During the Civil War the White armies made great use of anti-Semitism. Their incitement of non-Jews against Jews surpassed that of Tsarist days. The landlords and capitalists wanted to recover their old class positions at any cost. Jew-baiting and pogroms had been in the past one of the methods of bolstering up and prolonging their class rule. They thought that with even greater and more violent pogroms they might overthrow the proletarian dictatorship. The White generals, Petlura, Denikin, Koltchak, Bulacovitch and others organised during the intervention 1,520 pogroms in 911 different places. The victims in the Ukraine and White Russia totalled 200,000 dead and 700,000 maimed, while 300,000 were orphaned" (*Jews in the U.S.S.R.; a Symposium*, by Diamondstein, Kalinin and others, Moscow, 1935, p. 19).

With these losses and with the Jews of Poland, the Baltic Provinces and Bessarabia outside Soviet territory, the Jewish population under the Soviet Government after the revolution was no more than about 3 millions.

Within the first week of its existence, the Soviet Government issued an edict entitled "The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia," which proclaimed the sovereignty and equality of the peoples of Russia: their right to free self-determination, even to the point of separation to form independent States, the abolition of all national and peculiar religious privileges and restrictions; and the principle of free development of the national minorities and ethnic groups inhabiting Russia. The Jews and all other nationalities were thus given equal rights, and anti-Semitism and all racial chauvinism were outlawed.

The deep economic changes brought about by the Socialist revolution sharply affected the Jews. Private ownership of the land was abolished and replaced by State ownership. The lands of the landlords, the bourgeoisie, and the Tsar's

family, the monasteries and the churches were turned over to the working people for their free use. All mineral resources, forests and waters became likewise the property of the people. During the remaining months of that year and the early months of 1918 the Soviet Government concentrated in its own hands the key economic positions of the national economy. The factories, mills, banks, railways, foreign trade and mercantile fleet were taken over. Measures of compulsion in relation to petty trade rapidly followed, for speculation and profiteering, taking advantage of the people's want, were an especial danger at that time. The millions of small producers and traders in town and country would not submit to State accounting and control of distribution, and, what is more, they were a breeding ground for capitalism.

From these economic changes arose special problems which had to be solved in the task of assisting the Jewish people to become integrated within the new Soviet structure. For centuries the Jews had been largely excluded from agriculture and the professions, and, in modern times, from large-scale industries (most of which were situated outside the Pale).

"Under Tsarism less than 2 per cent. of the Jews were peasants, less than 4 per cent. were industrial workers. Roughly 20 per cent. were handicraftsmen, the vast majority in straitened circumstances. Nearly 40 per cent. were petty traders eking out a miserable existence. A small percentage were wealthy. The rest lived by unstable, unproductive means concerned often with Jewish ritual, observances and customs (rabbis, marriage brokers, masters of ceremonies at marriages, and so on). Many of these vocations had no counterpart, of course, outside the ghetto" (*Jews in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 54).

The fate of profit-making trading bore very heavily upon the Jews, of whom such a large proportion were engaged in petty trade. The special Government Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, headed by Diamondstein, which was set up after the Revolution, immediately set itself the task of drawing Jews into industry, agriculture and all other spheres

of the national economy. The establishment of Jewish craft co-operatives was encouraged.

This economic rehabilitation of the Jews had to be undertaken in extremely difficult circumstances. The country had been reduced to a state of ruin by the four years of imperialist war and three years of interventionist war.

"The gross output of agriculture in 1920 was only about one half of the pre-war output—that of the poverty-stricken Russian countryside of Tsarist days. To make matters worse, in 1920 there was a harvest failure in many of the provinces. . . . Industry was in a state of complete dislocation. The output of large-scale industry in 1920 was a little over one-seventh of the pre-war. Most of the factories were at a standstill; mines and collieries were wrecked and flooded. Gravest of all was the condition of the iron and steel industry. The total output of pig iron was only 116,300 tons, or about 3 per cent. of the pre-war output. There was a shortage of fuel. Transport was disrupted. Stocks of metal and textiles in the country were nearly exhausted. There was an acute shortage of such prime necessities as bread, fats, meat, footwear, clothing, matches, salt, kerosene and soap" (*Short History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, p. 243).

Industry was thus in no state to absorb large numbers of Jews with no previous industrial experience. Numbers were, indeed, absorbed into a whole variety of smaller industries; many of the handicraftsmen and even former traders were drawn into the craft co-operatives, for which training was provided in Government schools. But 40 per cent. of the pre-war Jewish population consisted of petty traders. Apart, therefore, from the spheres of work already mentioned, and the administration and professions, which took a small number, the main stress was placed upon the establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements.

"Lenin was greatly interested in the problem of Jewish land settlement, seeing in this a quick and radical way out of the severe economic conditions of the Jewish masses. . . . He raised the question in the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and it was decided that the appropriate Government organs

should give every assistance to help in the transition of Jews to agriculture. Concurrently with this decision, the People's Commissariat for Agriculture began immediately to allocate large stretches of land for Jewish land settlement" (*Jews in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 20).

It is noteworthy that this was in 1919, when the Soviet Republic was fighting for its very life against foreign intervention.

The enormous difficulties in the years following the Civil War and intervention made progress in land settlement difficult, but it was nevertheless achieved.

"In 1923, in eastern Ukraine, 2,786 Jewish families were growing, besides cereals, such commercial plants as beet, flax, hops, tobacco. . . . In the province of Gomel alone, 160 agricultural *artels* were established, but over half of them went under for want of equipment and seed and grain. It has been estimated that in 1923 the Jewish agricultural population of the Union was nearly 76,000 as against some 53,000 in 1913, in the same territory" (*The Jews and Other Nationalities under the Soviets*, by A. Yarmolinsky, p. 85; written in 1927).

In 1921 the New Economic Policy brought a strategic pause in the advance towards socialisation of industry and agriculture.

"'In our economic offensive,' Lenin said plainly, 'we did not provide ourselves with an adequate base, and so it was necessary to make a temporary retreat to a secure rear'" (*Short History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*, p. 258).

This enabled many of the Jewish traders temporarily to resume business, and their plight was to some extent mitigated.

After four years of strenuous work along the lines of the New Economic Policy, economic restoration of the shattered forces of production approached completion.

"In the fiscal year 1924-5, agricultural output had already approached the pre-war level, amounting to 87 per cent. of pre-war output. In 1925 the large-scale industries of the U.S.S.R.

were already producing about three-quarters of the pre-war industrial output. In the fiscal year 1924-5 the Soviet Union was able to invest 385,000,000 rubles in capital construction work. The plan for the electrification of the country was proceeding successfully. . . . Wages had risen, and so had the productivity of labour. The standard of living of the peasants had greatly improved. In 1924-5 the Workers' and Peasants' Government was able to assign nearly 250,000,000 rubles for the purpose of assisting the small peasants" (*Short History of C.P.S.U.(B.)*, pp. 271-2).

In these circumstances, Jewish land settlement acquired a real impetus. A special decree was issued by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the White Russian Soviet Republic giving certain privileges to the Jews in relation to the distribution of free land. The Soviet Government made it clear that its action was intended to correct an historic injustice committed against the Jewish masses in forbidding them by law to work on the land.

In August, 1924, 17,198 Jewish families cultivated 156,115 dessiatines (1 dessiatine=2.7 acres): three years later 33,357 families (165,000 persons) occupied holdings amounting to 452,052 dessiatines.<sup>1</sup>

With the mass settlement of the Jews on the land there arose Jewish National Regions in the Ukraine (Kalinindorf, Neu Zlatopolier and Stalindorf) and in the Crimea (Freidorf, and Larindorf), with Yiddish as the official language. Large numbers of Jewish agricultural settlements grew in these regions, as well as in White Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia. In the summer of 1927, over 21,000 families occupied more than 265,000 dessiatines in the Ukraine: over 3,300 families worked an area of more than 106,000 dessiatines in the Crimea.

"It is at present possible to travel from Theodosia to Eupatoria, a distance of 200 versts (167 miles) without leaving, except for insignificant stretches, the territory of Jewish villages" (A. Yarmolinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 97).

<sup>1</sup> *Der Yiddisher Poyer* [The Jewish Peasant], Kharkov, No. 33, 1927.

The Jews adapted themselves with remarkable facility to agricultural life, from which as a people they had been divorced for some 2,000 years. With the more recent development of Biro-Bidjan, which we shall shortly describe in detail, there are now about 400,000 Jews settled on the land in the Soviet Union.

Of this adaptation and of the relations of Jewish and non-Jewish land workers, Lion Feuchtwanger wrote in 1937, after a stay in the Soviet Union:

"I was interested to hear what non-Jewish Soviet peasants had to say about these collective farms; I assumed that anti-Semitism must manifest itself here if anywhere. And it transpired that originally the non-Jewish peasants had indeed been imbued with superstitious notions as to the nature of the Jews, and that they considered them to be totally unsuited for farming, above all things. Now they had only a good-humoured laugh for their earlier prejudices. I was told of big friendly contests between non-Jewish and Jewish settlements in the Ukraine, in the Crimea and in the region of the Don. Don Cossacks told me that it was not the fact that the Jews had beaten them in an agricultural competition which had overcome their former mistrust, but that the Jews had proved themselves to be the better riders" (*Moscow, 1937*, pp. 101-2).

The rapid development of large-scale industry as a result of the first Five-year Plan absorbed large numbers of Jews, while many found jobs within the Government administration. Side by side with the settlement of Jews on land, a process of economic rehabilitation and regeneration of the Jews as equal citizens was taking place.

In the cultural sphere there were big developments. Yiddish was recognised as the official language of the Jews in the U.S.S.R., and in the schools and administrations of the Jewish National Regions it became the official language. Faculties of Yiddish Culture were created in the universities of the Ukraine and White Russia, while three big national newspapers<sup>1</sup> and many smaller regional ones were published

<sup>1</sup> *Emmess* (Moscow), *Oktober* (Minsk) and *Stern* (Kiev).

in Yiddish. The numerous Yiddish theatres include the famous Yiddish State Theatre in Moscow; and within the Jewish National Regions, as throughout the whole of the Union, many Jewish libraries, workers' clubs, reading-rooms and other cultural institutions have arisen. Within a short period a new Yiddish literature began to arise out of the new free productive life, embodying the best of past Jewish literature and developing new forms in poetry and prose, so that to-day modern Soviet Yiddish writers such as Izik Pfeffer, Perez Markish and David Bergelson, to mention only a few, are carrying on the great literary tradition of Mendele Mocher Sphorim, Shalom Aleichem and Yitschak Leib Perez, the great Yiddish classical writers. Moreover, past and present Jewish writers are read, not only by Jews but by millions of non-Jews in the scores of languages of the various peoples, amongst whom the most popular is Shalom Aleichem, whose work so closely reflected the every-day Jewish life and struggles of his time.

Such is the culture which has grown out of the life which the Jews have been assisted to develop in the Socialist Soviet Union. We shall return to this subject.

### (3) The Question of Jewish Territory

Stalin, in 1913, defined a nation as "a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture."<sup>1</sup> The Jews of the U.S.S.R. developed a fuller life, enjoying in common with the many other peoples of the Soviet Union economic, political and cultural freedom. Nevertheless, without a territory they were not equally a Soviet nation with the Georgians, Ukrainians and the rest, nor could they develop their specific cultural characteristics to the full.

It is true that there did (and do) exist compact settlements of Jews with the maximum of Jewish autonomy, forming the Jewish National Regions. Thus in 1927 there were in White

<sup>1</sup> *Marxism and The National and Colonial Question*, p. 8.

Russia eighteen Jewish local Soviets, four of them rural. In the same year there were in the Ukraine 115 Jewish Soviets, rural and semi-urban, each of which represented over 500 people, and one Jewish regional Soviet, representing a population of 18,000, of which 16,000 were Jewish farmers. But these Jewish settlements were in the midst of thickly populated autonomous republics, with powerfully developed national cultures which might impede the fullest development of Jewish culture.

Nor was this development likely to emerge from life in the big industrial cities where large numbers of Jews lived. True, their children could receive a Jewish Socialist cultural background in schools directed to this purpose, often, too, in schools which did not specially cater for it. Thus Moscow's 40,000 Jewish workers have their newspaper and general literature in Yiddish, their clubs and reading-rooms, and the Jewish State Theatre, where they can enjoy the works of Shalom Aleichem as well as translations of Pushkin, Lermontov, Goethe and Shakespeare, performed by first-rate artists. But the Moscow population is made up of every Soviet nationality. In the cosmopolitan life and atmosphere, with an ever-growing standard of life, the specific national characteristics of Jews, Tartars, Uzbeks and so on tend to vanish.

As Kalinin, President of the U.S.S.R., remarked:

"Moscow, for example, cannot preserve any specific national characteristics. It represents a city collective of all nationalities within the U.S.S.R. . . . How much does the average Jewish worker who has worked in Moscow for ten years preserve of his Jewish nationality? Very little. Life in Moscow is multi-national in character, and specific national characteristics tend to become slowly obliterated" (*Jews in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 32).

A national territory was, therefore, necessary to enable the Jews to expand to the fullest their cultural contribution to the multi-national cultural development of the U.S.S.R.

The years of reconstruction which followed the defeat of the intervention had brought into existence new types of

Jews who had formerly existed only in the dreams and wistful aspirations of the Jews of the ghetto. There came into existence the Jewish peasant farmer, tilling his land with the most modern equipment, settled on the soil like any non-Jewish land worker, and rejoicing in the fullness of its harvest. In basic industries the Jewish worker hammered his metal and built his machines with skill, inventiveness and pride of craft. New virile Jewish writers mirrored the revolution in Jewish life. Slowly but surely, Soviet society was achieving what capitalist society in its heyday had failed to achieve, the integration of the Jews as a whole into the society around them.

Without this reconstruction of Jewish life, it would have been impossible to embark on the development of a Jewish territory. Without the Jewish farmer, builder and factory worker, the soil would remain unploughed and the factories would never rise above the ground, let alone house machines and turn out manufactured products. *With the completion of the phase of rehabilitation and reconstruction, a new phase was entered, the setting up of a Jewish State unit.*

As there were no large reserves of free land in European Russia, the Jews were allotted a sparsely populated territory in the Far East, with potentialities for large-scale development. The Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Union, on March 28th, 1923, set aside "for adjoining Jewish settlements" all the free land in the Biro-Bidjan region, and the decree provided that "should the colonisation of the region proceed successfully, the possibility of developing it into a Jewish National administrative unit ought to be kept in view." This meant, in effect, the setting up of a Jewish Soviet Republic when a sufficient population and development of the territory should be reached.

Not all the Jews in the U.S.S.R. were to be concentrated within this one territory. This was not the aim of the Soviet Government. As Kalinin pointed out:

"Those Jews to whom Jewish national culture is so dear and who desire to develop the Jewish State unit as the base from

which this Jewish culture, Socialist in content, will arise, must help in the construction of Biro-Bidjan (*Jews in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 33).

The cultural characteristics which the Jews in their state unit would develop would be very different, though none the less Jewish, from those of the Jews in capitalist society.

"... The Biro-Bidjan Jews will not be a nationality with the characteristics of the town Jews of Poland, Lithuania, etc. The Jews will become Socialist colonisers on a free, rich territory, colonisers with strong fists and sharp teeth, who will become a strong national group within the Soviet family of nations. This, of course, is a matter of time" (*ibid.*, p. 34).

For the development of this virgin land, a large farming population would be needed. Kalinin pointed this out in saying that to accomplish this big task—

"... an important section of the Jewish people must become transformed into a compact, firmly rooted Jewish farming community..."

Those Jewish workers in the U.S.S.R. with national aspirations which they wished to fulfil along Socialist lines, were prepared to face every hardship to see that the Soviet Jews developed their territory and achieved Socialist nationhood.

The inhabitants of the Jewish territory were in no sense to be isolated and segregated from the rest of the Soviet peoples. In the Soviet Socialist Union the closest co-operation of all peoples has been rendered possible and is necessary for the further building of Socialism. The Jewish settlers could be sure of maximum assistance in developing their territory and in linking it up with the more advanced regions of the U.S.S.R. They would not only be achieving national aims; they would be playing an important part in Socialist construction, and they would be helping to develop the backward small population already inhabiting Biro-Bidjan. Thus in 1928 began a new phase in the reconstruction of the life of Soviet Jewry, the building up of a Jewish State unit.

#### (4) Biro-Bidjan: A Jewish State Unit

Biro-Bidjan is a large territory, slightly more than half the size of Britain. It is situated in the Far Eastern Territory of Siberia, stretching from the Amur River northwards and traversed through its centre by the Trans-Siberian Railway. Its eastern boundary is within a few miles of Khabarovsk, the capital city of the Far Eastern Territory, which is about eighteen hours' journey from Vladivostok. Biro-Bidjan is also the name of the capital town in the centre of the Biro-Bidjan region (previously it was called Tikhon Kaja). It has its own station on the Trans-Siberian Railway; all express trains stop here on their way between Vladivostok and Moscow. Before it was allotted for Jewish settlement, it was sparsely populated by some 30,000 people of varying nationalities, backward in character. With the advent of Jewish settlers, the population has more than quadrupled itself.

Forests cover more than half of Biro-Bidjan. There are large areas of good meadow and prairie land, while there are still large stretches which require amelioration. The region is well watered, and has considerable mineral resources: lime, building-stone, granite, marble,<sup>1</sup> basalt and quartzite, besides rich deposits of graphite and magnesite, and high-grade iron ore estimated at 3,400,000 tons. Large coal deposits have been discovered. The soil is highly fertile, yielding abundant harvests of wheat, oats, rice, soya beans and other cereals; some 2,000,000 acres are now under cultivation. From these facts it is clear that tremendous scope exists for agricultural and industrial development and thus for mass settlement.

In 1918-22 Biro-Bidjan had been the scene of epic struggles between the men of the Red Army and Japanese interventionist troops, when the hastily gathered, ragged and ill-equipped Red Army detachment defeated and expelled the well-equipped Japanese regiments.

<sup>1</sup> Such as the choice green and rose coloured marble which adorns the walls of the Moscow Metro.



Prior to 1928, the territory contained a few small villages and a railway station, hidden among the forests. They were lonely, isolated settlements in a vast virgin country whose forest wilderness was rarely relieved by patches of cultivated land. In 1928 the first Jewish settlers arrived in horse-drawn carts, and for four days they looked around for land suitable for settlement. They felled trees and cut timber for their houses, and built a tiny village.

Lord Marley, who visited Biro-Bidjan in 1933, wrote in his pamphlet:

"The first settlers arrived in 1928 and some of these are still there, very proud of the work which they initiated. Many of the stories of the hardships of Biro-Bidjan are now no longer true, but arose from the lives lived by those early settlers when there were no roads, one small village, heavy undergrowth (*taiga*) to be cleared and only tents to live in. From this period comes the story of the flies which has so often been quoted. These flies were numerous and had an unpleasant bite, but it was found that as soon as the undergrowth was cleared the flies disappeared, and now they are no longer found either in the villages or in the cultivated areas" (*Biro-Bidjan*, by Lord Marley, 1933, p. 9).

Not all the settlers were able to stand the rigorous pioneering life. There still existed at that period numbers of Jews who, in the past, had not been used to productive work and had not yet been absorbed into the Soviet economy. This element, to a large extent, left, but those who remained created a solid basis for development. By 1933, with the help of the Soviet Government, which allocated large sums of money for the development of the area and supplied tractors and other equipment, the initial difficulties had been overcome, and to-day the tiny village of the early days is large and prosperous, the first large-scale collective farm village in the Far East. Waldheim, as it is named, is one of fifteen similar collectives.

In industry tremendous development has taken place. Side by side with the rise of collective farm villages, craft co-operatives have sprung up. Textile, clothing and furniture factories have been built and a flourishing timber trade

has been developed, while plans are well ahead for developing the rich iron and coal deposits to build up heavy industry. Biro-Bidjan will become a highly industrialised unit supplying the Far East with coal and steel. A big metallurgical plant is at present being built.

In recent years railway carriage and wagon building have become Biro-Bidjan's chief industries, and the town of Biro-Bidjan contains important works specialising in rail trucks. In respect of food, the Territory is not only self-supporting; it sends corn and maize to other parts of the Far East; and it has also become an important provisioning base for the Far Eastern Red armies.

Jewish schools, clubs and technical institutes have been set up. Yiddish newspapers and periodicals on all subjects appear, and outstanding among them is the *Forepost*, a bi-monthly literary and political journal, to which the best Jewish writers in the U.S.S.R. contribute.

By 1934, very few settlers were returning. Lord Marley observed that he found those to whom he spoke "contented and enthusiastic about the conditions in which they lived" and that they "would give blood and muscle to defend the Soviet Union" (*ibid.*, p. 16). That was in 1933, and since then gigantic strides have been taken.

On August 27th, 1940, the London *Jewish Times* wrote:

"The Soviet authorities have issued an appeal for settlers for the Jewish Autonomous Territory of Biro-Bidjan. . . . The Moscow wireless spoke in glowing terms of the Jewish collective farmers in Biro-Bidjan. . . . The history of this region is a wonderful tale of transformed men, emigrants from little towns and villages. They cleared the forests and cultivated the land. Their agricultural achievements are outstanding. . . . Their work is excellently paid. . . . The region has also many industrial undertakings which are rapidly growing in number. There are mills, tanneries, and so on. Coal-mines and goldfields are exploited. The region is exceedingly rich and its exploitation has only begun."

Of the latest developments, Israel Goldmacher and Leah

Vishnianskaya, the deputies representing Biro-Bidjan, reported to the meeting of the Supreme Soviet:

"House-building in the towns and collective farms has greatly increased, providing accommodation for thousands of newcomers. The harvest has been an exceptionally good one this year, and marked progress has been achieved in the consolidation of the collective farms. Courses have been established for the training of tractor drivers, breeders and other qualified workers.

"Particular attention is to be devoted during the coming year to the settlement in Biro-Bidjan of industrial workers and members of artisan co-operatives.

"The population of the Autonomous Region is steadily rising and there is a continuous stream of immigrants, particularly of young people" (*Jewish Chronicle*, London, October 25th, 1949).

The special cultural qualities which have already emerged from life in Biro-Bidjan were noticed by the American Zionist, Ben Zion Goldberg, who visited the Jewish centres in the U.S.S.R. in 1934. In a series of articles published in the *Jewish Times* in November, 1934, he paid great tribute to the Soviet's work. He was greatly impressed by the Jewish culture among the Jewish children in the Jewish National Regions, and had to admit that these children possessed far more Jewish culture than did those outside the Soviet Union. He went on to make an important observation. He said that while the atmosphere in the National Regions was undoubtedly Jewish, it differed from that in Biro-Bidjan. In the Jewish Autonomous Territory the Jewishness of the atmosphere was something which pervaded everything and was evident everywhere. This, from a once bitter opponent of the U.S.S.R. and of its Jewish reconstruction schemes, is a striking testimony to the correctness of the national policy of the Union and its application to the Jews.

Between the Jewish settlers and the small population of Tartars, Koreans and Mongolians, peaceful and happy relations exist. The settlement involved no displacement of the backward inhabitants, who gratefully acknowledge the tremendous economic and cultural help they have received

through it. Their children go to the Jewish schools, and speak Yiddish as fluently as their mother-tongue. Their recognition of the Jewish settlers as friends who are anxious to help them advance contrasts in a striking fashion with the attitude of the Arab peasants under British rule in Palestine, who regard the Jewish immigrants as enemies and usurpers.

The Jewish population of Biro-Bidjan, about 30,000, is certainly well below the number anticipated after a decade of upbuilding. But the free life which the Jews enjoy in every part of the Soviet Union makes the overwhelming majority quite content to stay where they are, rather than move to the present less advanced conditions of the Territory in the Far East. Nothing compels them to migrate to Biro-Bidjan. In Kalinin's words, it is "the Jews to whom national culture is so dear and who desire to develop a Jewish State unit" who up till now have been the pioneers. That those Jews are to-day a small minority is no evidence that Biro-Bidjan is a failure, or that there is no need for a Jewish State unit. Kalinin made the significant observation that every Soviet Jew must be imbued with the same proud national consciousness that, for example, the Ukrainian or Tartar has both inside and outside his own national republic. When the Jews become imbued with the consciousness that they, too, have their national State unit, whose social fabric is as Jewish as that of the people of the Ukraine is Ukrainian, when the Jews throughout the U.S.S.R. feel that they, too, have achieved fully fledged Soviet nationhood within the great family of Socialist nations—then Jewish work in the U.S.S.R. "will bring appreciably greater results, perhaps better than we expected." Jewish national feeling and aspiration, developed along Soviet lines, if it is to blossom to its fullest, *must of necessity* have a Jewish autonomous State.

Moreover, Biro-Bidjan's effect on Jews outside the U.S.S.R. must be fully appreciated. On May 7th, 1934, Biro-Bidjan was declared a Jewish Autonomous Territory with its representatives on the Supreme Soviet. Thus, for the first time since Jewish nationhood was finally destroyed

<sup>1</sup> *Jews in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 35.

nearly 2,000 years ago, a Jewish State, with its own autonomy and administration, came into existence. Many Jews, hitherto antagonistic to the Soviets, appreciated the historical significance of this decree. Through the Jewish Autonomous Territory, they were drawn closer towards the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the present small number of Jews does not detract from the great achievements of the Jewish Autonomous Territory or from the necessity for such a territory. Jewish nationhood which a decade ago was a perspective is gradually approaching a reality. Biro-Bidjan has a great future. When 100,000 Jews have settled there, it will become a fully fledged Jewish Soviet Autonomous Republic. Here the Jews of the U.S.S.R. (together with Jews from other parts of Eastern Europe after Hitlerism has been destroyed) will expand to the fullest their national cultural contribution.

#### (5) From the Border States of the U.S.S.R.

Between September, 1939, and July, 1940, the incorporation within the U.S.S.R. of Western Ukraine, Western Byelo-Russia ("Western White Russia"), Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina and the Baltic States—Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia—brought with it a Jewish population of about two and a quarter millions.

In Western Ukraine and Byelo-Russia, territories previously under Polish rule, the condition of the Jews was similar to that in Tsarist Russia. Polish Jewry was steeped in poverty and suffering. While the Polish ruling class oppressed all its national minorities, the Jews suffered most, as was the case under Tsarism. Their economic structure was distorted, with a large unproductive middle class. With the strength and experience of twenty years of Jewish reconstruction, the process of regeneration for these Jews, newly come to the Soviet Union, would have been far easier than was that of the past.

Till the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, the change was

<sup>1</sup> From 1919 onwards, various Jewish philanthropic organisations in the U.S.A., notably the "Ort" and the "Agro Joint", have assisted the Soviet Government's Jewish reconstruction work.

well under way in Western Ukraine and Byelo-Russia. Large numbers were drawn into industry and settled on the land. The "yellow benches" for Jewish university students of those lands had been replaced by chairs in the Yiddish language and its literature. Thousands of Jewish students had been admitted and new Jewish schools of all descriptions had been opened.

In Bessarabia, too, according to the *Jewish Chronicle* (November 1st, 1940):

"Reorganisation of Jewish life on a large scale is being carried out in Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia. . . . Yiddish elementary and secondary schools have been opened in Cernovitz, Kishinev and many other towns, and Jewish theatres and libraries closed down four years ago by the Rumanian authorities have been reopened.

"Efforts are also being made to provide work for Jews ousted from their professions as a result of Rumanian anti-Semitic legislation. Steps have been taken for the retraining of Jewish small traders in Bessarabia and for the reorganisation of Jewish farm life.

"A number of Jewish farmers from Bessarabia have registered for admission to the Jewish Autonomous Region of Biro-Bidjan."

In the Baltic States anti-Semitism had not been so crude and violent as in Poland and Rumania, but it existed in a veiled form in wide discrimination against the Jews, who were squeezed out of trade and handicraft and the professions. Moreover, the governments were pro-Nazi, tolerating and even encouraging pro-Nazi Fascist organisations.

"What is happening in the Baltic States which have now joined the Soviet Union? Very little news reaches the outside world. Here are extracts from a letter received by a Lithuanian in London.

"Although the former government of Lithuania had not declared an anti-Jewish policy, a section of the population was under the influence of the western neighbour, Germany, and practised anti-Semitism. Now all this is a thing of the past. The

new régime does not differentiate between races' " (*Reynolds*, London, December 29th, 1940).

The Jews of all these countries, except some of the wealthy and some other elements, such as Zionist leaders, welcomed the change, for the freedom of Jewish life within the U.S.S.R. is well known to the Jews throughout the world. In the countries bordering the Soviet Union, where life had been so tragic for the Jews, many of them had long yearned and hoped for such an outcome.

"When the Red Army first came into Vilna, September 19th, 1939, the common people met it with cheers. After six weeks it withdrew and Vilna was given to Lithuania. Promptly the Smetona Government staged one of the worst pogroms in Vilna's history, attacking under the name of 'Jews' all persons who had shown sympathy with the Red Army. Some 20,000 of Vilna's workers, especially the Jews, didn't wait for this pogrom. They went with the Red Army into the U.S.S.R.

"I stood and watched them go," the Principal of the Jewish school told me. "They couldn't endure it not to be in a Soviet land" " (*Lithuania's New Way*, by Anna Louise Strong, p. 33).

The Soviet Government was particularly anxious that Jews from the Baltic provinces should settle in Biro-Bidjan. It promised every facility for those who wished to do so, and large numbers responded, since they realised that unparalleled opportunities existed for them.

Thus the incorporation of the new territories within the U.S.S.R. opened up new perspectives for millions of Jews.

#### (6) The Jewish Question solved

In December, 1936, the Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. adopted a New Constitution, made possible and necessary by the fact that since the 1924 Constitution was introduced the Socialist system had triumphed in all spheres of economic life. In the U.S.S.R. of 1936:

"The exploitation of man by man had been abolished for ever.

Public Socialist ownership of the means of production had been firmly established as the unshakable foundation of the new, Socialist system in all branches of economic life. In the new Socialist society, crises, poverty, unemployment and destitution had disappeared for ever. The conditions had been created for a prosperous and cultured life for all members of Soviet society.

"The old class dividing lines between the working people of the U.S.S.R. were being obliterated, the old class exclusiveness was disappearing. The economic and political contradictions between the workers, the peasants and the intellectuals were declining and becoming obliterated. The foundation of the moral and political unity of society had been created" (*Short History of C.P.S.U.(B.)*, pp. 343-4).

The national policy which we have discussed is consistently pursued. Article 123 of the Constitution states:

"The equality of the rights of the citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, State, cultural, social and political life is an indefeasible law.

"Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of or, conversely, the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as the advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred or contempt, is punishable by law."

That this equality of rights is real and not merely juridical is demonstrated by the whole change in the character of Jewish life in the U.S.S.R. by the end of the Second Five-year Plan in 1937. The words of the Constitution are a record of facts.

The Jew of the Tsarist ghetto, so faithfully depicted in Shalom Aleichem's character, Menachem Mendel, with his precarious, unproductive life of speculation, grew into the Jewish industrial, agricultural or professional worker of the Soviet Union. Anti-Semitism is a crime, and though vestiges of it may linger among the older folk, it is almost dead for want of a soil and an exploiting ruling class to tend it. The Jewish Autonomous Territory, the Jewish National Regions and a home for the Jew wherever he may choose it in the

Union of Socialist Soviet Republics have replaced the Pale of settlement.

The rights of the citizens of the Soviet Union are irrespective, not only of nationality, but also of religion. Article 124 of the Constitution states:

"In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the Church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the State, and the school from the Church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognised for all citizens."

The law is explicit and it is operated. The Dean of Canterbury wrote:

"A Stakhanovite girl worker on a State farm in Siberia was a practising believer. Her anti-religious neighbours felt that, as such, she should not hold important office. Hers was made a test case. It was referred to Stalin himself. And Stalin's decision was entirely in favour of the girl" (*The Socialist Sixth of the World*, p. 360).

On the same subject, Lord Marley observed:

"After travelling much in the Soviet Union, I am convinced that it [the law concerning religion—I. R.] is properly enforced; any twenty persons may establish a religion and have their place of worship. . . . I did not see any synagogue while I was in Biro-Bidjan, though there may be such. But I am convinced that if there was a desire for one no difficulty whatever would be placed in the way. The people themselves control their own lives and they can please themselves in this matter" (*Biro-Bidjan*, p. 19).

Freedom of religious worship is guaranteed, and religion is a matter of free choice for the individual.

It is true, of course, that religion plays a very small part in the life of the Soviet people; and this is true also of the Jews. Most of them, especially the youth, have cast off a great deal of the religious element which was so large a

constituent in former Jewish culture. The praying shawl, the phylacteries and the devotions have largely lost their place in life, along with the dietary laws, the Sabbath and the Rabbinical schools. But religion is not the criterion of Jewishness.

The Soviet Jews are creating a new national culture. It is different, very different from that of the Jews of Tsarist Russia or of the present-day capitalist world, but it is none the less Jewish, for it is the expression of the life of the Soviet Jews. The people in the U.S.S.R. who have conserved the best of past Jewish culture and carried it forward in the development of new and wider forms—these are Jews. Their cultural effort, their work in building the Jewish Autonomous Territory, are clear indications of their desire to live and function as Jews. Moreover, the citizens of the Union have the right to adopt a nationality, and while a number prefer to adopt the Russian culture and describe their nationality as Russian, several millions describe their nationality as Jewish.

In the past, the rising capitalist order which broke down the ghetto walls and gave a degree of emancipation to the Jews tended to undermine the religious element in Jewish as in other cultures. The new science which arose spread a rational outlook. Disregard of religious observances has long been a common feature among wide sections of Jews in the capitalist countries. These are, nevertheless, Jews by virtue of Jewish national characteristics and consciousness, which do not depend on religion.

The rejection of religion by the large majority of the Soviet people is a part of the change in man's outlook under Socialism. Faith in the supernatural depends mainly on the frustration of human efforts and the misery produced by class society; in Socialist society this is replaced by confidence in man's own power increasingly to harness the forces of Nature and distribute its plenty for the common good, a confidence securely rooted in the victories already won.

Jewish culture has evolved to a higher stage in the U.S.S.R.; Soviet Jewish culture now expresses the life of

Socialist Jews. Those who question its Jewishness are people who view Jewish national life and culture as something absolute and unchanging. They forget that Jewish culture in the past has undergone changes corresponding to different phases of historical development which had their reaction on the Jewish community. The Jewish culture in the U.S.S.R. is a higher type of Jewishness, an integral part of the new society.

The Yiddish literature in which Jewish life found the truest expression has been carried over into the new culture. Soviet publications of the Yiddish classics run to many millions of copies. Just as the whole country celebrated the anniversary of Pushkin, the Russian poet, of Rust'hvelli, the Georgian poet, of Shevchenko, the Ukrainian poet, so it has marked the anniversary of Shalom Aleichem, the great Yiddish writer.

Nor is it only Yiddish writers who are read and popularised. In April, 1940, it was decided to celebrate on a national scale the 800th anniversary of the death of Yahuda Halevi, the great Hebrew scholar and philosopher of the mediæval Spanish period, and to publish special editions of his work in Hebrew, Yiddish and other languages of the Soviet peoples. A commission of eminent scholars, including Terach Greenberg, I. Yuzadiki, and M. Wiener, was set up to edit for publication hitherto unpublished manuscripts of Halevi, which are in the great Lenin Library in Moscow. The commission was also to concern itself with the works of other mediæval Hebrew poets and philosophers of the Spanish period, such as Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moshe ibn Ezra and others. The purpose is to popularise among Jews and non-Jews the great Jewish literary creations of the period in Moslem Spain when Arab and Jew lived peaceably together and jointly enriched the cultural heritage of mankind.

Jewish culture has changed; Jewish life has changed.

"In the twenty-one years of Soviet power the Jews have been drawn into every phase of economic life and activity. Jews are

now employed in heavy industry and engage in agriculture, pursuits which were formerly closed to them. Jewish scientists are members of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. . . . Jewish fliers took part in the historic expedition to the North Pole. Thousands of Jews operate machines in factories and mills. In the city of Gorki (formerly Nizhni-Novgorod, where Jews were forbidden to live in Tsarist days) there are about 8,000 Jewish workers employed in the automobile works alone. Among the prominent Stakhanovite workers we find many Jews, such as Blidman, Khenkin, Yussin and others, whose names are known all over the country. Jewish Red Army men who took part in the battles at Lake Hassan were among those decorated by the Soviet Government for their heroism and devotion. Jewish names are among those of the Heroes of the Soviet Union, the Deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. and the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics" (*The Jewish Autonomous Region*, by David Bergelsohn, Moscow, 1939, pp. 9-10).

Socialism has solved the Jewish problem in the U.S.S.R. It will solve that problem in other lands when the people come to power. The form of the solution will vary with the conditions in the different countries and with the position of the Jews within their economies. In essence, however, the solution will be the same. With the end of the exploitation of man by man, with common ownership of all the means of production by the working people irrespective of nationality, there comes an end to national oppression.

#### (7) The Nazi Invasion

The Nazi attack on the Soviet Union brought nearly 3,000,000 Jews within the war zone of the vast 1,800-mile Eastern Front. As the Nazi hordes advanced into the U.S.S.R., they carried out horrible atrocities against the civilian population; the Jews were the worst sufferers. Numbers of them left the towns with the retreating Red Armies, and of these (particularly from the Baltic provinces) a number went to Biro-Bidjan. Many Jews from the evacuated towns joined the guerrilla fighters. Those who remained in the war areas underwent terrible persecution from the Nazis.

In the intervention twenty-three years ago, the White armies of Petlura and Denikin massacred thousands of Jews; they tried to play on the anti-Jewish sentiments which Tsarism had fostered for centuries, thus hoping to win over the population to their side. To-day the Nazis think that incitement against the Jews might still win them some sympathetic response from the population. So their broadcasts and propaganda in the Soviet territories rail against the "Jewish Bolshevik rulers" who have "enslaved" the Russian people.

But over twenty years of Soviet development stand between Petlura and the Hitlerite pogromists:

"The Nazis attempted to incite the people in the Ukraine and White Russia against the Jews by posters calling upon Christians to assist Germany in overthrowing the yoke of Jews who crucified Christ and of the Jewish Bolsheviks 'who desecrated the Churches' and in 'helping Hitler to rebuild in Russia all that the Jews had destroyed.' But the Ukrainians and White Russians . . . preferred to ignore the posters" (*Jewish Chronicle*, January 2nd, 1942).

The Nazis are resorting to systematic atrocities on a gigantic scale.

In Odessa 25,000 Jews were massacred in cold blood; in Kiev "after the Nazi occupation, 52,000 Jewish men, women and children were systematically put to death amidst scenes of undescribable horror" and "all indications go to show that the Kiev massacre was no isolated incident and that similar measures have been taken in other conquered towns" (*Jewish Standard*, November 28th, 1941).

Anti-Jewish legislation and mass anti-Jewish incitement are one of the regular supports of Hitler's "new order" as the rising struggle intensifies in the occupied lands of Europe. But the cold-blooded slaughter of tens of thousands of Jews in the U.S.S.R. far surpasses the anti-Jewish atrocities outside the U.S.S.R.

Soviet Jewry has responded magnificently to the Nazi attack on their fatherland.

"In response to Stalin's appeal to all Soviet citizens to defend their Fatherland by all the means in their power, Jewish leaders in Moscow have, in their turn, issued a manifesto to Soviet Jewry emphasising that Hitler is not only the enemy of progress and civilisation, but also the arch-enemy of the Jews. The manifesto urges Jews to take their places bravely in the front line, to work vigorously in the production of weapons for the Red Army, and to assist in the relief of war refugees.

"The Autonomous Jewish Region of Biro-Bidjan, in the Far East, has informed the Government of a decision that all local Jews between the ages of twenty and forty are to join the Red Army.

"Russian wireless stations and the Russian Press continue to picture the horrors of the persecutions of the Jews in the Third Reich and in the Nazi-controlled countries. This is the reply to the Nazi propaganda machine, which is trying to induce the Russians to rise against their 'Jewish Bolshevik rulers.' The Soviet broadcasters declare that in Russia all citizens are judged by their deeds, and that Russians will never associate themselves with Nazi racial theories or acknowledge the aspirations of the Germans to become a *Herrenvolk*.

"Arrangements have been made in many Moscow cinemas to show the well-known anti-Nazi film, *Professor Mamlock*, which illustrates the anti-Jewish savagery of the Nazi régime.

"The Russian Press has been noting with satisfaction that large numbers of Jews are volunteering for service in the Red Army. The percentage of Jewish student volunteers for active service is especially high. Many Jewish students and pupils of the secondary schools are volunteering for harvest work. Jewesses are offering their services as nurses and munition workers" (*Jewish Chronicle*, July 11th, 1941).

This was to be expected. These Jews have experienced freedom of a character never known before in Jewish history, and as the most advanced section of world Jewry they realise what the outcome of the titanic struggle fought out on their soil must mean for mankind in general and for the Jews in particular.

With what valour and heroic devotion the Soviet Jews, together with all the peoples in the U.S.S.R., are defending their country can be seen from these reports:

"Kishinev [the capital of Bessarabia] was found to be totally destroyed, every building, public and private having been systematically dynamited, reduced to a heap of ruins and then set on fire. Then *franc tireurs*, mostly Jewish, inflicted serious loss of life, firing on the Germans from behind the shelter of the heaps of rubble" (*The Times*, July 23rd, 1941).

"The fact that many Jews in the Russian war zone are taking part in the guerrilla warfare against Hitler's hordes and that the local Jewish population are actively assisting the guerrilla bands in their historic resistance to the invaders, has added fuel to the Nazi's anti-Jewish campaign in the occupied Russian territory. The Nazi radio fulminates against the Jews in the Baltic States, White Russia and the Ukraine as 'specialists in sabotage and guerrilla warfare' and the Nazi occupation authorities in Kovno, Vilna, Byelostok, Grodno and Baranovitch have arrested large numbers of prominent Jews as hostages in the hope of compelling Jewish members of the guerrilla bands to lay down their arms.

"But nothing of the kind has happened, although the Nazis are threatening to shoot the hostages. Despite all the threats, Russian Jewry seems determined to fight the Nazi invaders with all the means at its disposal" (*Jewish Chronicle*, August 8th, 1941).

Last August an international Jewish Congress was held in Moscow from which was issued a stirring appeal to the Jews of the world urging them to unite and play their part in the anti-Hitler struggle. This manifesto had a warm response from the Jews all over the world and from every section of Jewry.<sup>1</sup>

Many thousands of Jews evacuated from the occupied Soviet territories are now hopefully planning a new life in the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The manifesto, as well as the speeches made by famous Soviet and other Jewish writers, scientists, artists of international repute, can be read in *Jews Against Hitler*, published by the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, London, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> "The development of a new Jewish centre in the Western Asiatic Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, with a possible Jewish population of a million, is predicted in Tashkent, the capital of the Republic. This potentially wealthy, but still undeveloped area also contains the important towns of Bokhara and Samarkand.

"Tens of thousands of Jews from the Ukraine, White Russia, the Crimea and

The Soviet Union has shown the world how it can solve its national problem, including that of the Jews. And the Soviet Jews are showing the world how they are prepared to fight and die for a land and a social order where they are "equals among equals."

#### (8) Marx on the Jewish Question

Having discussed the position of the Jews in a Socialist State in the years 1917-42, let us now note what Marx, the founder of Scientific Socialism, wrote on the Jewish question in 1844. His essay, *On the Jewish Question*, appeared in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, of which he was a joint editor. At this period he was rapidly moving towards the Communist position. Lenin, in his *Bibliography of Marxism*,<sup>1</sup> says of the articles of Marx in 1842 in the *Rheinische Zeitung* (Cologne):

"Here we observe signs of Marx's transition from idealism to materialism and from revolutionary democracy to Communism. In the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* this transition was definitely consummated."

Whilst the Marx of the essay *On the Jewish Question* was not yet the Marx of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, his materialist conception of history was already manifesting itself. A century ago, Marx already foresaw that the final solution of the Jewish question could only take place in a higher order of society than the one which was unfolding before him, which he later analysed in *Capital*.

The essay was written in the period of transition from other parts of Soviet territory who were evacuated to Uzbekistan before the Nazi invasion, have started to map out plans for remaining permanently in this part of the world, in conformity with the order issued to the local authorities by the Soviet Government in Moscow instructing them to arrange for the permanent absorption of all refugees. . . .

"The number of Soviet and Polish Jews concentrated in Uzbekistan is estimated to be about one million. . . . Sparsely populated, Uzbekistan offers striking opportunities in agriculture and industry, and is able to absorb millions of new settlers" (*Jewish Chronicle*, March 27th, 1942)

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, Vol. XI.



feudalism to capitalism in Germany. Marx perceived the social, commercial function of the Jew in feudal society; he also saw the important link between the Jew and the rising bourgeoisie, struggling then for class power, and recognised that the new bourgeois society in Germany was based on a social function which the Jew had performed for centuries. He drew the conclusion that the social function of the Jews had kept them alive through the centuries, in so far as this function was of importance in the societies of the past, and that it was from this social function that the Jew derived certain of his ideological characteristics. "Jewry," wrote Marx, "has survived not in spite of, but because of history."

Marx at that time already saw the anarchic character and jungle law of the industrial capitalist order, then as yet nascent, and knew that economic and political freedom in it would be but a semblance. Contrasted, in his mind, was a higher form of society in which real "human emancipation" would take place, a social order which could only be achieved by the abolition of capitalist society.

"Human emancipation will only be achieved when man recognises and organises his own capacities as social forces and therefore no longer separates from himself the social force in the form of political force."

The Jew would not achieve the fullest emancipation in capitalist society, despite his link with it and his utility in it, because this social system did not give "human emancipation" to anyone. There could be no "human emancipation" in a system where "cheating," "huckstering" anarchy and the law of the jungle prevailed. The Jew would achieve real freedom only in the higher form of society which the young Marx envisaged:

"An organisation of society which had abolished the fundamental conditions of huckstering, and therefore the possibility of hucksters, would have made the Jews impossible."

In the higher society the typical Jew, unproductive, bound

up with trade, would be "impossible." The Jew would no longer be compelled to perform his old social function in order to keep himself alive as a Jew.

Marx did not expect the Jew to sit and await the coming of this "human emancipation":

"If the Jew recognises this, his practical character, as futile and works for its abolition, then he will be working away from his previous development towards the emancipation of mankind in general."

The Jew must realise that his old social function is valueless, said Marx, and will not bring him real emancipation. He must therefore labour for the abolition of capitalist society, to end the conditions which condemn him to perform that function.

Thus at a time when he was still approaching Communism Marx appreciated the position of the Jews in the developing capitalist society, and pointed to the ultimate solution of the Jewish question ("in its final significance") in the "human emancipation" of a social order higher than capitalism.

### Chapter III

## JEWISH NATIONALISM AND ZIONISM

(1) JEWISH NATIONALISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. (2) ZIONISM AND THE IMPERIALIST ALLIANCE. (3) ARAB AND JEW IN PALESTINE.

### (1) Jewish Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century

ZIONISM offers the construction of a Jewish National Home as the solution to the Jewish problem. It is said that outside Palestine the Jews will continue to be strangers in danger of persecution until they become a nation through the establishment of a sovereign Jewish State. Palestine is for Zionists the natural and only territory for the Jewish State, because of the historic connection with that land. Some Zionists profess to be Socialists, but regard the achievement of Socialism as possible only in the distant future and devote themselves now

to the building of the Jewish National Home which they see as a more or less immediate solution.

Political Zionism, not to be confused with the religious longing for Zion which has permeated the Jewish liturgy for centuries, is a modern phenomenon from the ghetto. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Jewish aspirations were for emancipation. The revolution had liberated the Jews in France, and the revolutionary wars which followed shattered the ghetto walls in country after country. The liberalism of the French Revolution, the nationalism of the new bourgeois order, and its new arts and sciences were reflected among the Jews in a cultural renaissance.

This renaissance, which came to be known as the *Haskalah* (enlightenment), arose in Poland, Lithuania, Germany and Russia. It aimed at the secularisation of Jewish education and culture, and the revaluation of ancient Jewish culture in the scientific and rationalist spirit of the time; it broke from the Messianic tradition of a Jewish return to Palestine. European literature and philosophy were brought into Jewish life. The young Jewish intellectuals mastered the German language and feasted on the works of Goethe, Kant, Fichte, Schelling and other bourgeois humanists, which were translated into Hebrew. *The Haskalah*, though it was an expression of nationalism, did not raise the question of a Jewish State; liberty, equality and fraternity were its inspiration, and Jews believed that the liberalism of the period would integrate them with society.

But the Napoleonic Wars ended in a period of reaction. Feudalism was given a new lease of life by the Holy Alliance and the bourgeois-democratic revolution was deferred for decades throughout the greater part of the European continent. Side by side with attacks on the newly won democratic liberties of the people went persecution of the Jews. The ghetto, the blood libel and the pogrom were revived. In the years of the repression of liberalism, the Jews fought in the movements for national independence and liberty for the emancipation they had already tasted.

“In the revolutionary movements the Jews played no unimportant role. Circumstances made them liberal; the black reaction in every country drove them into the ranks of those who opposed the existing régime. By training and temperament, too, most of the Jewish leaders opposed the suppression of constitutional and national liberties. A people with their history could as soon believe in the miracles of saints as in autocracy. They were therefore prominent in every movement which led to the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Sometimes they were associated with the middle-class struggle for democratic reform, sometimes with the working-class struggle for radical social reforms, or again with the nationalists in their attempts to win independence or autonomy. In any case, they met on common ground in their animosity to the bigotry and narrowness of reactionaries in every camp” (A. L. Sachar, *op. cit.*, p. 288).

With the rapid expansion of capitalism and the material prosperity of the mid-century, Jews found widening opportunities for the exercise of the trading and financial functions to which they had long been accustomed, but the main struggles for bourgeois democracy in Europe extended over at least three-quarters of the century and the achievement of equal rights for the Jews was a correspondingly extended process, uneven in character and sometimes even retrogressive. In Russia capitalism was extremely backward and the bourgeoisie weak; even in the twentieth century it was dependent on the Tsarist autocracy which it supported from fear of the mass of the people. Except in the early years of the reign of Alexander II, which saw certain limited reforms, the persecution of the Jews was unremitting.

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw the birth of modern political Zionism, which rapidly took form in an organised political movement with a concrete programme for the building of the Jewish State in Palestine. The conception of a separate Jewish nation was not new. Even in the days of the Holy Alliance, when so many Jews fought for emancipation under the blows of renewed persecution, a few had voiced dissent. Moses Hess, a German Jew, wrote in 1840: “We shall always remain strangers among the nations; these, it is true, will grant us rights from feelings of humanity

and justice; but they will never respect us so long as we place our great memories in the second rank. . . ." According to Sachar,<sup>1</sup> he went so far as to suggest that if Jewish nationalism was incompatible with Jewish emancipation in each country, the latter should be sacrificed. In 1873, Perez Smolenskin developed the thesis that the Jews are a nation and require Palestine for the normal development of their genius. He turned the cultural renaissance of *Haskalah* in the direction of political nationalism. "Those who found the doors of Russian life closed upon them fed hungrily upon the new nationalistic literature, which gave the disillusioned a hope and the discontented a programme. The *Haskalah*, in this sense, was a forerunner of Zionism."<sup>2</sup> Another Russian Jew, Dr. Leo Pinsker, in his book *Auto-Emancipation* (1882), advocated emancipation through the creation by the Jews of a national homeland.

Capitalism had reached its transitional phase to imperialism, and bourgeois democracy had made great strides forward when modern Zionism was born; the severe economic crises which marked the transitional phase, together with the rise of democracy, produced a sharp recrudescence of anti-Semitism. In Germany and France reactionaries inveighed against the Jews, and the Dreyfus Case (1895) was a significant portent of the new uses to which anti-Semitism was to be adapted. There was a wave of pogroms in Russia, including the notorious massacre in Kishinev, Bessarabia, in 1881.

By this time the independent mass working-class parties which formed the Second International had begun to declare the necessity for the abolition of the capitalist system and the setting up of Socialist society. In Europe and America, a Jewish proletariat had come into existence, and tens of thousands of Jewish workers were participating in the working-class struggle for democracy and Socialism. They saw the fight for equal Jewish rights as part of the economic and political struggle for social progress, whose successful outcome in Socialism would alone solve the Jewish problem.

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> Sachar, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

Against this conception, political Zionism opposed the view that the Jews could not integrate themselves with their social environment because of Gentile hostility, and proclaimed a separate Jewish solution through the Jewish State in Palestine. Ignoring the social basis of anti-Semitism, Zionism denied the community of interests between the Jews and all the other oppressed, especially the working class, in the social struggle. Since the solution was to be achieved in Palestine, Zionism offered no programme of struggle for Jewish rights as an integral part of the general social struggle within the various countries where Jews were living. In its tendency to divert Jewish workers from the class struggle and the fight for Socialism, Zionism was, and is, a diversionist movement. However, it failed for many years to attract any considerable following, even in Tsarist Russia, where persecution of the Jews was so intense.

The Jewish working men of Russia in the main supported the Jewish General Social Democratic Union, known as the Bund. Despite certain reactionary nationalistic tendencies, this organisation (formed 1897) was based on a programme of immediate class struggle and was opposed to Zionism. Jewish working people also supported the parties of the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. Wealthy Jews found their political place in the party of the Cadets, the bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic Party. All but a small section of Jewry rejected Zionism.

A "Socialist" version of Zionism soon arose in Russia (where, it will be remembered, millions of Jews still lived); it was sponsored by certain Jewish petty bourgeois intellectuals who could not find a home in the existing working-class parties. "Socialist" Zionism accepted the class struggle and saw the final solution for the Jews in Socialism but maintained that the Jews needed a territory upon which to struggle effectively for Socialism, being in an unfavourable position to wage that struggle in Russia and elsewhere because of their peculiar position in industry and their political disabilities. Industrial development had shattered the economic position of hundreds of thousands of Jewish

artisans in Russia, but, unlike their non-Jewish counterparts, who entered the ranks of the proletariat, they were barred from heavy industry and forced into the secondary industries (such as tailoring), to be employed in small Jewish-owned enterprises, where sweating and overcrowding were prevalent. In the democratic countries of the West, the position of the Jews in industry was similar.

Only on a Jewish territory, said these "Socialists," a territory to be developed by Jewish capitalists and workers, would there emerge a healthy Jewish proletariat which could fight for Socialism alongside the workers of other countries. The immediate aim was, therefore, a Jewish territory, in whose development capitalists and workers would co-operate, the former to provide the necessary capital investment and the latter the honest toil. This was, in effect, a policy of class collaboration watered down by the promise of working-class struggle in the future. As with "bourgeois" Zionism, for which these "Socialists" professed contempt, the Jewish National Home came first. They struggled for Zionism and paid lip service to Socialism.

Palestine was again the territory selected, and Ber Borochov, the founder of Labour Zionism, who claimed to be a Marxist, found it difficult to explain why. He produced a theory according to which, as social conditions became more acute and anti-Semitism increased, there would inevitably be a tremendous natural movement of Jews to Palestine (in fact there was a tremendous movement of Jews to America, Britain and other countries, but to Palestine only a trickle). The Labour Zionists, led by this self-styled "Marxist," thus took over the mystical and Utopian yearning for Palestine.

If Borochov and his friends found it difficult to struggle for Socialism at home, the mass of the Jewish workers did not. They participated in the revolutionary movement in Tsarist Russia, and later played their part in the October Revolution, which overthrew capitalism. In Great Britain and in America, Jewish immigrants contributed their share to the working-class movement generally, a fact which

directly contradicts Borochov's theory that their continued employment in the secondary industries was a disqualification for effective struggle. To this day, indeed, Zionism has failed to win the support of any appreciable section of the Jewish workers.

Though Zionism took it as axiomatic that the position of the Jews could not be "normalised" without a Jewish State because of the hostility of the non-Jewish majorities among which they lived, it ignored from the outset the fact that Palestine was an Arab land, part of the Arab territories around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, then under Turkish rule. The Zionists gave no consideration to the Arab aspirations for national independence, which had taken root as early as the forties of the nineteenth century. To these dreamers, the Arabs were almost non-existent; a primitive people who presented no problem and might, said Borochov, become assimilated in a Jewish Palestine. (A remarkable perspective for one who fought against Jewish assimilation; but perhaps Arabs were different!) Actually, the Arab National movement and its opposition to Zionist aims was to become a factor of great importance.

## (2) Zionism and the Imperialist Alliance

It was not until the 1914-18 War that the Jewish National Home became a political reality. Before then there had been only a relatively small Jewish immigration, mainly of Zionists, and some agricultural colonisation supported by non-Zionist Jewish philanthropists. The War of 1914-18 brought a promise by Britain to facilitate the setting up of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, and began the active alliance of Zionism and imperialism. The Zionist leaders had always understood very well that their aim could be realised only with the consent and support of the imperialist Powers who ruled Palestine or had interests there, and they were not thereby deterred. In the years that have elapsed since Britain made its promise, the Zionist alliance with imperialism has been conscious and consistent, and has enabled the imperialists, as we shall show, to use the Zionist

movement as their instrument against the movement for Arab independence.

Thus the process described by Lenin found its reflection in the Jewish community:

“Capitalism formerly a liberator of nations has now in its imperialist stage become the great oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, it has now become a reactionary force” (*Socialism and War*, Little Lenin Library, p. 11).

*Haskalah*, which in the early nineteenth century partook of the progressive character of the bourgeois national movements and stood for emancipation in the lands inhabited by Jews, was the forerunner of Zionism, just as Liberal capitalism was the forerunner of imperialism.

The desire on the part of the Jews to find a solution to their problems is a progressive desire, but Zionism transposes the problem to Palestine, acts as a diversion from the struggle for social progress and allies itself with imperialism.

The gravitation towards the imperialists has characterised Zionism from its birth. Theodore Herzl, who inspired and founded the movement, sought the favour of the blood-thirsty tyrant, Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey, of Joseph Chamberlain, British Colonial Secretary and apostle of empire (“the more the Empire expands the more the Chamberlains contract”), of Wilhelm II of Germany, another noted “democrat,” and even of Von Plehve, Tsarist Minister of the Interior and organiser of pogroms.

The Sultan was offered Jewish financial aid in return for support of the Palestine project, but was not interested. Chamberlain was sympathetic and suggested Uganda for Jewish colonisation, but to the Zionists Uganda was not the Holy Land. The Kaiser knew that the rich Jews were not interested in Zionism, and, anyway, had his own agency in Palestine in the German Christian Templars. They were the counterpart of the British, French and Russian religious missions, all “devoted” to the Holy Places and all serving as the cover behind which the Imperialists manœuvred for positions in the Middle East.

To Plehve it was represented that Zionism could draw Jews away from the revolutionary movement and would help Russia to rid itself of “surplus” Jews. He was impressed, and through him the Russian Government was asked to use its influence with the Sultan. Here too nothing was achieved, but Zionist activity in Russia enjoyed a measure of freedom, while the progressive movements suffered rigorous repression.

Alliance with imperialism did not disturb Herzl, whose outlook was thoroughly anti-democratic. Witness his famous book, *The Jewish State*, the bible of political Zionism.

“Nations are also not really fit for unlimited democracy at present and will become less and less fitted for it in the future” (*The Jewish State*, p. 69).

“It is impossible to formulate a wise internal or external policy in a popular assembly . . . hence I incline to an aristocratic republic . . . many of the institutions of Venice run through my mind” (*ibid.*, p. 70).

“I am a staunch supporter of monarchical institutions, because these allow of a continuous policy and represent the interests of a historically famous family, born and educated to rule, whose desires are bound up with the preservation of the state” (*ibid.*, p. 69).

Though Herzl did not succeed with Chamberlain in 1902 and the alliance was not to come about till later, the uses to which Jewish settlement in Palestine could be put for the advance of British aims in the Middle East had long been appreciated by British statesmen. As far back as 1838, a British Consulate had been established in Jerusalem, having as one of its main purposes “protection of the Jews generally.” Lord Shaftesbury, strongly opposed to the Jewish franchise in Great Britain on religious grounds, was greatly interested in a scheme for colonising Palestine with the “descendants of Abraham,” and many other Tory reactionaries also saw possibilities in it. A whole literature arose in the middle of the last century around the scheme of a Jewish restoration.<sup>1</sup> In 1842 Abraham Benisch, an

<sup>1</sup> See N. Sokolow, *History of Zionism*, London, 1919, Vol. I, Chap. 17.

Austrian Jew, submitted a memorandum to Canning (then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs) in which he argued "in favour of increasing British influence in the Near East by resting it on Jewish support."<sup>1</sup> He advocated "a Jewish colony in some well-situated part of Palestine" under a British guarantee. "England would find in this colony a new, sure and stable market for her goods."<sup>2</sup>

It was during the War of 1914-18 that the plan was put to use. A powerful section of the Zionist Movement was pro-German, seeking German support for its aims, while another section, led by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, had hopes of British support and wished to place the Zionist Movement at the disposal of the Allies. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Arthur (later Lord) Balfour calculated that support to Zionism would be useful during the War in gaining Jewish sympathy for the Allies, while after the War the Jewish National Home would provide an excuse for the British control of Palestine.

The outcome was the Balfour Declaration of November 2nd, 1917:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country."

Lest it should be thought that in the Balfour Declaration considerations of imperial strategy and humanitarian sympathy had found a happy combination, the Earl of Oxford and Asquith later made it clear that the statesmen had suffered no lapse into highmindedness.

"Curiously enough, the only other partisan of this proposal is Lloyd George, who, I need not say, does not give a damn for the Jews or their past or future" (*Memories and Reflections*, entry dated March 13th, 1915).

<sup>1</sup> *The British Consulate in Jerusalem*, Jewish Historical Society of England, Part I, 1838-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The British promise was

"a war measure adopted by the Powers of the Entente in their own interests . . . a bold, imaginative and statesmanlike effort to prevent the influence of Jewry being exerted on the side of the Central Powers" (*History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, by H. W. V. Temperley, Vol. VI., p. 171).

For the German government had also been busily preparing its "Balfour Declaration" to serve its interests in the struggle for the Middle East, the Suez Canal and the route to India.

When the promise to the Zionists was made, Britain was already committed to support of the Arab cause. In July, 1915, more than two years before the Balfour Declaration, the British Government had reached an agreement with the Arabs (the Husseini-McMahon Agreement) pledging themselves to establish a new independent Arab State in return for assistance against the Turks. The Arabs were led to understand that Palestine was to be included in this State. However, the existence of the incompatible pledges did not worry the British, who had no intention of fulfilling either of them and had, indeed, entered into a secret agreement with the French (the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, made public by the Soviet Government in 1917) which shared out the Arab territories among the two Powers.

The Balfour Declaration was later embodied in the preamble of the Mandate for Palestine granted by the League of Nations to Britain on July 24th, 1922. Thus were fulfilled the plans worked out at the end of the last century by Lord Kitchener and Sir Reginald Wingate, then Governor-General of the Sudan, for annexing Palestine from Turkey, as the eastern bulwark of the Suez Canal and the overland link with India.

Opposed throughout by the Arab people struggling for national independence, Britain has since ruled Palestine as a colony, under cover of the Mandate. The Jewish population has grown to nearly 500,000, and considerable economic development has taken place. The Zionist Movement and its aims have become the buffer and counterweight used by

Britain against the Arab National Movement. Thus Sir Ronald Storrs, a former Governor of Jerusalem, stated that it was hoped that—

“enough [Jews] could return, if not to form a Jewish state . . . at least to prove that the enterprise was one which blessed him that gave as well as him that took by forming for England ‘a little loyal Jewish Ulster’ in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism” (*Orientations*, 1937, p. 404).

Lord Melchett, who is both a leading British monopoly capitalist and a leading Zionist, looked forward in 1936 to Palestine and Transjordan becoming, as a single political entity, a self-governing unit within the British Empire:

“The advantages to the British Empire are obvious. The points at issue are no less than the defence of the Suez Canal, of air stations essential to imperial communications, and the outlet of the oil pipe line in Haifa; and the harbour at Haifa (and later the harbour which is necessary at Tel-Aviv) have become vital to our naval strategy in the Mediterranean. The security of this complex of imperial interests can be better assured by a large European population than by the few battalions that can be spared” (letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, June 14th, 1937).

And in his book this was emphasised:

“The presence of three million Jews would remove for ever the possibility of a successful armed rising to destroy the effects of the mandatory policy” (*Thy Neighbour*, 1936, pp. 201-2).

The aims of the Zionist Movement became closely bound up with British aims, a fact which the Zionist leaders understand and welcome, since British rule is their only guarantee. Thus, Mr. M. Ussishkin, a veteran Zionist leader, wrote:

“A Palestine which is wholly Arabic means that sooner or later Great Britain will be forced to leave, just as it is gradually leaving Egypt. A Palestine which is largely Jewish means a political alliance cordiale . . . between the Jewish people and the English” (*Palestine Review*, July 3rd, 1936).

The British Government, in the attempt to pacify the

Arabs, has from time to time whittled down its obligations to the Jews, but, despite setbacks to Zionism:

“We shall, as always, co-operate, and in spite of disappointments and disillusionment, our co-operation will be loyal” (*Zionist Review*, November 10th, 1938).

The imperialist alliance has been cemented by capital investment. Zionism is now strongly linked with the City of London (and Wall Street) through the medium of the Jewish big bourgeoisie. Loyalty to a Jewish State became compatible with loyalty to Britain, once Zionism received British blessings, and support of Zionism’s development work required and facilitated participation in the profitable exploitation of the resources of Palestine. Thus among the pillars of the Zionist Movement there are British and American Jews who are prominent in the world of British and American finance capital.

By 1936, £20 millions of British and £10 millions of American capital was invested in Palestine. The Wall Street crash of 1929 and the subsequent calling in by the U.S.A. of her foreign loans acted as a brake on the penetration of American capital, but British investment went on steadily, and British capital is solidly established in Palestine. The Board of Directors of the Palestine Electric Corporation, a British company, includes Lord Hirst, Lord Melchett, Mr. E. S. Baron and Viscount Samuel. Lord Hirst, at home, is Chairman of the General Electric Co. and of numerous other electrical enterprises within the Empire. Lord Melchett, the Zionist, is a director (and son of the founder) of the Imperial Chemical Industries, the great chemicals monopoly. Mr. E. S. Baron, a staunch Zionist, is the tobacco magnate, of Carreras, Ltd. Viscount Samuel, who has been a member of British governments and High Commissioner for Palestine, is a supporter of the National Home, though not a political Zionist. Mr. Harry Sacher, another leading Zionist, is a director of Marks and Spencer, Ltd., and of Palestine Potash, Ltd. a British company in which I.C.I. is interested. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Marks

and Spencer, Ltd., Messrs. Simon Marks and I. M. Sieff respectively (both staunch Zionists, the latter's wife, Rebecca Sieff, being a well-known Zionist leader), provide another link between the Zionist Movement and British finance capital in Palestine. Similarly, there are American Jewish magnates who combine support of Zionism with interest in economic exploitation in this field of operation. The Prudential and Sun Life Assurances have investments in building loans (£1,750,000 by the end of 1935); Lloyds Bank and Barclays Bank have issued large loans to Jewish land-purchasing organisations.

Zionists have often explained that their movement is using British imperialism for the promotion of Zionist aims. This "use" is well illustrated by what followed the White Paper of 1939. The Fascist political drive into the Arab world had made it necessary for Whitehall to offer concessions to the rebellious Arabs. The White Paper repudiated the Balfour Declaration and "rewarded" the faithful services of the Zionist leaders with *minority rights for the Yishuv* (Palestine Jewish Community). The Jews in Palestine were to remain a permanent minority; and the Utopian dream of Palestine as a Jewish State or commonwealth was shattered.

The Zionist solution of the Jewish question—namely, Palestine as a Jewish State—is in fact an impossibility. But before we finally dispose of Zionism as a solution, we must consider how the Jews in Palestine have fared, their present tasks and future perspectives.

### (3) Arab and Jew in Palestine

In 1914 there were about 60,000 Jews and 500,000 Arabs in Palestine. Under British rule, these numbers have grown to about 500,000 Jews and 1,000,000 Arabs. With the closure of the doors of the Western world to Jewish immigration and the facilitation of entry into Palestine, large numbers of Jews looked to this land as an escape from persecution in Europe. Fascist anti-Semitism increased the pressure, and since 1932 over 200,000 Jews have entered the country.

A small backward agrarian country, semi-feudal in character, it underwent a rapid economic development. As a sphere of profitable investment, it attracted considerable capital from wealthy Jews abroad and from British and American banking and financial houses. As already mentioned, by 1936 British and American capital investments reached £30 millions. According to the *Jewish Chronicle* of September 9th, 1940, in the last twenty-two years since the British occupation of Palestine, Jews have invested in the country the sum of £105 millions, of which national institutions have provided £19,861,444. Concessions were granted for the exploitation of the salts of the Dead Sea by the Dead Sea Potash Co. (Palestine Potash) and for the harnessing of the waters of the Jordan by the Palestine Electric Corporation. With large-scale immigration, the building and allied industries enjoyed a boom for a number of years, and the Nesher Cement Co., one of the three largest capitalist concerns in the land, was established. A variety of light industries developed.

The Jewish National Fund, a Zionist land-purchasing agency, spent millions of pounds in buying land from Arab landlords for cultivation by Jewish immigrants. The scale of these purchases is shown by the following round figures to 1936:

	<i>Acres of agricultural land</i>	<i>Price paid</i>
1918-29 . . .	175,000	£3,000,000
1930-5 . . .	50,000	£4,351,000

Numerous agricultural settlements arose, many of them communal (*Kvuzoth*). The land purchased was mainly in the most fertile areas, but marshes and malarial swamps were also acquired and brought under cultivation. Much devoted pioneering work was done, and many young Zionist idealists lost their lives in these swamps.

Many of the immigrants were in the "capitalist" class, for immigration regulations concerned with the "economic absorptive capacity" of the country were not applied to



persons possessing more than £1,000; but the majority of immigrant Jews became industrial or transport workers or agriculturists. The organisation of labour came to be catered for by the Jewish Labour Federation, or *Histadruth*, which has organised a very high proportion of the Jewish workers and now comprises a membership of some 120,000.

The impact of rapid economic development on this backward country was bound to produce dislocation in the life of the indigenous Arab population. There is an unsolved agrarian question in Palestine, as in all colonial countries. In the last twenty years the Arab population has doubled itself, but, as the methods of production in agriculture continued to be largely primitive, increasing congestion of the peasantry on the land ensued. The average holding of the Arab peasants tended to diminish, and as a result of consequent impoverishment large numbers lost their land to the big Arab landlords and usurers.

This problem has been aggravated by Zionist penetration under British auspices. Jewish land purchases from Arab landlords led, in many instances, to the eviction of peasants from their land with negligible compensation, though inflated prices were paid for the land. Arab landlords and rich peasants grew fat, invested their money in citrus groves and were recruited to the ranks of the new Arab bourgeoisie, but the landless peasants became proletarianised and drifted to the towns to casual employment or unemployment.

To the impoverished Arab peasantry, victims of imperialist rule, the Jewish immigrants appeared to be responsible. The anti-Arab policy of the *Histadruth* in the factories, depots and citrus groves, where these new proletarians sought employment, served to strengthen their resentment.

Capitalist development has in addition contributed to the ruin of traditional Arab industries and crafts, which have been unable to meet the competition of better equipped capital and Western technique. A section of the Arab bourgeoisie of the landlord class has consequently become strenuously opposed to Zionist penetration and aims. Equally opposed are those who are anxious to replace the

immigrant Jewish capitalists in the exploitation of the country's resources.

In these conditions the Arab National Movement for independence has been enormously strengthened. The two decades of British rule have been marked by repeated disturbances and revolts. In the early years before the Arab masses realised that British imperialism was basically responsible, the risings took the form of pogroms against the Jews. Later, particularly in the General Strike and revolt of 1936, the movement was plainly directed against British rule. Subsequent anti-Jewish excesses were the result of Fascist influence upon the Arab Movement.

The Zionist Movement has discovered at the cost of bloodshed that the leaders who ignored the Arabs were wrong. For the Arab people are indigenous to Palestine and the neighbouring countries, they are the overwhelming majority of the population, and they struggle for national independence against imperialism, not on the basis of any unfulfilled pledge by Britain, but on the basis of their own needs and the inalienable right of a people to be free.

Arab opposition to British imperialism and to Zionism as its instrument placed two alternatives before the Zionists. They could either reach an understanding with the Arabs, which would involve abandonment of political aims for a Jewish majority and a Jewish State in Palestine, and would mean participation in the anti-imperialist struggle, but would safeguard and secure the Jewish population; or they could continue the alliance with the British. Here, undoubtedly, was an opportunity for the Jewish Labour Movement to take up the struggle against capitalism. The course followed by the *Histadruth* is revealing.

It has throughout subordinated the trade-union principle of organisation of all workers irrespective of religion or nationality to its Zionist nationalism.

"The *Histadruth* is unlike any other trade union. It is, first, a Zionist colonisation co-operative and only in the second place a trade union. This is its essential character, which all those who mistook it, for instance, for an instrument for the propagation of

socialism have learned to their cost" (*No Ease in Zion*, by T. R. Feivel, a Left Zionist, 1938, p. 257).

As the Palestinian section of the Second International, it stood for co-operation with the Jewish employers in Palestine and with British imperialism. Its aims are clearly expressed in the following statement by its leader, Ben Gurion:

"I belong to that Zionist wing which stands for the maximum, unrestricted and limitless Zionist authority. National jurisdiction over Jewish work, national jurisdiction over Jewish capital, national jurisdiction over the existence of the people. . . . This national authority is Socialism" (*Der Yiddisher Kämpfer*, May 10th, 1935).

In order to extend the National Home and increase the Jewish population towards that majority position at which Zionism aims, the *Histadruth* has followed a policy of excluding Arabs from employment by Jewish enterprises, hoping thus to facilitate the economic absorption of larger numbers of Jewish immigrants. This policy of Jewish exclusiveness has, of course, proved quite impossible to realise, because Arab labour, newly come from the land, plentiful and unorganised, is cheap and therefore often preferred by Jewish capitalists. To force or keep Arab labour out, the *Histadruth* bureaucrats made Jewish labour competitive by lowering Jewish wage levels. Systems of contracted labour (really forms of piece work) were introduced, which cut wages drastically, and low wages were often made up by subsidies from the funds of the *Histadruth* itself. Strikes against wage reductions were declared illegal, and militants threatened with expulsion.

To protect Jewish wage levels as Arab labour penetrated the "Jewish sphere," the *Histadruth* could have organised the Arabs alongside the Jews, replacing the competition of the workers by their association—the principal basis of trade unionism. But organisation of the Arabs has never been achieved. The Jewish Labour leaders are prepared to organise the Arabs in separate unions, provided they accept the political aims of Zionism and the principle of 100 per

cent. Jewish labour in Jewish enterprises. To accept the former means to accept imperialist servitude. To accept the latter is to sacrifice the right to seek work in any part of Palestine and to bow to a sentence of unemployment for thousands of Arabs who are compelled to seek work in the "Jewish sector" or to starve. Naturally, the Arab workers will not sell their birthright to the *Histadruth*. Again, the *Histadruth* does not wish association to develop between the anti-imperialist Arab workers and the Jewish workers, many of whom are also anti-imperialist, for, in common with non-Labour Zionists, the *Histadruth* is tied to imperialism.

The effect of the policy of exclusiveness has been to arouse bitter hostility between Arabs and Jews. The Arab workers regard as enemies those who refuse them opportunity to work in the largest sphere of employment in Palestine, the sphere of Jewish enterprise, and who even attempt to displace them from work in non-Jewish spheres (for example, in Government public works).

Zionism, then, has not even solved the Jewish problem for the Jews in Palestine, let alone for the 15½ million Jews outside Palestine. It has merely extended the Jewish problem to Palestine, where hitherto it had scarcely existed. So long as the position of the *Yishuv* is insecure, so long as it is an irritant within the Arab world, then its problems are part and parcel of the Jewish problem in all capitalist lands, which, as we saw, is insoluble within the present order of things.

What Zionism has done—and this must surely be a matter for the most earnest consideration of those thousands of young Zionists who are devoted to the welfare of their own people—is to bring the age-long curse of our people into Palestine: it has made them a "buffer" between British imperialism and the anti-imperialist Arab Nationalists—the very situation that Jews must everywhere and by all means avoid.

The immediate task confronting the *Yishuv* is to establish co-operation and understanding with the Arabs. If the Zionist leaders, while paying lip service to this, oppose it in

practice, there are elements in Palestine who understand the position and choose accordingly.

Included among these are Dr. Judah Magnes, Rector of the Hebrew University, and S. Kaplanski, formerly head of the department of the Zionist colonisation organisation. An outstanding example is that of Khalvariski, a veteran Zionist leader, who for years has stood at the head of the Arab department of the Zionist organisation and has worked for an honourable understanding with the Arabs. The *Jewish Times* of November 28th, 1939, reported an interview with him, in which he complained that—

“the Zionist leaders who not long ago admitted their past mistakes in regard to their attitude to the Arabs have not yet to this day changed their past attitude. . . .”

He went on to say that mere loyalty to Britain and dependence on her “gratitude” in return for services rendered is no solution of the Arab-Jewish problem. It could only bring “the same results as those which followed the last War.” Stressing the necessity for organising the Arab and Jewish workers in joint trade-union associations, Khalvariski made a number of proposals aimed at bringing together organisationally the labouring and progressive sections of both peoples for the benefit of Arabs and Jews alike. Finally, he remarked that the cost to the Jews of putting his proposals into operation would have been a fraction of the cost of the damage sustained by the *Yishuv* through years of unrest and conflict.<sup>1</sup>

To-day, when the war has spread all over the globe and is now a world war against Fascism, it is more than ever necessary to establish Arab-Jewish co-operation as an in-

<sup>1</sup> Khalvariski is a leading figure in a group calling itself *Al Paroshes Darchainu* (“at the cross roads”). This body consists of all elements desiring Arab-Jewish understanding. Some three years ago they published a book under the above name; in it Khalvariski pointed out that in the past there had been many opportunities for the Zionist and Arab leaders to reach an amicable understanding, but negotiations had broken down in each case, primarily through the fault of the Zionist leaders. Their attitude, he said, was one of complete under-estimation of the strength of the Arab Movement. They argued: if Britain is with us, if the League of Nations is with us, then why do we need the Arabs?

tegral part of the world front against Hitlerism. For years prior to the war, the Nazis had attempted to establish a foothold within the Middle East because of its vital military strategic importance. They succeeded in winning over powerful and influential elements within the Arab liberation movement by exploiting the anti-British feelings of the Arabs and particularly their hatred and fear of political Zionist aims. In spite of British action in Iraq and Syria and the joint action of Britain and the U.S.S.R. in Iran, Nazi influence has been by no means completely eliminated. The need to make the Middle East an impregnable barrier to Nazi penetration cannot be over-emphasised. Arab-Jewish co-operation along the lines laid down by Khalvariski and Magnes can make an enormous contribution towards this, while the present policy of the Zionist leaders will only perpetuate Arab Jewish antagonism, a breach within the anti-Hitler forces in the Middle East which the Nazis agents will not be slow to exploit. Arab-Jewish unity against Fascism in Palestine as an integral part of the anti-Hitler world front is a vital need for world Jewry; the democratic institutions not yet granted to Palestine would serve, once they were in being, as the best framework for this co-operation, adding strength to the anti-Fascist forces.

#### Chapter IV

### THE MENACE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

(1) IN CONQUERED EUROPE. (2) JEWS IN THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES: (a) THE U.S.A.; (b) BRITAIN. (3) CONCLUSION.

WE shall attempt in the present chapter, first, to recall how anti-Semitism is used by the Nazis to maintain their slave rule in Europe over the growing forces struggling against the oppressor; second, to show the alarming growth of anti-Semitism in the Western democracies prior to the war, and how it has crept into the acute problems raised by the war; third, to indicate how, in the situation created by the Nazi

aggression against the Soviet Union, anti-Semitism can become a dangerous tool in the hands of Hitler's friends within the democracies, and may be used to disrupt the national unity of the British and American peoples with those of the U.S.S.R. in their struggle against Hitler.

### (1) In Conquered Europe

Hitler's conquest of Poland has reduced the Polish people to the status of slaves. The Poles are represented as being racially inferior to the Germans, who, according to Nazi doctrine, are the *Herrenvolk*, the master people destined to rule over the so-called racially inferior peoples.

The measures adopted by the Nazis against the 2,000,000 Polish Jews who came under their rule are even more oppressive and degrading. In Warsaw the ghetto has been resurrected, while new ghettos in other parts of the country have been erected. The conditions under which these Jews live beggar all description. According to the *Jewish Chronicle* (June 7th, 1941):—

"40,000 Jews died in the past year. . . . This is a vast increase in Jewish mortality and has no parallel in Polish Jewish history."

The movement of the Polish people for national liberation becomes stronger from day to day. Approximately twenty-eight illegal newspapers and periodicals are issued. Among those issued in Yiddish by Jewish patriots and circulating in the ghetto, is the *Bulletin* (issued fortnightly) and the *Voice of Youth* (issued monthly). The *Australia Jewish Forum* of Sydney reports that the Bund (the Jewish Socialist League) is carrying on intensive underground activity. It works jointly with the P.P.S. (the Polish Socialist Party) and the Peasant Party, and issues with them a journal in the Polish language, *Wolnoze* ("Freedom").

As the anti-Nazi activity of the Polish patriots, Jews and non-Jews, increases, so attacks on the Jews become sharper.

"The regulations barring the delivery of food to the Jewish ghettos have also been strengthened by the introduction of the death penalty for offenders. A Jew named Kantowicz has been

publicly hanged in Kutow on a charge of having smuggled a small quantity of sugar into the Warsaw Ghetto. Leading local Jews were forced to witness the scene."

"The bread ration for the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto has been reduced to exactly one quarter of the amount allowed to Germans" (*Jewish Chronicle*, April 30th, 1941).

Thus increasing anti-Jewish violence and repressive measures go hand in hand with the increasing militancy of the Polish peoples' struggle.

In Vichy France the movement against the Nazi conquerors is growing daily. The special restrictions imposed on Jews in October, 1940, were condemned by the Nazi Press as "an unsatisfactory half measure," and now a violent drive is being made against the Jews, and the suffering of the French people is attributed to Jews and Communists.

"Anti-Nazi feeling in France . . . had led to an enormous increase in the Nazi terror in Paris. Raids on Jews and Communists have resulted in many new arrests. By order of a military court, a Russian Jew, Abraham Trizlmecki, has been guillotined and another Jew, Bernard Friedman, has been sentenced to ten years' hard labour for anti-Nazi activity. All Paris Jews have been ordered to surrender their wireless sets.

"Many cases have occurred of Parisians hiding Jews in their homes to save them from arrest. Severe penalties have now been imposed for harbouring these fugitives from Nazi persecution.

"The Nazi Press is demanding that all French Jews should be compelled to live in ghettos in order to put an end to their alleged subversive activities" (*Jewish Chronicle*, Oct. 5th, 1941).

Here, too, the ground is burning beneath the feet of the Nazi hangmen. Hence more ferocious attacks on the Jews.

In Hungary there has been an intensification of anti-Nazi activity since the country was brought "peaceably" within the "new order." The already existing anti-Jewish discrimination has now become transformed, under pressure from Berlin, into the full-blooded Nuremberg Laws.

"In response to orders from Berlin, the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws has been proclaimed in Hungary. . . . The

excuse given for the adoption of the laws is necessary collaboration with Germany" (*Jewish Chronicle*, June 20th, 1941).

Within the Balkans, prior to the Nazi conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece, there had been a tremendous growth of the people's movements against the pro-Nazi policy pursued by the pro-Hitler elements within their ruling classes. In answer to this growing feeling, attacks on the Jews have taken place from above. In Bulgaria, before its pro-Nazi Government capitulated to Berlin, anti-Jewish legislation was instituted. The adherence of Rumania to the "new order" aroused strong opposition not only from the working people, but also from elements within the Fascist Iron Guard, who were opposed to Rumania becoming bound hand and foot to the Reich. In the autumn of 1940, when these dissident elements attempted a *Putsch* against General Antonescu's Government, and fighting broke out between the rival Greenshirt gangsters, the Nazi military in Rumania played their trump card and exploited the anti-Jewish feeling of the rebels by deflecting their "revolutionary" ardour into anti-Jewish orgies of murder and butchery.

"... The Nazis scored a complete success. They succeeded in persuading the rebels [against General Antonescu—I. R.] to organise the pogroms, which cost the Jews over 700 lives. Another 7,000 Jews were injured, 2,000 of them seriously.

"Dozens of Rumanian Jews—women and children as well as men—were literally burned alive by Iron Guard rebels during the Bucharest pogroms last week. Over 200 were foully massacred in a slaughter-house. So declares an eye-witness account... which states that, apart from those burned to death in hundreds of buildings to which rebel Guards set fire, Jews were beaten senseless in the streets, robbed, then doused with petrol and set on fire.

"Perhaps the most horrifying single episode of the pogrom, says the report, was the *kosher* butchery of more than 200 Jews in a municipal slaughter-house. The Jews, who had been rounded up after several hours of Iron Guard raids, were put into trucks and carried off to the slaughter-house.

"There Green Shirts forced them to undress and led them to chopping blocks, where they cut their throats in a horrible

parody of *Shechita* [Jewish ritual slaughter]. Tiring of this sport after a few score had been slaughtered, forty to fifty armed legionaries, mad with hate, beheaded the rest with axes and knives" (*Jewish Chronicle*, January 31st, 1941.)

In Greece, where there was relatively little anti-Semitism:

"The Nazis have placarded the streets with proclamations declaring the Jews responsible for the misfortunes which have befallen the Greeks" (*Jewish Chronicle*, June 20th, 1941).

Not only are the Nazis and their native quislings increasingly using the Jews as a buffer against the national movements of liberation in Europe, but Jewish chain-gangs are being organised as cheap labour for Nazi use.

"In Yugoslavia the majority of the able-bodied men among the 7,000 Belgrade Jews who remained after the occupation have been conscripted into forced labour battalions and sent to the provinces. They receive no pay or food, being entirely dependent on relief organisations for the barest necessities of life" (*Jewish Chronicle*, August 8th, 1941).

"The Nazis have established a labour camp in Limburg, Belgium, for 600 Jews who are forced to toil in the coal mines ten hours daily. The food allotted to them is meagre and the mortality among them is very high. The dead are being promptly replaced. The men receive no pay, but allowances at starvation rates are made to their families" (*Jewish Chronicle*, June 27th, 1941).

Anti-Semitism, as we have seen, has always been the weapon of reactionary forces, and the very fact that Hitler's "new order" supports itself by anti-Semitism organised on a scale hitherto unknown to history is a measure of its character: it is, in fact, an old order doomed to extinction by all the progressive forces of humanity.

## (2) Jews in the Western Democracies

### (a) The U.S.A.

In the Western democracies, the U.S.A. and Great Britain,<sup>1</sup> there are over 5,000,000 Jews, of whom over

<sup>1</sup> We include here the Jews in the colonies of the British Empire, where there is no democracy for native peoples, and also the Jews in the British Dominions.

4,000,000 are in the U.S.A. In the U.S.A. anti-Semitism has long subsisted, together with other forms of race hatred, like that suffered by the Negroes.

An outstanding sponsor of anti-Semitism in the U.S.A. has been Henry Ford, the great car magnate of Detroit, Michigan. The *Dearborn Independent*, the paper published by him in 1920-27, promulgated the vilest anti-Semitic slanders in articles republished in book form under the title, *The International Jew*, warning the world against the dominance of "international Jewry." When he had been sued for libel in 1927 Ford publicly retracted the "offensive charges" and ceased publishing the *Independent*, but *The International Jew* continued its flourishing career. On the outbreak of war, Ford found it necessary to publish another repudiation of anti-Semitic sympathies.<sup>1</sup> Editor of the *Independent* was W. J. Cameron, later active in the "Anglo-Saxon Federation" which distributed the *Protocols of Zion* (p. 95) and now vice-president of Ford, Inc. In 1937 Ford received a decoration from Hitler, presumably for "services rendered." Like the pro-Nazi magnates in Germany, he and his fellow industrialists must in fact have spent enormous sums on anti-Jewish propaganda.

It is noteworthy that anti-Semitism was disseminated on a wide scale from Michigan, in which is concentrated America's great motor car industry—a State with a long record of strikes, lock-outs and acute social conflicts in general. Trade-union organisation always met with bitter resistance from Ford and his fellow magnates. The crisis of 1929, which hit America like a tornado and created mass unemployment and social unrest, seriously affected the car industry. It was no accident that this industrial centre, where thousands of foreign immigrant workers are employed, was the virtual fountain head of organised large-scale anti-Semitism in the U.S.A. Although Henry Ford had now ceased to be the open protagonist of anti-Semitism, the crisis of 1929 soon threw up individuals who became the tools of

<sup>1</sup> Dated Jan. 7th, 1942. See the *Jewish Standard*, March 6th, 1942.

the anti-Semitic and reactionary elements among the American upper class.

In 1928 an obscure Catholic priest, Charles Coughlin, began broadcasting, calling himself the voice of the "Golden Hour of the Little Flower." His sermons were very persuasive. Money flowed in in support of his religious broadcasts. Whereupon he organised the "League of the Little Flower," whose articles of association were:

"To obtain funds which will be devoted towards defraying the expenses of operating the parish shrine of the Little Flower at Woodward Avenue and 12 Mile Road, Detroit, Michigan, and, further, to obtain funds which will be donated towards the building of a new church in the same parish."

Thus began the career of America's "Radio Priest," Father Coughlin, who became America's Jew-baiter No. 1. According to John Spivak, the well-known American anti-Fascist author, who in 1939 wrote a number of well documented articles on Coughlin, he used this money for

"organising profit making corporations . . . collecting money through the United States mails upon his solemn assurance that it was for a non-political organisation<sup>1</sup> . . . taking his parish's money, which the Catholic Church permits him to bank in the parish's name and using it to build a political organisation" (*New Masses*, November 21st, 1939).

When the Archbishop of Detroit, acting upon Papal

<sup>1</sup> "The weekly publication *Social Justice*, which was founded by the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, of the Shrine of the Little Flower at Royal Oak, Michigan, and is now owned principally by his parents, has been barred temporarily from the mails because of a complaint by the United States Attorney-General, Mr. Francis Biddle, that it was violating the Espionage Act by making 'a substantial contribution to a systematic and unscrupulous attack upon the war effort.' . . . Mr. Biddle declared that as early as December 25th, 1938, there appeared a striking similarity between its themes and Axis propaganda. On that date, he said, 'whole portions of a speech made on September 13, 1935, by Propaganda Minister Goebbels were published in *Social Justice* as an original article, with but a few words changed here and there, and with no crediting or other identification of source.' . . .

"*Social Justice* is notoriously anti-Jewish. It has a circulation of about 200,000." (*Times*, April 16th, 1942).

instructions, enquired into the finances of Coughlin's organisation and his journal *Social Justice*

"the Archbishop was told to go roll a hoop . . . that the magazine was a private business venture and not subject to requests from the Archbishop or anyone else" (*ibid.*).

By 1934 the "League" had broadened out into the "Radio League of the Little Flower," a so-called non-political organisation; all good Christians were invited "to join this non-political organisation in defending the principles of Christianity and of patriotism, and to assist in bringing back to the fold those who had fallen away."

"Patriotism" had now become part of Coughlin's stock-in-trade. It found expression in the "The National Union of Social Justice" and the "Coughlin-Lemke Union," political parties formed for mass support. Coughlin's aim was to control enough votes to hold the balance between the traditional national parties of American finance capital, the Democratic and Republican Parties. In the Presidential Election of 1936 he manifested his true political colours, and in the name of "patriotism" and "Christianity" formed a common front with the Bund, a pro-Nazi organisation controlled from Berlin, whose leader, Fritz Kühn, was employed as a chemist by Ford. Ford, Coughlin and the Bund alike opposed Roosevelt and the New Deal.

Coughlin thus entered the camp of Fascist reaction. His career as a rabid Jew-baiter began soon after, coinciding with an important phase in the American working-class movement, the great trade-union drive which the C.I.O.<sup>1</sup> was then making among the industrial workers, organising hundreds of thousands who hitherto had either been unorganised or in company (employers') unions. Coughlin now embarked on his attempts to use anti-Semitic demagoguery as a means of splitting the workers and obstructing trade-union organisation.

<sup>1</sup> Congress for Industrial Organisation, America's "Left Wing" federation of trade unions, the older and traditional body being the American Federation of Labour, consisting chiefly of craft unions.

In 1937, when the C.I.O. made its intensive drive among the automobile workers, Coughlin came out openly in support of Ford against the C.I.O., made vicious attacks on progressive-minded dignitaries of the Catholic Church who favoured the C.I.O.'s trade-union campaign, and accused the C.I.O. itself of being a Jewish body, alleging that "many C.I.O. organisers were Jews; the Jews were on the Executive Board" (*New Masses*, December 12th, 1939).

Spivak claims that Ford attempted to halt the trade-union drive among his workers by splitting the leadership and bribing certain reactionary elements within it; he gives documented evidence showing that Coughlin was the intermediary who brought together Homer Martin, a leading Union official, and Henry Bennett, chief of Henry Ford's elaborate factory espionage corps from whom Martin received large sums of money to "soft pedal" the trade-union campaign among the car workers.

By 1938 this employers' nark in priest's garb was becoming America's leading Jew-baiter. His paper *Social Justice* was enabled to increase its size from 8 pages in 1937 to 32 pages in 1938. Spivak revealed that Coughlin—

"was secretly communicating with Nazi agents and propagandists active in this country, one of his choice contacts being William Dudley Pelley, leader of the Silver Shirts." [Arrested March 1942, charged with pro-Nazi activity.]

Coughlin began publishing the *Protocols of Zion*, that notorious anti-Semitic forgery of Tsarist days which alleged the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy to rule the world. The Jews were made responsible for the ills of American society, for the Russian Revolution, etc., etc.

Someone was needed by union-hating American industrialists who could wield anti-Semitism in the way a skilled craftsman wields his tools, and Coughlin was the man for the job. He was the best possible choice at the time. His demagoguery over the radio as an American "Christian" and "patriot" had won him a mass following; his greed made him the

hireling of anybody who paid him well enough; his Jew-baiting was a valuable weapon to numerous American magnates in their attempt to smash trade-union organisation among their workers. William Dudley Pelley once declared that he received constant requests from leading car industrialists for anti-Jewish agitators. The American weekly, *Friday*, in a series of articles by Michael Sayers and A. Kahn on the growth of anti-Semitism in the U.S.A. (September, 1940), stated that the Duponts (the armament magnates), E. T. Weir, President of the Warton Steel Co., Alfred Sloan, Chairman of General Motors, the late Edward T. Stotesbury, partner of J. P. Morgan, the great financier (who will employ neither Jews nor Catholics), and many other leading bankers and industrialists contributed to the funds of anti-democratic organisations, though these individuals were not openly outspoken anti-Semites. The same authors gave evidence showing that anti-Semitic agitators were employed by big industrialists to work hand in hand with strike-breakers and *provocateurs* among the workers.

Even the great political parties representing powerful vested interests in the U.S.A. were not averse from supporting Fascist anti-Semitic organisations. The National Committee of the Republican Party contributed funds to such bodies. Nine leading Republican families financed fourteen of these bodies to the tune of nearly a million dollars (see the financial reports gathered in by the U.S.A. Government under the Corrupt Practices Act).

Since the radio became one of the mediums through which anti-Semitism was disseminated into millions of American homes, it was not surprising to find anti-Jewish prejudices rampant among wide sections of the youth. This was revealed by Milton Melzer, a master in Gwynn's Falls Junior High School, Baltimore, who "noticed increasing signs of anti-Semitism among the boys." Their average age was fifteen; 95 per cent. came from working-class homes. When he decided to make a test and asked them to write frankly about their prejudices and dislikes, the test revealed that "in that group of 162 young boys almost one out of three

declared his enmity towards the Jews. Here is how some of them feel about it. . . ."

"A Jew cannot and will not testify against his own kind."

"If a Jew kills a *Goy* [Gentile] it is not a sin."

"They [the Jews] always make it their business to get ahead and they pop up from nowhere. They start with nothing and end up rich" (*New Masses*, August 1st, 1939).

Clearly anti-Semitism, even before the outbreak of war, was already widespread throughout the U.S.A.

Since the outbreak of war, conditions in the U.S.A. have sharpened. The American employers made enormous profits;<sup>1</sup> rising prices and, particularly, rising taxation hit the American working class, more than off-setting any rise in wages. Moreover, American magnates working on Government war orders began using the war situation as an excuse to smash trade unionism:

"A number of larger companies have been taking advantage of their strategic position in relation to Government war orders to provoke strikes with the object of smashing the unions concerned" (*Labour Notes*, April, 1941, American Labour Research Association).

According to the *Economist* (March 22nd, 1941), there was an upward tendency in both the number and severity of strikes in the U.S.A. towards the latter part of 1940, mainly in plants working on defence contracts. This tendency continued well into 1941, so that the London *Times* New York Correspondent reported that "fresh strikes were breaking out almost every day" (June 9th, 1941). This sharpening situation brought with it an alarming increase in anti-Semitic activity.

The car industry is the key industry in Government defence contracts. Lorries and motor vehicles of all descriptions are needed by the belligerents in large numbers. Detroit, where there has been a spate of strikes, is of the utmost importance in regard to the production of war

<sup>1</sup> According to *Economic Notes* (American Labour Research Association), January, 1941, net profits of 284 companies rose in the first nine months of 1940 by 79 per cent. as compared with the corresponding period of 1939.



material. The following Fascist organisations had intensified their activity in Detroit:

National Workers' League; Industrial Legion of America; Committee of a Million; Mantle Club; Black Legion; Legion of the Blue Cross; Young American; Anglo-Saxon Federation; Invisible Eye of Labour; Sons of the South; Ku Klux Klan; Novelty Club; Billet Club; Industrial Workers' League.

The first-named (National Workers' League) had as its leader F. Seyitch, who was once a member of the United Automobile Workers' Union, but was flung out as a Nazi spy. This organisation is supported by the big automobile companies. Seyitch has lauded Henry Ford to the skies as the man who "can solve the Jewish problem." The potentialities of Jew-hatred as a brake on war production, as well as its use for "industrial" strike-breaking purposes, are clear for all to behold.

The American Press, which is controlled by powerful vested interests, had also begun to reflect how anti-Semitism was being increasingly resorted to by powerful sections of American big business; the big national papers carried an increasing number of anti-Semitic advertisements.

George Seldes, in his news-letter, *In Fact*, pointed out the anti-Semitism of the Scrip-Howard chain of newspapers:

"Under Roy Howard's guidance, the *World Telegram* has become more and more anti-Semitic, although the fact is carefully covered up, so as not to anger the Strausses, the Gimpels and the other big [Jewish] advertisers.

"Recently *P.M.*, the new daily, caught the *World Telegram* faking the news and smearing the Jews at the same time" (September 22nd, 1941).

One example, indicating how anti-Semitism had penetrated Government institutions, is worth quoting. The *Herald-Tribune* (September 17th, 18th, 1940) carried an advertisement asking for experienced stenographers *who must be Christians*. Applicants for the job were then sent to the Board of Higher Education. This was revealed in *Main Events* (September 22nd, 1940), an educational journal.

More anti-Semitic letters began to appear in the national Press. When "the largest circulated daily newspaper in New York City, the *News*, frequently publishes anti-Semitic letters . . . it is apparent that there is something wrong with the capitalist Press in New York City" (*Morgen Freiheit*, September 23rd, 1940).

After the Nazi offensive against the Soviet Union had been followed by the American Government's pledge to give all aid to the U.S.S.R., the pro-Hitlerite elements within American governing circles began using Jew-hatred as their instrument for sabotaging American aid to the U.S.S.R. The Isolationists, who represent some of these wealthy elements, said that American aid to Soviet Russia was an attempt on the part of Jewry to drag America into the war. Lindbergh made a speech accusing the Jews of being responsible for Roosevelt's pledge to the Soviet Government. *Peace*, the organ of the pro-Fascist Isolationist body, the *America First Committee*, openly agitated against Roosevelt's pro-Soviet policy, describing it as a policy of "refugee Germans and their racial and religious brethren. . . . These were the warmongers" who wanted to involve the American people in war with Hitler!

The *New York Herald-Tribune* frankly commented on Lindbergh's speech:

"Lindbergh's virtually unconcealed appeal to anti-Semitism cannot be regarded as an Isolationist incident. Many Isolationists are not anti-Semitic, we are glad to concede. But evidence that their leaders are deliberately taking up this despicable disruptive and profoundly inhuman and un-American weapon is too strong to be denied."

Now Lindbergh, like Fritz Kühn, has been taken into the employment of Henry Ford.

"The Ford Motor Co. announced to-day [March 25th] that Mr. Charles A. Lindbergh has accepted a position in the engineering department of its huge new bomber building plant. Mr. Henry Ford has long been eager to enlist the services of Mr. Lindbergh in this new project. It was recalled to-day that two years ago, when Mr. Ford declared that 'in certain conditions'

he could turn out 1,000 aeroplanes a day, one of his stipulations was that he should have the technical assistance of 'men like Lindbergh' " (*Times*, March 26th, 1942).

*Congress Weekly*, organ of an influential section of middle-class American Jewry, stated in October, 1941:

"At no time in American history has anti-Semitism been as strong as it is to-day. At no time has that particularly smug, mealy-mouthed 'some-of-my-best-friends-are-Jews' type of anti-Semitism received such widespread public utterance on political platforms, in the House of Congress [America's Parliament—I. R.] and in the Press. At no time has so large a minority [the Isolationists] been so frustrated that, for lack of any possible rational argument, it must fall savagely back on the eternal scapegoat, the Jew. . . .

"The inescapable fact is that Isolationism in America to-day is inextricably bound up with anti-Semitism. . . . The vast majority of the leaders have . . . participated in Jew-baiting of the most dangerous and insidious sort. . . .

"There were rumours several months ago of a deal among the Isolationist leaders in Washington to use the Jewish issue in one last desperate attempt to swing the issue their way. Subsequent events have supported the rumour. . . .

"In the representative chamber of the world's largest democracy, phrases like 'international Jewish bankers' have been bandied about, and sneering references have been made to the 'foreign' birth of those Jews prominent in the administration, while in the Upper House, the leaders of a troop of semi-Fascist vigilantes sit in the chair of the Military Affairs Committee. . . .

"Anti-Semitic feeling has grown in this present Congress to alarming proportions, and there is more anti-Semitic evidence than is apparent in the *Congressional Record* [the American *Hansard*—I. R.]. I hear it in the cloak-rooms, and I know it exists. It only needs a spark to set it off in amazing proportions" (October 24th, 1941).

(b) *Great Britain*

In Great Britain, in the last decade, anti-Semitism has become a force to be seriously reckoned with, and since the outbreak of war anti-Jewish feeling has spread further to an alarming degree.

The Jews in Britain, owing to earlier development, became more integrated within the economy of the country than elsewhere. The Jewish upper class, by the turn of this century, had become part of the native British upper class and many of them had been ennobled with aristocratic titles. The Jewish working-class elements, however, still largely maintained their cohesiveness (as for example, in the East End of London and the Gorbals in Glasgow). They lived on fairly peaceable terms with their Gentile neighbours.

During the period of Britain's world trade monopoly, and later, thanks to the enormous super-profits drawn from the Empire, the working class in Britain had a relatively higher standard of living than that enjoyed by most Continental workers, and social conflict in general did not take on the sharpest forms. Moreover, the Jews in Britain number only about 350,000, a much lower ratio of Jews to non-Jews than that in the U.S.A. Anti-Semitism has been less widespread than in other countries, though a latent "anti-foreigner" prejudice, due partly to British insularity and complacency, existed to a certain extent. More important as a source of unpopularity has been the fact that the Jewish immigrants who flocked to East London, Leeds and Glasgow towards the end of last century (p. 35) were forced to find their employment in the lowest-paid and worst-organised trades, whilst those who could rise at all became mainly small industrialists, small craftsmen, sub-contractors for "home work" or small traders, carrying on the traditional petty production and huckstering by which the Jew has so often been forced to exist and which engender characteristics peculiar, not to Jews, but to the "small bourgeois" in similar conditions everywhere.

How many times have we heard people remark: "Of course, I don't dislike Jews—they're really no different from us. . . . Some of my best friends are Jews. . . . *But*, you know, Jews are 'pushy' by nature; they do like to show off. . . . They're awfully clever and get on. . . . The majority are well off and don't seem to work hard. . . . You never see a Jew with a pick and shovel or going down a coal-mine."

Jewish "ostentation," Jewish "cunning" in being able to amass wealth at the expense of the Gentile without having to work for it, etc., are represented as the root of all evil! Such mistaken but passive ideas about the Jews are whipped up by continual and persistent propaganda into violent dislike and hatred of Jews; and where ill feeling against the Jews already existed, it is intensified into a passionate desire for the destruction of the Jews. By continually pointing out that the Jews are responsible for the grievances of the people, those concerned to do so can always spread racial feeling into quarters where previously it had never existed.

During the first ten years after the last War, the British ruling class had no need for anti-Jewish diversions, and there existed only two Fascist organisations, the British Fascists and the Imperial Fascists. Both were small insignificant bodies with no support from any important and influential elements within governing circles. But the crisis of 1929-32 opened a new phase, marked by the formation of the National Government, "economy cuts" in wages, almost 3,000,000 unemployed, strikes, demonstrations, and great mass struggles. Moreover, Ramsay MacDonald's "sell-out" and the Labour debacle in the 1931 elections had shaken the confidence of large numbers of workers and progressives in the Labour leadership.

It was in 1932, when production had reached its lowest point and working-class struggles were sharpened, that the British Union of Fascists was formed by Sir Oswald Mosley, an ex-Socialist and renegade from the Labour Party. The B.U.F. differed from its predecessors in that it was the first attempt made by important elements within the British upper class to build up a Fascist movement to deflect large numbers of disillusioned workers from the Labour Party and trade unions and to prevent them from moving further Left. It also attempted to canalise into "safe" channels the large discontented elements within the middle classes, who were particularly affected by the crisis.

Mosley, soon after Hitler's rise to power, denied that anti-Semitism was part of his programme. This showed that

organised Jew-baiting for political purposes was still foreign to the soil of Britain. Mosley put his emphasis on the programme of the Fascist corporate State. But a number of his lieutenants, particularly William Joyce (now "Lord Haw-Haw"), were for immediately making anti-Semitism the B.U.F.'s main plank. Thus, while Mosley disclaimed anti-Semitism, the B.U.F.'s organ, *Blackshirt*, could write at the same time:

"In the light of recent events, we state deliberately that the Jews are striving to involve Britain in war . . . the Jews have now organised a racial minority within the State to conduct a furious agitation with all the forces of their great money power which can have no effect except to drag this country towards war with Germany" (November 4th, 1933).

In spite of this difference of opinion on the Jewish question within the leadership, in the early months of the movement the B.U.F. undoubtedly did attempt to build a mass following on the principle of the corporate State for Britain, modelled on Italian lines. But it made very little headway.

There existed in Britain, however, a large middle class that was being "squeezed" by the big trusts and combines and among whom anti-Semitic feeling could be whipped up. Mosley could tell the impoverished shopkeeper that the rich Jews were the international financiers controlling the big monopolies and banks that were crushing him out of existence. He could represent to Mr. Smith, the struggling Gentile shopkeeper, that it was Mr. Cohen, his competitor round the corner, the "alien" and "foreigner" who had no business to be in the country, who was taking away his living (although Mr. Cohen was no better off than Mr. Smith—both were victims of the same conditions). He could enumerate the rich "Jewish financiers" and "chain-store owners" who exploited the British people and were responsible for the major ills in Britain.<sup>1</sup> Mosley and his advisers realised that, without the most virulent anti-Semitism as its main plank, the B.U.F. was doomed in Britain. And so on

<sup>1</sup> For facts and figures on this subject, see the pamphlet by W. Gallacher, *Anti-Semitism, What it Means to You*, Communist Party.

October 28th, 1934, at a Blackshirt rally in the Albert Hall, Mosley came out openly with rabid anti-Jewish vituperation and declared that his Party was primarily concerned with combating the Jews. Thus, for the first time in the history of Britain, there existed a party whose programme was the destruction of the Jews. At the Albert Hall rally—

“the audience was composed of Blackshirts, well-to-do suburban people [middle class], with a sprinkling of workers. The dominant note of the meeting was a passionate anti-Semitism. . . . Let no one after this meeting say that anti-Semitism is not dangerous in England. Sir Oswald’s anti-Semitic passages were wildly, madly, cheered from all parts of the hall. People rose in their seats and yelled delight when he accused the Jews of blackmailing the Press and of destroying England by their international financial control” (*New Statesman*, November 3rd, 1934).

The B.U.F. made some headway as soon as its political programme was pushed into the background and Jew hatred became its dominant note. In London, in the Bethnal Green and Shoreditch areas, where there were large Jewish communities, it mobilised disgruntled shopkeeper elements as well as the most backward sections of workers. Here there still existed large relics of the sweatshop system, where the small Jewish employer, with a handful of workers, toiled long hours, in many instances with his family, and was no better off than his workmen. Such petty Jewish craftsmen sub-contracted out from the larger concerns, who cut the price so finely that these “employers” had to make desperate efforts to find the money to pay wages and keep their workshops going. Till this very day these workshops exist, the victims of a system which allows the big monopoly concerns to squeeze down on the petty proprietor and craftsman. But these conditions provided the background for anti-Semitic agitation. Here was the personification of the Jewish “sweater,” who sweated the Englishman; here was visible and concrete example of Jewish “domination,” while behind the scenes the international Jewish financiers, the wealthy brethren of these local “sweaters,” ruled the world!

Here, in these areas, it should be noted that the trade-union and Labour movement was weak; it had few traditions of working-class militancy and unity. So Fascist anti-Semitism and support for the B.U.F. was able to make headway because of political backwardness. But in Glasgow and other such areas, where the Labour movement is strong and militant, Mosley and his lieutenants could not even get a hearing. And in Stepney, on that memorable day, October 4th, 1936, when the Fascists, under strong police protection, attempted to march through the London East End, where such strong working-class traditions exist, they received a smashing defeat. The hundreds of thousands of London citizens, Jews and Gentiles, of diverse political opinions, who packed the streets and prevented the Fascists from marching through, were a striking indication of how even the Government-protected forces of the Fascists can be defeated, provided the proletarian movement is strong, united, and determined to resist. These are the lessons which my own people, the Jews, must never overlook.

British Fascism did not become a mass movement on a nation-wide scale. There was no Versailles Treaty to pave the way for anti-Semitism and Hitler, and the strong anti-Fascist feeling aroused by the war in Spain and Hitler’s continued aggressions set definite limitations to the growth of the B.U.F., in spite of its persistent Jew-baiting. But its activities had the following results: first, they led to anti-democratic legislation, ostensibly against the Fascists, but in reality restricting the normal activity of the democratic and progressive organisations (e.g. the ban imposed on processions and demonstrations in certain parts of London). Second, the noisy anti-Jewish hooliganism and vulgar showmanship tended to cover up the most powerful and influential centres of pro-Fascist reaction here in this country. Those powerfully entrenched interests, which backed Fascism against the progressive movements in Britain and throughout the world, stood behind such organisations as the Anglo-German Fellowship.

The members of the Anglo-German Fellowship, according to the *News-Review* of January 23rd, 1936, were:

"Distinguished representatives of British big business who claimed that Hitler had an unanswerable case, who planned to set up a lavishly equipped club in London at which Nazism could be preached and ministers of National Socialism entertained and feted."

This organisation lauded the new Germany; it raised no protest against the destruction of the German trade-union and Labour movement or the bestial anti-Semitism of Hitler. In a word, the Anglo-German Fellowship was not unsympathetic to a system of Government of which anti-Semitism was an integral part. It worked for an Anglo-German Alliance against the U.S.S.R.

The following members of this body and their connections indicate what powerful vested interests stood behind the Anglo-German fellowship:

"Hon. W. W. Astor, Lord Londonderry, Lord Lothian (late Ambassador to Washington), Lord McGowan (of Imperial Chemical Industries), Lord Mottistone, Lord Nuffield, Lord Redesdale, the late Lord Stamp (who was chief industrial adviser to the Government). Also directors of the following banks: Bank of England, Midland, Lloyds, National Bank of Scotland, National Bank of Australia, J. H. Schroeder, British Linen Bank, Halli Bros., National Bank of Egypt, Coutts. Directors of the following Insurance Companies: Commercial Union, Eagle Star, Phoenix, London, London and Lancashire, Guardian, Norwich Union Fire, General Accident, Fire and Life, National Employers' Mutual General. Of the companies with directors among the members, six alone—Lever and Unilever, I.C.I., Shell Transport and Trading, Anglo-Iranian Oil, Gas Light and Coke, Distillers—have a total capital of over £257,000,000. Other companies with directors among the members included Tate and Lyle (Sir Leonard Lyle), Imperial Airways, Wm. Beardmore, Short (Aircraft), Consett Spanish Ore, Pressed Steel of Oxford" (*The Traitor Class*, by Ivor Montagu, pp. 39-40).

True, not all these British gentlemen professed anti-Semitism. Some may quite sincerely have disliked it. Others, on the other hand, came out openly with anti-Semitic utterances. Lord Londonderry, ex-Minister for Air, who boasted that at the Geneva Disarmament Conference

in 1932 he had prevented the abolition of bombing from the air, disguised neither the class character of his own attitude to anti-Semitism, nor his sympathy for Hitler. (See e.g. his book, *Germany and Ourselves*, Penguin edition, pp. 97, 144.) Lady Astor, leader of the "Cliveden set," which gave such powerful support to the Chamberlain Government before the war, and which shared its responsibility for Munich and its terrible consequences, also made anti-Semitic utterances before the war.<sup>1</sup>

Another organisation, similar in aims to the Anglo-German Fellowship but not so powerful and influential, was the Link. It also had its connections with big business and individuals in high circles. The pro-Nazi propaganda of these organisations was not conducted in the noisy fashion of the B.U.F., but insidiously, behind the scenes; it was at times difficult to unearth. The anti-Semitic poison which flowed from these sources was much the more dangerous. It was dissociated from the ugly hooliganism and brutal physical excesses against Jews which disgusted even people who had anti-Jewish prejudices. It was conducted indirectly and was not easily exposed.

By the outbreak of war in 1939 Jew-hatred had become a strong force in Britain, fostered and nourished by the most reactionary elements within the governing class. The war created conditions which gave it a further impetus. The transformation of the whole economy of the country uprooted millions of men and women from their normal existence and activity and transferred them into the Services or into war jobs. A serious deterioration took place in the standard of living of the working population as the cost of living climbed sharply and wages failed to catch up with rising prices. Particularly did the war hit the shopkeeper and

<sup>1</sup> "Witness," writing in *News Chronicle*, March 21st, 1938, remarked: "Lady Astor, I learn, has become fantastically anti-Jewish. She made a painful scene recently at a meeting of the Conservative Foreign Affairs Committee when she attacked one of the members on anti-Jewish lines, and again, at a private dinner of the English Speaking Union, her emotions about the Jews overcame her sense of the fitting." Lady Astor replied that she was not anti-Jewish and that "some of her best friends are Jews," etc. But she did not deny the precise statements of "Witness."

professional elements, the former being squeezed out by the big combines, the latter in many instances seeing their practices, the hard toil of many years, vanishing overnight. This was followed by the Blitzes of September, 1940, and the following months, with their destruction of lives and property and dislocation of family life.

In such conditions of social stress, the Jew-baiter reaped a rich harvest. The pre-war demonstrative thuggery of the B.U.F. came to an end. But the racial propagandist is always able to seize upon the immediate grievances of the people and to blame them on to the Jews. If before the war unemployment, slums and all the social evils were due to "Jew control," the war, according to the racial propagandists, was a "Jew's war," deliberately fostered by the Jews, for whom the Englishman was called upon to shed his blood. When the September Battle of Britain exposed the deficiencies of shelter accommodation and evacuation areas, the Jew-baiter was able to introduce into these issues anti-Jewish feeling. Had the Government pursued a bold constructive policy for alleviating the terrible distress and suffering caused by the intensive raids, then the Jew-baiters in the shelters and billeting areas would have found their job much more difficult. But when appalling shelter conditions were allowed to exist, such as those in the notorious Tilbury and other East End shelters, when chaos and overcrowding took place in evacuation areas, then anti-Semitism met with success. Racial feeling arose in the shelters within the first few weeks of the Blitz. The *Jewish Chronicle's* special correspondent, commenting on the growth of anti-Semitism he encountered in his tour of the shelters, wrote:

"Generally speaking, racial hostility was weaker where the shelter conditions were better organised, and stronger where the organisation was haphazard and where points of friction were allowed to accumulate" (November 1st, 1940).

When the Tubes were taken over by the public as shelters, a tremendous scramble took place for pitches on the platforms and even on the stairs. The Tubes were supposed to be practically bomb-proof shelters. Terrible overcrowding,

discomfort and filthy sanitary conditions engendered strife among the tens of thousands who were in fear of sheltering anywhere but in the Tubes.

"A complaint which is given significance to by the fact that it recurred at several stations was that individual policemen had openly sided with anti-Semites in disputes which had arisen. I heard this complaint from shelterers at Leicester Square, Tottenham Court Road and Wood Green" (*ibid.*).

The *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette*, a local North London paper with a wide circulation in North and East London, where Mosley gained some mass support, gave the Jew-baiter a hand:

"From personal observations, I should say that 90 per cent. of those who recline nightly on Tube platforms are of the Jewish persuasion. . . . Besides males with black patriarchal beards, the observer cannot fail to detect a considerable number of robust and obviously well-nourished men" (October 21st, 1940).

Even local authorities manifested racial discrimination.

"Resentment was caused at Tube stations last night by a question on the application form for bunk tickets. This question demanded the nationality of the applicant. A number of people, most of them British-born, queried the necessity and desirability of the question. The Post Warden replied that it was inserted by order of the local Council" (*Reynolds*, December 22nd, 1940).

In the billeting areas the Jew-baiter also stirred up racial feeling. Here again he was assisted by the Government's failure to tackle in a constructive manner the problems in the evacuation centres. Evacuees were thrown upon working-class homes, while the wealthy were hardly called upon to play their part. This led to overcrowding and discomfort, which soon brought forth into the open anti-Semitic prejudices.

"In a neighbouring town I found considerable evidence of friction. Outside the station, as the refugees left in a pathetic procession to seek billets, I heard disgruntled mutterings about a Jewish invasion. . . . Later, when there was a scramble for buses and several members of the much-inflated population naturally failed to obtain seats . . . there were grumblings about 'Jews and foreigners'" (*Jewish Chronicle*, October 27th, 1940).

"A mean attack on Jewish evacuees from London was made this week at a meeting of the High Wycombe Borough Council. . . . Councillor E. W. Hole stood up to declare that it was the Jews who scrambled on the buses and prevented other people finding places. The Jews, he said, get on the top step and keep out anyone who does not belong to the tribe of Israel. Foreigners were attending the local markets and taking away the places of honest Englishmen" (*Jewish Chronicle*, November 22nd, 1940).

In Cambridgeshire, a local Councillor, Major Fowler, declared that "we shall have half of the East End springing on us" and that—

"it is really scandalous, when honest born British citizens are staying in London and facing it, that the Jewish element should come down here and throw themselves on the public expense" (*Cambridgeshire Times*, October 18th, 1940).

Thus did the anti-Semites and their local allies stir up anti-Jewish feeling amidst the chaos and disorganisation in the evacuation areas.

Another issue arising from the war was the food racket, which the Government failed to tackle adequately. Large quantities of food went to the West End, where the rich could pay black market prices, while much smaller quantities went into working-class districts, whose inhabitants could not pay the inflated prices. Unscrupulous wholesalers and retailers took advantage of the food shortage created by the Government's food policy; profiteering and racketeering were widespread.

Among the numerous prosecutions for infringement of food regulations, the Jewish offenders were only a fraction of the total; but they were given most prominence in the newspapers.

"Only a tiny proportion of the malefactors are members of the Jewish community. But unfortunately, despite the fact that Jews among them form . . . so small a proportion, discrimination is practised in the procedure of the prosecution, where, for example, one Jew among thirty traders is selected as the test case, whereby the other twenty-nine non-Jews' cases are decided—and the grotesquely disproportionate prominence frequently given in the

Press to the Jewish cases is calculated to give a dangerously false impression" (*Jewish Chronicle*, June 12th, 1941).

In September, 1941, Mr. Alec Nathan, a Jewish communal leader, referring to the growth of anti-Semitism, said:

"Some of you may think that I have an obsession regarding the . . . development of anti-Semitism, and an altogether exaggerated idea of its incidence and importance. My answer to that is that I am in a better position than a man in a particular locality to measure its rapid development throughout the country, particularly in the last twelve months, as evidence of this development accumulates from all over the country and comes to the London office. Within the last few months I have been called in to meet three M.Ps. who were disturbed by the rapid growth of anti-Jewish feeling and fearful of its effect, if allowed to go unchecked, not only upon the Jews, but on the Gentile community. They wanted to know if we Jews were alive to the fact, and what we were doing to combat it.

"I have also had meetings with four men holding very important editorial positions on newspapers with a national circulation . . . who wanted to discuss this matter with me. . . . I was recently called into a consultation that was prompted by high Government circles" (*Jewish Chronicle*, September 5th, 1941).

Since the Nazi attack on the U.S.S.R., which was followed by Mr. Churchill's historic speech and the Anglo-Soviet Alliance, there have been significant indications that those elements in high circles who have been associated with anti-Semitism are those who, like the Isolationists in America, are bitterly opposed to the whole-hearted alliance with the U.S.S.R. for the joint victory over Hitler and the joint organisation of the peace. The political background of Lieutenant-Colonel Moore-Brabazon, Minister for Aircraft Production until the end of February, 1942, whose anti-Soviet speech aroused such widespread indignation in September, 1941,<sup>1</sup> can be seen from a passage in the

<sup>1</sup> At the T.U.C. Congress on September 2nd, 1941, Mr. Jack Tanner, President of the A.E.U., revealed that Moore-Brabazon had made a speech in which he expressed the hope that "the Russian and German armies will exterminate each other, and, while this is taking place, we, the British Commonwealth of Nations will so develop our air force and other armed forces that, if Russia and Germany do destroy each other, we shall have the dominating power in Europe."

"Londoner's Diary" of the *Evening Standard* (July 27th, 1939):

"Lady Mosley emerged last night as a new political hostess. She and Sir Oswald Mosley gave a dinner party at their home. . . .

The guests of honour were three Tory M.P.s., Colonel Moore-Brabazon and Captain Alan Ramsay and Sir Jocelyn Lucas, the newly elected Member for South Portsmouth.

The other guests included . . . Admiral Sir Barry Domville and Lady Domville, Professor Laurie [all leading figures in the Link—I. R.] and Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, who is a Mosley prospective candidate at next elections."

The refusal by Mr. Herbert Morrison, as Home Secretary, to make public the names of the Right Club, a body founded by Moore-Brabazon's fellow guest, the arch Jew-baiter, Captain Alan Ramsay, M.P., is another indication of the power wielded by Britain's pro-Hitlerites in high places. This club was stated by Ramsay to be an "anti-Judaic organisation" which had among its members "M.P.s., peers and people of good standing"; he had promised not to divulge the names of about 20 per cent. of the members, who did not want it to be known that they were associated with an "anti-Judaic organisation." Its programme was virulent hatred of Jews and the Soviet Union, and adulation of Hitler Germany.

Clearly there exists a direct link between anti-Semitism and those elements in high circles who, like their American counterparts, the Isolationists, fear a military defeat for Hitler because this may endanger the whole fabric of their system, their wealth and privileges. As anti-Semitism was used before to disrupt the anti-Fascist forces, so, if the time seemed ripe, it would be used again to disrupt the national unity of the British people against Hitler and to sabotage the Anglo-Soviet Alliance. Anti-Semitism in Britain may well become a powerful tool against the British people. Those elements who to-day are most strongly opposed to the fullest implementing of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance now and in the making of peace, are yesterday's supporters of Mosley and other disseminators of Jew-hatred. Anti-Semitism has

penetrated deeply into the British democratic mode of life. If this is not so apparent as in America, it is because here it is fostered in a much more discreet and cunning fashion. No British magnate of any real standing, no matter how reactionary, has ever published or even openly associated himself with a Jew-baiting organ in the crude fashion of Henry Ford and his *Dearborn Independent*. Even the late Lord Rothermere openly backed Mosley only for a short time. But the class function of this form of racial hatred is well understood. When in the early months of Hitler's rule certain prominent Jews and non-Jews told the Jewish people to "keep out of politics" as a means of combating anti-Semitism, the *Economist*, organ of powerful interests in the City of London, made a significant comment:

"But even if the Jew abstains from all political activity, will not increasing social conflict introduce anti-Semitism into England in any case? The problem in the last analysis is therefore not whether England is immune from anti-Semitism, but whether England is immune from social conflict" (June 10th, 1933).

This passage, which epitomises the essence of our argument, proves the understanding of anti-Semitism and its relation to "increasing social conflict," which exists in circles of high influence. Journals of this character are not for mass consumption.

"Anti-Jewish feeling is on the upward trend in this country. There exists a smouldering hatred of the Jew that only requires the slightest fanning to become a flame of practical persecution. . . . There appears to exist a large degree of sympathy with Hitler in his anti-Semitic outlook among people who otherwise ardently support the war against Germany" (*Freethinker*, quoted by the *Jewish Chronicle*, December 5th, 1941).

For the purposes of class domination and the maintenance of class privileges, all the old weapons of racial hatred are brought out again. The latest counterpart of anti-Semitism is Vansittartism. This creation of a former high Foreign Office official exists to foster hatred of the Germans as a peculiarly evil people, different from all others, and thus to



destroy the "mischievous influence" of the idea "that once there is a Socialist Germany there is nothing more to fear."<sup>1</sup>

### (3) Conclusion

We have shown that throughout the ages anti-Semitism and the Jewish question have been used as a diversionist weapon against the progressive forces in their struggle for a better and higher order of things, and that to-day they can still be used for the same purpose. We have seen how the Jewish question has been solved, and have also considered the Zionist problem. It remains for us to consider what lessons can be learnt from this survey in the present situation, when Fascism is menacing the freedom and liberty of tens of millions of people.

Mankind to-day is confronted with an immediate task which must be fulfilled before it can go forward to a higher and better social order. This is the defeat of Hitler Fascism, which has geared to its military machine practically the whole of the productive resources of the conquered countries in Europe. Hitlerism is a threat both to the nations which enjoy democratic freedom and to the Colonial peoples who are struggling for it.

New perspectives are now opened up for the Jews in their struggle against anti-Semitism and for the maintenance of their democratic rights; Hitlerism, the enemy of mankind, is the particular enemy of the Jews; even its temporary victory would mean the complete extinction of a large section of the Jewish people.

The immediate task of the Jewish people to-day is simple and clear. They must subordinate everything to the military defeat of Hitler, and, in addition to their work in political parties, trade unions and other non-Jewish organisations, *they must unite as Jews*. Jewry, if it wishes to win the respect of its non-Jewish brothers, must be in the forefront of the anti-Hitler struggle. For this is the path of progress and if there is one great outstanding lesson we as Jewish people must learn,

<sup>1</sup> Major Ernest Lloyd, M.P., at a luncheon of the Never Again Association, the Vansittart organisation, whose secretary, Mr. Digby d'Avigder, has been at different times employed by the British Intelligence Service, Scotland Yard and the Japanese Embassy (*Evening Standard*, February 19th, 1942).

a lesson that all our long history teaches, it is that where there is progress and expansion, where education and culture advances, anti-Semitism dare not show its evil face. Where reaction flourishes, education and culture are destroyed, while anti-Semitism becomes the principal weapon of those whose one desire is to hold back progress.

The greatest obstacle to the pro-Hitlerite Jew-baiter, who will attempt to profit from the problems and discomforts created by the war, is a strong, united Jewry, playing its part and contributing more than its share to the winning of the war. The Jewish people must learn that the strengthening of the national front against Hitler and the fullest carrying out of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance is their part in a struggle on whose outcome depends their very life and existence.

The heroism of Soviet Jewry, which is defending, together with all the peoples of the U.S.S.R., not only its fatherland, but the national freedom of all peoples, must be an example to the Jews the world over. The Soviet Press has paid a glowing tribute to the devotion and courage with which Soviet Jews are fighting. These Jews are indeed carrying on the great tradition of the Maccabees, Bar Kochba and Rabbi Akiba who in the Palestine of antiquity fought for national liberty against the Hellenes and the Romans with such great heroism. They are also carrying on those great traditions of the Jews in later centuries who, in Heine's words, bled on every battlefield for freedom and social progress. The modern Maccabees, those Jewish *franc tireurs* who levied such terrible toll upon the Nazi troops when they entered Kishinev, and the Jewish guerrilla fighters who, with their non-Jewish brothers, are harassing the German lines of communication, must inspire the Jews to even greater feats of heroism and sacrifice for Hitler's ultimate defeat.

For the non-Jew the menace of anti-Semitism as a diversionist tool in the present situation cannot be over-emphasised. He must help to stamp out every manifestation of anti-Semitism as part and parcel of his struggle for democracy and against Hitler and his agents in this country. He must

look upon anti-Semitism as the Trojan horse which has proved so successful in the past and which the reactionary pro-Fascists will have no hesitation in resorting to when the first opportunity arises.

It is not only the Fascist Jew-baiter, and those in the high places who openly or secretly support him, who must be exposed as Hitler's friends and the disrupters of our war effort. There are also individuals who may profess to be anti-Fascists, yet tend to blame the Jews for the evils and discomforts created by war conditions and to accuse them of exploiting for profit the issues that are such sore problems with the people. To accuse the Jews in the evacuation areas of being responsible for discomfort and overcrowding and the shortage of food, to accuse the Jews of monopolising the best shelters and speculating in the nation's food, etc., is to play Hitler's game here.<sup>1</sup> People may have their anti-Jewish prejudices or any other racial or religious sentiments, however wrong and mistaken. But what must be made clear to them is the danger of allowing such feelings to be exploited by the reactionaries in this country who are working against the interests of the British people and of democracy and freedom everywhere.

If, however, racial hatred is a powerful weapon in the armoury of Hitler's followers within the democracies, then a scientific understanding of the Jewish question is a necessary weapon in the armoury of every sincere anti-Fascist, for which he may well be thankful in the great battles that have yet to come. When imperialism and the conflicts to which it gives rise have vanished, when classes have been eliminated and a new and higher form of society has begun, our people will no longer be a "buffer" between warring forces but, blessed with peace and security, will march side by side with their Gentile brothers to a happier life than they have ever known.

If this book contributes even in the least degree to that end it will have served the purpose of the author.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Beverley Baxter's anti-Semitic utterances in the House of Commons, linking the Jews with the Black Market, have been quoted approvingly by the Nazi paper, the *Berliner Boersenzeitung*, which has hailed Mr. Baxter as one of those who have "perceived the deadly danger" (*Jewish Chronicle*, March 20th, 1942).