Zionism and Colonialism

Political Zionism: The Hegemonic Racism of the early 21st Century

By Ian Donovan

The popular image of Arabs in some of our most beloved Hollywood movies actually resembles... the popular image of Jews in Nazi propaganda... Hollywood and Washington share the same genes. Political and economic events like the crisis of high oil prices in the United States as a result of the refusal of the Arabs to export it to us, the (non-Arab) revolution in Iran, as well as Al-Qaeda activities, the events of 9/11 and others, exported a bad, faded image about Arabs to every American home... a blatant pattern of profiling to stereotype the Arabs and they also showed the similarity of this stereotype with the racist, anti-Semitic caricature and cartoon art throughout history.
Where we stand (extracts)

1. We stand with Karl Marx: ‘The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule’ (The International Workingmen’s Association 1864, General Rules). The working class ‘cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other sphere of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society’ (Marx, A Contribution to a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, 1843).

2. In the class struggle we shall fight to develop every struggle of the working class and oppressed in the direction of democratic workers’ councils as the instruments of participatory democracy which must be the basis of the successful struggle for workers’ power.

5. We fight for rank-and-file organisations in the trade unions within which we will fight for consciously revolutionary socialist leadership in line with Trotsky’s Transitional Programme statement: “Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn ones back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian factions, it is no less so passively to tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative (“progressive”) bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution.”

6. We totally oppose all economic nationalist campaigns like for ‘British jobs for British workers’ that means capitulation to national chauvinism and so to the political and economic interests of the ruling class itself. We are therefore unreservedly for a Socialist United States of Europe.

8. We fully support of all mass mobilisations against the onslaught of this reactionary Troy Government, in particular we stand for the repeal of all the anti-trade union laws and strongly opposed the new ones promised.

9. We are completely opposed to man-made climate change and the degradation of the biosphere which is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production for profits of transnational corporations. Ecological catastrophe is not ‘as crucial as imperialism’ but caused by imperialism so to combat this threat we must redouble our efforts to forward the world revolution.

11. We also support the fight of all other specially oppressed including lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people and the disabled against discrimination in all its forms and their right to organise separately in that fight in society as a whole. In particular we defend their right to caucus inside trade unions and in working class political parties. While supporting the latter right, we do not always advocate its exercise as in some forms it can reinforce illusions in identity politics and obscure the need for class unity.

13. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence. It is a legitimate act of self-defence for the working class to ‘No Platform’ fascists but we never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers’ organisations, as history has shown.

14. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price.

19. As socialists living in Britain we take our responsibilities to support the struggle against British imperialism’s occupation of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland very seriously. For this reason we have assisted in founding the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group and we will campaign for political status these Irish prisoners of war and for a 32-county united Socialist Ireland. We reject ‘two nations in Ireland’ theories.

21. We are for the re-creation of a World Party of Socialist Revolution, a revolutionary international, based on the best traditions of the previous revolutionary internationals, critically understood, particularly the early Third and Fourth Internationals, with their determination to combat and overcome both reformism and centrism. It is by orienting to the ranks of workers in struggle, struggles against imperialism, struggles of oppressed minorities against varied all forms of social oppression, as well as political ferment among intellectual layers radicalised through these struggles, that we will lay the basis for regroupments with forces internationally breaking with reformism, centrism and various forms of radical populism/nationalism, and seeking to build a new revolutionary Marxist international party.
Socialists (and anti-racists more generally) have to confront the role of political Zionists as the chief promoters of open racism today. This means open racism, not racism in general. There are many other types of racists active in the advanced capitalist countries, but with the exception of the political Zionists they largely operate in an obscured, cryptic manner in terms of political discourse.

We have to do this because we do not reduce all questions involving oppression in a vulgar manner to economic relations alone. Working class politics is more complex than that, and class and social antagonisms are refracted through, and often obstructed by, a substantial overlay of questions resulting from other complex types of oppression that cannot be simply reduced to ‘class’. As Lenin put it over a century ago, when dealing with often very different concrete questions, but of the same type:

“the Social-Democrat’s ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects” (https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/iii.htm)

The concretes may have changed, but the basic principle is the same. Socialists are consistent democrats, and need to be able to address questions involving such forms of oppression concretely, completely, and in an up-to-date manner in order to help resolve them and bring the explicit class aspects that underlie them to the fore. In today’s circumstances, with a new Intifada seemingly breaking out in Palestine, and with politics in the imperialist countries, including British politics substantially influenced by Zionism, and with injunctions from leading people influenced by it in all the major parties as to what views are, and are not, considered legitimate in the body politic, getting this right is a matter of the highest importance. Later I will deal with some concrete manifestations of this regarding the rise of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership of the Labour Party, but first of all it needs a proper elaboration and concrete theorisation.

It is necessary to define exactly what we mean by political Zionism. This is a movement whose objective is the maintenance by any and all available means of a Jewish ethnic state in the territory now known as Israel, which was taken by force from its indigenous Arab inhabitants over 70 years ago, and is still maintaining that state by the most monstrous force against the indigenous people of Palestine. Though in its core it is Jewish, Zionism is not just confined to Jews. If it were simply a narrowly Jewish movement it would not be so dangerous and hegemonic. Rather, it has a great moral authority among the ruling classes of the advanced capitalist countries, in a manner analogous to the way that white supremacism, anti-communism, homophobia and even ironically anti-semitism once had a similar authority.

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There is a common thread to all these bigoted ideologies, which have taken root as ideological watchwords of the bourgeoisie in discrete historical periods. They are/were all seen by the bourgeoisie as means of ideological terror against the opponents of the capitalist system, and thus as means to preserve a capitalist social system that does not have much appeal to its victims among the working class and exploited people generally. If the political representatives of capitalism proclaimed openly that the system was dedicated to the enrichment of a tiny minority of the population, it would not last very long. Its strength is in its ability to create ideologies that hide that reality, that instead provide reasons for sections of the subject population to hate other sections to the benefit of capitalism.

**Imperialism and ‘racial’ supremacy**

Capitalism lives by scapegoating; this technique is the basis of convincing part of the working class and middle class population that they have a common interest, not with each other against capital, but with capital against some population oppressed by it. This has always been the purpose of racism in all its varied forms. It was obviously the purpose of white supremacy, which existed since the dawn of capitalism; to create an ideology whereby instead of opposing slavery and colonial oppression, part of the working class particularly of the oppressor nations considered that they benefitted in social terms from the enslavement of the (usually) non-white working class in the colonial countries.

There was, and still is (in a modified form) a material basis for this in that the enormous profits gained initially from the hybrid capitalist form of chattel slavery were used to fund the industrialisation of the first advanced capitalist countries, notably Britain, France, Holland and later the United States. This laid the basis for these states to wage extensive wars of conquest around the globe, and thus for the later exploitation of colonies and semi-colonies under modern monopoly capitalist imperialism.

As the gap between the emerging advanced capitalist nations, and the countries and peoples their ruling classes plundered and enslaved, grew progressively greater in material terms, some of the wealth thus gained was, and still is, used to buy off a layer of the working class in advanced countries, with social gains that, it was clear, depended on the fortunes of ‘their’ imperialist country in the world order. This was justified by the pernicious idea of racial superiority and inferiority; this was actually always the basis of imperialist ideology in the working class.

The doctrine of white ‘racial’ superiority was dominant within imperialist ideology throughout the colonial period, but suffered...
Zionism and Colonialism

a seemingly huge, discrediting blow with the defeat of Nazi Germany in WWII. Hitler’s regime was the concentrated expression of this doctrine; although by virtue of its defeat in the 1914-18 war Germany’s colonies in Africa had been taken away. Instead of a colonial empire based on plunder in what is now known as the Global South, Nazi Germany concentrated its main efforts to the East. Its version of ‘racial superiority’ treated Slavs, and in a more concentrated form Jews and Roma as *untermenschen* (subhumans) who were to be exploited as slaves and ultimately exterminated for the supposed benefit of the Aryan *übermenschen*.

**Contradictions and Paradoxes**

The blow to notions of racial superiority that resulted from Hitler’s defeat was not without its contradictions, paradoxes and ambiguities, however. One being that though the ideological roots of National Socialism were firmly rooted in white supremacism, many if not most of its victims in the genocidal terror that was concentrated in Europe, were actually white (though considered not to be ‘Aryan’ according to the Nazi racial ideology).

The claim that the slaughter of Jews was simply unique, made today mainly by Jewish chauvinists or those who follow elements of their ideology, is false. The Nazi genocide of between 5 and 6 million East European Jews, today called the Holocaust or *Shoah*, took place alongside a similar number of non-Jews murdered, including at least four million Slavs of various nationalities, half a million Gypsies, tens of thousands of homosexuals and numerous identified Communists.

It was not even the first such mass killing of millions under modern imperialism. A comparable slaughter took place, of approximately 10 million Congolese Black Africans, at the hands of the Belgian State, which instituted personal rule of the Congo by its king, Leopold II, just prior to the beginning of the 20th Century. This incredible act of mass killing is infinitely less well-known than the slaughter of Jews in WWII (see the 1998 work *King Leopold’s Ghost* by Adam Hochschild for a comprehensive account).

The reasons for this lack of knowledge are several fold; one is that a great deal of effort was expended by the Belgian ruling class to cover it up. They had plenty of help from more powerful imperialist allies; Belgium was the *casus belli* for Britain’s involvement in WWI. The violation of the ‘neutrality’ of ‘poor little Belgium’ by Germany as a military manoeuvre against its opponent France was the excuse for Britain’s (already planned) declaration of war in 1914. The portrayal of Belgium as a victim would not be quite so convincing if it were widely known that Belgian imperialism was guilty of an act of slaughter that massively exceeded any then known, and that even Hitler probably did not exceed.

The genocidal slaughter of black Africans in the Belgian Congo is also indicative of something else that is grossly hypocritical about the claim of Western imperialism to have overcome racism. This is only the worst of many atrocities committed against non-white peoples by colonial and imperialist powers. Yet it was not the slaughter of dark-skinned Africans that supposedly discredited the cause of racial supremacy – on the contrary the Belgian crime and many others in Africa and Asia have been marginalised in public consciousness and are under-recognised to this day. Rather, it was the mass killing of European Jews that is supposedly the seminal event that discredited the notion of racial supremacy.

Yet despite the supposed rejection of racial supremacy that the Jewish *Shoah* brought about, imperialism still slaughters people in the Global South who challenge imperialist domination, and such slaughters proceed unabated, albeit these days often under the banner of ‘humanitarian’ intervention instead of racial supremacy. Except
Zionism and Colonialism

that where Israel’s dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs is concerned, even this fig leaf is missing as the ‘Jewish state’ is overtly supremacist and has openly racist laws.

Cultification of the Shoah
The way this is rationalised in the West is through the cultification of the Jewish Shoah. So while such events as King Leopold’s Congo murder of millions are not given anything like the historical prominence they deserve, in effect covered up by omission, the Shoah of Jews (though of not Hitler’s other victims) is sacralised as the ultimate crime in human history. Jews are portrayed as the ultimate victims, their suffering the Shoah is implicitly deemed to put them in a different, saintly category to the rest of humanity. For those who subscribe to this hypocritical ideology, which is itself genocidal in its logic, past Jewish suffering means that Jews are completely entitled to establish a Jewish ethnic state in the Middle East by expelling the majority of the indigenous people of Palestine. Furthermore, according to practitioners of this ideology, which include almost all North American and West European bourgeois politicians, as well as political servants of the bourgeoisie on the so-called left, Israel “has the right to defend itself” from the people it dispossessed by force, and whom it drove out of their own country.

This purely racist concept manifests itself whenever Israel decides to “mow the lawn” as it calls its periodic genocidal massacres of the indigenous people whose land it took by force, and continues to take more and more of. Whenever this happens, in response to completely justified rage and hatred from normal, decent working class people against the beasts who carry out these ‘mowings’, you hear a caterwaul about so called ‘antisemitism’ which is purely racist in content. After all, it’s only Arabs who are the victims, and they don’t really matter at all, what really matters is the dominance over them of Israeli Jews, who are part and parcel of ‘Judeo-Christian civilisation’, and so valuable to the capitalist system itself that normal considerations of human decency go right out of the window. This is the mainstream racist ideology in the West today, shot through with a hypocritical, gangrenous pseudo-anti-racism.

One important consequence of such events as Leopold’s Congolese carnage remaining little-known is that it helps to propagate the myth that the barbarism of Nazi Germany was some kind of aberration, something extraneous, not rooted in the capitalist mode of production itself. Nazi Germany is deemed alien to the humane and tolerant ethos of profit-making that is supposedly characteristic of capital. Nazism is bracketed instead with ‘communism’. The atrocities of Stalin, Mao etc., along with Hitler, are depicted as supposedly in a completely different, ‘totalitarian’ category to ‘normal’ capitalist society.

Class struggle and ‘totalitarianism’
But these distinctions are phoney. In fact both Nazism and Stalinism are products of the class struggle that is organic to capitalism, from which it can never escape whatever stratagems its ruling class may resort to. Both, in rather different ways, were
movements directed against the working class. Nazism was a mass movement of the despairing petty-trading middle class and powerless, chronically unemployed who were used by German capitalists as a battering ram to smash the strongest labour movement in Europe when German capital faced the deepest, most crippling crisis in its history during the depression of the 1930s.

It was only able to do this because the German labour movement was politically dominated by the Social Democratic labour bureaucracy, which had proven its loyalty to capitalism in 1914-1918 by its support to the imperialist war effort. This same loyalty and servility to capital meant they refused to fight Hitler’s fascist terror movement with the methods of civil war; under their misleadership the German workers were crushed without resistance.

The German Communist Party (KPD) was supposed to be the revolutionary opposition to this. It had been founded by principled fighters for the working class who had been the most determined opponents of the imperialist world war. Key founders of the party were murdered in 1919 by the ultra-right acting in an uneasy alliance with the pro-war right-wing social democrats in the context of an incipient, spontaneous working class revolution. The infant Communist Party, knowing it was too small and inexperienced to lead the revolutionary upsurge to victory, attempted to give what leadership it could while minimising the danger of a crushing defeat for the working class. However this cost them the death of some of their best leaders: Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Jogiches and others.

The KPD never recovered from the loss of its revolutionary founders, and it became a casualty of the degeneration of the Russian revolution. A series of lesser leaderships were imposed on it by the degenerating regime in Russia, which was becoming increasingly hostile to the possibility of working class revolution anywhere else.

But it had acquired the means to control large Communist Parties in some parts of the world, and to impose on them policies that served the interests, not of the working class in their own countries, but of the clique around Stalin in the USSR. For its own factional-prestige reasons, the Stalin regime at that point saw social democracy as its main enemy, so it directed its tame leadership of the German CP to pursue a bizarre policy of denouncing the German social democrats as ‘social fascists’ and even at times allying with the Nazis against them. The actually had the effect of making a united fight against fascism of the German workers impossible – it also played a crucial role, alongside the servility of the social democrats themselves, in allowing Hitler to win without any serious resistance.

These events took place in a much wider context: the defeat of the post-World War I revolutionary wave in the advanced Western countries, most crucially Germany, meant that the only place where a victorious revolution had taken place was backward Russia. The confinement of the working class to an isolated, but massive, backward country where the urban workers were massively outnumbered by peasants based on backward rural economy, meant that social-
ism, always conceived of as an international endeavour involving at minimum several of the most advanced countries acting together, was in the given situation impossible.

The Soviet state did not thereby cease to exist; rather a new conservative layer arose within the Communist Party itself, which by degrees manoeuvred the genuine internationalist communist elements out of power, and then repressed them savagely in a counterrevolutionary bloodletting at the end of the 1930s that rivalled the repression instituted by fascism in the capitalist countries. This amounted to the working class being pushed out of power and replaced by an anomalous form of class rule based on a state bureaucracy, which mimicked the exploitative role of capital while taking half a century to openly break with the formal ideology of the revolution and the state owned economy that was created by it.

For all that this regime continued to call itself ‘communist’, continued for decades to rule a state-owned economy, and even managed to attract imitator ‘communist’ movements in a number of backward countries, such as China, Vietnam, even Cuba. These were not working class movements seeking international socialism on the basis of working class democracy and the most advanced productive forces.

Rather they were middle class/peasant nationalist movements, looking for an alternative way for backward countries to industrialise using a centralised state as a weapon as with the Russian example, in countries where capitalism itself appeared at that time to have led these countries into a morass of foreign domination, enslavement and paralysis. These regimes in effect saved capitalism from itself, through attaining independence, unification, and the conditions for the emergence of viable national capitalist markets in countries that had earlier been plundered and ruined by imperialist predation to the point that the traditional forms of capitalist rule had become temporarily unviable.

These Stalinist regimes were not an alternative to capital in historic terms, but acted as something akin to a plaster cast for the capitalist system, a rigid framework beneath which the broken bones of local capitalism could repair themselves. Contrary to the demonology and myth-making of outright apologists for capitalism and imperialism, these regimes were not the creation of fanatics and extremists; the very fact that masses of the people sought an alternative to capital in the first place was because imperialist capital had driven these societies to the point of social collapse. Their rejection of supposed ‘ultra-leftism’ and ‘Trotskyism’ was not some obscure point of doctrine, but rejection of the working class itself, in pursuit of a programme that gave these hybrid bureaucratic regimes of statified capital a regent-like character, that was ultimately pro-capitalist in a profound sense, paving the way for the rebirth of capitalism proper. Thus the politics of Yeltsin were not a divergence from the politics of Stalin; the politics of Deng Xiaoping were not a divergence from that of Mao Zedong; they were rather the logical descendants of the earlier phase.

**Shifts in the imperialist ‘racial’ hierarchy**

This may appear as a digression from the subject matter of this article, but it is not. Zionism is not a parochial movement confined to the Middle East, but rather something that plays an important role in several imperialist countries, notably the United States, but also in Western Europe. In discussing the rise of such a movement to prominence, and the world role that it actually plays in the present phase of the epoch of capitalist-imperialist decline, the wider world context in which such developments took place also needs to be understood. The role of would-be communist movements internationally, especially given the power that those movements wielded through the
period we are discussing, is a part of this international context, which cannot be analysed in Marxist terms without touching on this question, at least in its most important features.

These events are important for understanding how Zionism gained the hegemonic position in bourgeois politics that it has today. It is bound up with a major change in the position of Jews in the pecking order of peoples that is inevitable in a world divided not just into classes, but also into a system of nation-states in which a number of wealthy imperialist countries systematically extract tribute from less wealthy nations and the corresponding peoples that underlie them. Thus overlaying the class divisions between the working class and the bourgeoisie are massively unequal relationships between peoples. The ruling classes of some nations actually play a role in suppressing the economic and political development of other peoples, though plunder, and both direct and indirect exploitation. Thus we get the phenomenon of oppressor and oppressed peoples, in all its variation, which contaminates the ‘pure’ class struggle with complex national questions.

Also overlaying this is the oppression of important ethnic minorities in the imperialist countries. For instance, there is the oppression of the black population of the United States, which was derived from slavery in the early capitalist period, and (Barack Obama notwithstanding) is still a long way from real equality. There is the oppression of aboriginal peoples in a number of former colonial-settler states, in Australia and New Zealand where this is still a major social question; or for that matter in the United States where formal racial discrimination was state policy, such as apartheid South Africa and ‘Rhodesia’. Something similar in some ways is being attempted in Occupied Palestine though there are some important differences.

There is also the situation of numerous immigrants from ex-colonies in the imperialist countries, such as Afro-Caribbeans, South Asians, and latterly Africans in the UK, Maghrebin Arabs and others in France, as well as Black Africans and those from French Caribbean dependencies, Turkish ‘guest workers’ in Germany, to the oppressed Roma population in much of Eastern Europe, Caucasians and those from former Soviet Central Asia in Russia, or even the Korean migrant population in Japan. More recently migrations of East Europeans in the EU free movement context, have complicated, but not fundamentally changed, these issues.

All of these questions involve the creation of ethnic (or ‘racial’) hierarchies through historical processes, both within and without the imperialist countries. All of them are in some way abound up with the enforcement of some kind of servitude or second class status on entire peoples, to the extent that it is true that the majority of humanity is not just subject to exploitation in the sense of a worker under capitalism, but is also to some additional form of national or racial oppression on top of that. Something that in practice deprives them even of equal status with ordinary working class people of
the imperialist countries, who themselves constitute an exploited and often semi-suppressed class. These kinds of relations between peoples, once consolidated under capitalism, have tended to become intractable, an inherent part of the system, to the point that it is obvious to anyone who seriously studies such things in their historical sweep that the real emancipation of these peoples from such systematic oppression can only fully take place when capitalism is abolished.

The exception to the rule
There is one glaring exception to this: one formerly oppressed population that under capitalism has escaped from oppression and degradation, and even a serious attempt at genocide in the middle of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century, to ascend the de-facto hierarchy of peoples that capitalism has created right to the top. Jews have, uniquely under capitalism, escaped from being a semi-pariah population in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century to being joint top dogs of the imperialist world in the early 21\textsuperscript{st} Century. Symbolic of this is the term ‘Judeo-Christian civilisation’ that is habitually used by ideologues of Western imperialism to denote the supposedly innate superiority of the West to its perceived ‘others’. By degrees, this has become the dominant narrative; since the 1967 war at least it was the default view, marginalising the anti-Jewish themes of the previous manifestations of imperialist reaction. In the 2000s, with the eruption of imperialism’s ‘war on terror’: ideological cover for an attempted partial recolonisation of part of the Middle East by imperialist states, it has become a feverish, militaristic barely-disguised racist narrative in its own right.

The reversal of the position of the Jews in imperialism’s pecking order of peoples has a materialist explanation. Unlike virtually every other victimised population that has been subjected to racial oppression under capitalism, Jews were never, except in the circumstances of the actual attempt at genocide, an enslaved population of colonial-type subjects. Rather, the Jewish population was a different type of pariah population with a complex origin bound up with their economic role in pre-capitalist European society. They were a commodity-trading and later money-trading people-class, in societies where commodity exchange, let alone commodity production (which was virtually unknown), was an activity at the margins of the economic system, which was based on natural, agricultural economy and a form of exploitation based on the appropriation of material goods (i.e. use values in Marxist terms), not exchange values.

This is a complex subject, which has been treated in full elsewhere. It was touched on by Karl Marx in his celebrated early essay *On the Jewish Question*. The understanding of the Jews as a people-class of traders in pre-capitalist society was elaborated at length in Abram Leon’s notable work *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, and some extensions of this analysis were much more recently put forward by myself in a series of articles on the website *Comunist Explorations*, most synthetically in the *Draft Theses on the Jews and Modern Imperialism*.

The core of this understanding is that the pariah role of the Jews was a transitory phenomenon that was not organic to capitalism, but rather was a hangover from the late feudal period, when their pre-capitalist
role as a ‘foreign’ commodity-trading class was rendered superfluous by the emergence of the bourgeoisies as competitors. They were pushed to the margins and became a pariah layer associated above all with usury, forced into ghettos by feudalism which increasingly used them as a scapegoat for mass discontent with a disintegrating economic system, while at the same time being regarded as insidious competitors by the emerging native bourgeoisies.

This pariah status and oppression, as well as the wide-ranging international trading connections of the Jews derived from their status as a religious minority in many countries, led to their being radicalised both as an intellectual layer and an artisan proletariat, and in those roles playing an important role both in the bourgeois revolutions, where the demand for Jewish emancipation from the ghetto was an important democratic issue, and in the early working class, socialist and communist movement. At the same time, the centuries-long experience of Jewish traders, merchant and usurers in the world of commodities gave them a cultural advantage in the new capitalist societies that were based on generalised commodity production and exchange. Part of the Jewish population was therefore absorbed into the bourgeoisies of the new capitalist countries in Europe and then North America, and became often extremely successful, in a proportion far beyond the proportion of Jews in the general population.

This combination, of successful Jewish capital, and Jewish participation in the working class movement, was the material base that gave birth to a peculiar, racist and deeply reactionary ideology, classical anti-semitism, when capitalism ceased to be an expanding, progressive system in the late 19th century. This ideology was based on a counter-revolutionary racist demonology; it saw Jewish bourgeois as the financiers of a Jewish-led subversive movement against ‘Christian’ civilisation. This was initially the ideology of late-feudal reaction in 19th Century Tsarist Russia, where the large Jewish population was subjected to vicious attacks and pogroms. But as many Jewish refugees fled Russia to the West, the ideology of ‘anti-semitism’ and the Tsarist forgery The Protocols of the Elders of Zion became a major force in European politics first in France with the Dreyfus case, then in Germany in the early-to-mid 20th Century, culminating in the rise of the genocidal anti-Jewish National Socialists under Hitler’s leadership.

Some say that the defeat of Nazi Germany and the exposure of its mass slaughter of the Jews, along with other less well-regarded minorities such as Roma and homosexuals, a considerable number of Slavs, as well as many communist and socialists, were decisive in discrediting racism. It is ironic then that today, the one state in the Western ‘family’ of nations based on the ‘Judeo-Christian’ tradition that openly propagates ethnic criteria for whom it regards as a real citizen of the state, and which openly engages in violent, oppressive treatment and even mass expulsions of (non-Jewish) people indigenous to its supposed national territory on ethnic grounds, is Israel: the Jewish state. It is also notable that this savage ethnocratic oppression takes place with the fulsome approval of its Western allies in Europe and America, with only the occasional half-hearted slap on the wrist when Israel ‘goes too far’ in some incredible atrocity against its indigenous Palestinian Arab population.

This suggests that the outcome of World War II was not the straightforwardly devastating defeat for racism that Western imperialist liberal apologists would like to pretend it was. Rather, it suggests that imperialist racism underwent a quasi-revolutionary transformation of its form, into something more sophisticated, more synthetic, and in many ways more pernicious and hypocritical. However, it was still racism in real practice: an ideology that, whatever its finer points, justified the sys-
tematic oppression and repression of the mass of the people of entire ethnic groups, based on a rationale that considered those groups as in some way collectively inferior and expendable for the supposedly greater good of the dominant peoples. Jews had now joined the dominant peoples, as indicated by the increasingly prevalent trope about ‘Judeo-Christian civilisation’.

Transformation into the opposite
The reason for this is not obvious, but can be explained by historical materialist analysis. One of the very factors that had created the conditions where ‘anti-semitic’ racism, and indeed the Nazi genocide, could take place, had been transformed into a novel way into its opposite. Prior to the genocide, as mentioned earlier, the combination of the disproportionate success of Jewish bourgeois in capitalist business with the radical role of Jews in the workers movement had produced anti-semitism as a racist, counterrevolutionary paranoia among the non-Jewish imperialist bourgeoisie.

The Nazi genocide dealt a savage blow to Jewish radicalism, by physically exterminating an enormous number of communist and socialist Jews. But it also dealt an even more devastating blow, as the sheer barbarism involved and the lack of effective solidarity that such Jews received from the (previously crushed) non-Jewish proletariat in Germany and its expanded Reich laid the basis for the political displacement of Jewish socialism by Zionism, as a nationalist movement that, even though it initially took left-sounding forms, had a deeply divisive and anti-communist logic. And thirdly, though the Jewish bourgeoisie suffered grievous losses in the Third Reich, the overrepresentation of Jews among the bourgeoisie that had in part prompted the rise of anti-semitic agitation (the “socialism of fools”, as Bebel called it), remained completely intact in the United States, not to mention the UK and other European imperialist countries, even if some did have to take refuge elsewhere for the duration of the conflict with Hitler.

In other words, what WWII and the genocide brought about was an ideological revolution, a major qualitative and regressive leap in the consciousness of the Jewish people. The pro-working class, radical part of the Jewish people was physically wiped out, and where it was not, was ideologically wiped out. This regressive change is irreversible in terms of the specific peculiarity of the Jewish people as a partial vanguard of socialism prior to the genocide: these specific elements of Jewish consciousness and the vanguard role they once played are gone, and can never be re-created.

A crucial indication of this is also represented by a major change in the relationship between Jews and the Communist movement, both the genuine internationalist (‘Trotskyist’) minority, and more significantly in terms of brute social power at least, the degenerated ‘Communist’ movements led by Stalin and his successors, both within and without the USSR. The previous radicalisation of the Jews as a result of their anomalous position in early capitalism led to Jewish intellectuals and workers playing a disproportionate, and thoroughly progressive, vanguard role in the early socialist and communist movement. However, the decline of genuine internationalist communism with the degeneration of the Stalin-led communist movement from internationalism to ‘socialism in one country’, and then the rise of third-world surrogate-nationalist movements in ‘Communist’ garb led by the likes of Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Castro and Guevara, produced a fairly generalised rift of Jews with the communist movement.

Both the internationalism of the bulk of the early communist movement, and the internationalism of the radical Jews who supported it, were extinguished and were replaced by symmetrical forms of reactionary nationalism. Where communist Jews were not exterminated by the fascists, many
lost the real internationalist element within their tradition and became Zionists, seeking the re-creation of a 2000-year-old semmythical Levantine Jewish state in the conditions of modern capitalism: a totally reactionary goal.

Some hid the reactionary implications of this, even from themselves, by projecting a ‘socialist’ Israel – the USSR even armed the infant Israeli state, before being quickly rebuffed. Over time the rift between Zionised Jews and the Stalinist regimes became a massive one; the participation of many Western Jews with Israeli government supporters in campaigns to ‘Free Soviet Jewry’ (they hoped to settle these in Israel) was also a crucial factor in turn in bringing about an equally drastic change in the view of the non-Jewish imperialist bourgeoisie towards Jews.

Whereas previously they had often looked at the Jewish bourgeoisie with suspicion, as a potential danger to them, now with the defeat of the Jewish left, they began to develop the opposite conception, which is the case today. As part of the outcome of these events, the non-Jewish bourgeoisie has come to regard its Jewish compatriots as a priceless resource of the capitalist system itself, a kind of vanguard, class conscious layer, the bearer of a culture whose connection with commodity exchange is older than capitalism itself, as a system based on the generalisation of commodity production and exchange. This became clear in the post WWII period, particularly after the rise of Israel and the 1967 war. It was manifested in the rise of neoliberalism, with ideologues like Milton Friedman, and then neo-conservatism in Cold War II and later the neo-colonial wars against the Muslim world, with the very prominent role of Zionist ideologues, often Jewish, in these bourgeois political movements and trends which have become pretty well hegemonic in bourgeois politics.

Vanguard of imperialist racism
And that is the take-off point for the situation we have today. Zionism has become the vanguard of racism in the main, traditional imperialist countries. Zionists are the vanguard of anti-Muslim agitation, they have been the core of the neo-conservative movement that has been, and still is, the vanguard of imperialist militarism in the Middle East. To a real extent, they are seen as a vanguard by the imperialist ruling classes in the most advanced countries. This has a material basis; for the historical reasons mentioned earlier, Jews have always been over-represented in the bourgeoisie of the advanced Western capitalist countries. In the earlier period of Jewish involvement in genuine revolutionary anti-capitalism, this was seen as threatening by many non-Jewish bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries.

But with the revolutionary change of consciousness referred to earlier among both Jews and the non-Jewish bourgeoisie, this has been transformed into its opposite. Jews are now seen as almost the Holy of Holies by the Western imperialist bourgeoisie. This process was inseparable from the rise of the state of Israel with its peculiar citizenship law, the Law of Return, which gives everyone regarded as Jewish in the conventional sense the right to Israeli citizenship. Thus the overrepresentation of Jews in the ruling classes of the imperialist countries added an additional element; that overrepresented layer acquired a material stake in another state, one they had already been considera-
bly involved in funding and bringing into existence in the earlier period on the basis of a Zionist-nationalist vision. What in effect happened is that part of the ruling classes of the Western countries came to overlap with the ruling class of Israel, the most recently and artificially created of the advanced-capitalist, imperialist states. That is the material basis of Zionist power in the advanced capitalist countries; the ‘moral’ authority of Zionism and Israel has had its own autonomous elements, but materially it is based on that.

**Corbyn, Labour and Zionism**

This has particular relevance for what has recently happened in the British Labour Party, when a working class revolt from below has expressed itself in a rejection of neo-liberalism and the imperialist militarism of the neo-conservatives, as most classically expressed by the foul legacy of Tony Blair. This has been done, not surprisingly, against the bitter opposition, resistance and hatred of Zionists, with the Jewish Chronicle playing a particularly prominent role.

Zionists played an enormously prominent role in attacking the Corbyn campaign, and it has to be said that the British working class movement is not yet armed politically to deal with this. At this point in time the working class movement is unable to give a complete political answer to Zionism’s witch-hunting methods and strategies, because it lacks a coherent and consistent Marxist understanding of the Jewish Question and its implications. But the analysis laid out above does answer the basic points that need to be addressed in combatting this, now dominant, form of racism in the imperialist countries.

Contrary to the disingenuous rantings and sophistry that has been oozing through the bourgeois press, and finding ready support in a number of ‘pro-war-left’ or left-neocon blogs, the reason that Corbyn has been targeted is precisely because he is an anti-racist and because, despite his left social democratic political limitations, this anti-racism has led him to solidarise with the victims and opponents, some of whom are flawed, others of which are politically confused, of this historically specific type of racism and virulent reactionary nationalism that is hegemonic in Western societies today.

**Distinction between oppressor and oppressed**

The attacks on Corbyn for fraternising with Hamas and Hezbollah, for instance, during his victorious election campaign, were trumpeted far and wide by the bourgeois media and echoed by Blairite shill’s and even some left Zionists in and around the Labour Party, such as the Alliance for Workers Liberty, who are in the embarrassing position of attacking Corbyn from the right and trying to curry favour with all kind of foul pro-imperialist war and anti-Arab ‘left’ bigots, while at the same time needing for reasons of historical attachment to keep one foot in the camp of the far left. Therefore they were compelled to support Corbyn’s election campaign, even though in their own terms they continually had to hold their noses because of the frequent intrusion of genuinely left-wing, anti-Zionist sentiments into it. This is their acute contradiction, and given their long political association with all kinds of reactionary pro-imperialist reactionaries and bigots, not one that we should have any confidence will be resolved positively from the point of view of the left.

Corbyn has been forced somewhat on the defensive when accused of sharing platforms with Hamas and Hezbollah militants at events opposing Israeli crimes against the Palestinians and Lebanese, and has rationalised his addressing their representatives as ‘friends’ as simply a diplomatic form of address to people he nevertheless strongly disagrees with and seeks to persuade of the benefits of ‘peace’. This is actually an unnecessary concession to bourgeois ‘public
opinion’, and is reflective of a contradic-
tion and weakness in Corbyn’s own ideolo-
ygy. ‘Peace’ is all very well, but as we are
sure he would agree when pressed, peace is
only possible when legitimate grievances
are fully addressed and when oppression
comes to an end.

In which case, Corbyn has nothing to
apologise for about engaging in joint pro-
test activity and campaigning against Zion-
list and imperialist oppression with repre-
sentatives of the Palestinians and Lebanese
Shia Muslims who have systematically (in
the case of the Palestinians) and periodical-
lly (in the case of the Lebanese Shia) been
murdered and oppressed by racist Zionist
Israel, with Western support, for decades.
Those who scream about the supposed
‘anti-semitism’ of Hamas and Hezbollah,
and thereby imply that Israeli-Jewish
armed settlers (which is what, in reality all
adult Israelis amount to in current political
conditions) are in some sense the actual or
potential victims of their ‘racism’, are
themselves peddling an anti-Arab, racist
narrative.

Anti-racism cannot ever be an injunction
on the oppressed to love their oppressors
and not to hold views of them that are
tinged with hatred, even if expressed in
religious and/or racialized terms. Racism is
not about the oppressed holding such
views about their oppressors. Racism is
rather an expression in ideological terms of
a power relation that an oppressor people
maintain in oppressing an oppressed peo-
ple. It systematically regards the oppressed
people as in some sense of a lower order,
as deserving of the oppression visited upon
them.

This understanding is the basis of the
elementary distinction that Marxists have
always made between the nationalism of
the oppressor and the nationalism of the
oppressed, or between the violence of the
oppressor and the violence of the op-
pressed. As Trotsky said of this issue in
Their Morals and Ours:

“A slave-owner who through cunning and
violence shackles a slave in chains, and a
slave who through cunning or violence
breaks the chains – let not the contemptible
eunuchs tell us that they are equals before a
court of morality!” (https://
www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/
morals/morals.htm)

In this sense, the record is quite clear. Pal-
estinians have been driven out of their own
homeland for the past 70 years, and those
in the additional parts of Palestine Israel
conquered in 1967 have been under Israeli
racist-terrorist rule for 50 years. The Leba-
nese Shia, the main Lebanese population
that has been periodically targeted for mas-
sacre by Israel since Begin’s day, are like-
wise in a power relation with Israel that is
crystal clear. What is true of violence and
nationalism is also true today of religious
fundamentalism or even so-called
‘racism’ (or ‘anti-semitism’) by supporters
of these movements – we distinguish be-
tween the ideologies and actions of the
oppressor, and the oppressed.

So actually, ‘concern’ about ‘anti-
semitism’ by supporters of Hezbollah and
Hamas in the context of Israeli ethnic-
cleansing and mass terrorism is akin to
‘concern’ about ‘anti-white racism’ among

Zionism and Colonialism
blacks in the context of apartheid South Africa, or white ‘Rhodesia’, or Jim Crow in America, and all manner of other racist crimes. It is racist demonology.

While Marxists do not subscribe to the programmes of these movements or the ideologies that underpin them, neither do we consider them in any way comparable to the racism of Israel and its supporters and apologists in the West. They actually arose, to a considerable extent, because of the successful actions of Zionism in destroying and humiliating earlier, secular movements against Zionist oppression.

Which make these Zionist attacks on the ‘reactionary’ politics of their supporters doubly hypocritical. There should be no concession to the calumnies about the ‘anti-semitism’ of the Arab victims of Zionism, but rather those who raise these ‘concerns’ should receive a robust response.

It is these critics who are the racists, who are inverting the relation between the oppressor and the oppressed in the Middle East in a truly Orwellian manner.

They are in reality devotees of the dominant racist narrative of the bourgeoisie of the ‘Judeo-Christian’ imperialist countries, using this anti-Arab, anti-Muslim narrative to justify massacres, ethnic cleansing and the threat of nuclear war in their neo-colonial offensive that has reduced much of the Middle East to chaos and bloodshed.

Paul Eisen and the Holocaust

Then there is the other question Corbyn was castigated about (by the Daily Mail and the Jewish Chronicle, among others) during his campaign for the leadership – his supporting events by so-called ‘anti-semites’ and Holocaust Deniers. Most importantly, Corbyn was denounced for having attended events organised by Deir Yassin Remembered, an organisation that was founded mainly by Jews and Israeli expats to commemorate the Zionist massacre of over 100 Palestinian villagers at Deir Yassin, on the edge of West Jerusalem, in April 1948. The Director of Deir Yassin Remembered is Paul Eisen, a British Jew who lives in North London.

Any examination of Eisen’s material would reveal that he is deeply sensitive to the crimes that have been committed in the name of the Jewish people (and thereby himself), and has an emotional response to this that may be eminently comprehensible, but is hardly the best way to achieve political clarity. He embodies a deep sense of guilt for crimes committed by his own people, as he sees it. This is not an unfamiliar phenomenon to those active on the left. One sometimes comes upon those who have a similar response to their British, German or American heritage, and are consumed with guilt about the crimes of imperialism. This is not usually a working class response; however neither is it anything to fear, it can be the beginning of wisdom if those usually quite middle-class radicalised types break with their guilt reaction and seek to analyse imperialism politically, using Marxist methods of analysis.

What is relatively new is coming across Jewish people who have a similar guilt complex about their own Jewish origin. This is evidently the case with Eisen, who has reacted to the cultification of the Shoah and its use to justify crimes against the Palestinians today, by publicly expressing strong doubts about the truth of key aspects of the Shoah, particularly the existence of gas chambers and whether there was ever a Nazi plan to exterminate Europe’s Jews in 1941-5. He considers that Jews were subjected to arbitrary imprisonment, starvation and slave-labour which caused many deaths, but was aimed at ethnic cleansing and expulsion, not mass extermination, and that the number of Jewish victims was therefore inflated, partly by inaccurate estimates of the Jewish pre-war population.

This is a fair summary of Eisen’s views and motivations, some of which are still available on the web. His personal website was made private when his views and activities became a political issue during Jeremy

Zionism and Colonialism
Corbyn’s election campaign. Corbyn himself had attended some events of *Deir Yassin Remembered*, most recently in 2013, when he was pictured at a public event along with Gerald Kaufman, the ‘father of the House [of Commons]’ (longest serving MP) who in his younger days had been a fervent and idealistic Zionist; in later life he became one of the most outspoken Jewish critics of Israeli crimes and himself has been frequently denounced as a ‘self-hating Jew’. It appears that Corbyn sometimes gave donations to this grouping for its work in commemorating a hideous, too-little-known massacre and bringing it to public attention.

Eisen’s views are misguided and historically wrong. Apart from the dubious factual basis of the material he directly cites, mainly gleaned from dubious sources on the old-style far right concerned to minimize Hitler’s crimes (which Eisen accepts without any real examination of motives, a product of his guilt about current crimes), his analysis accepts one key aspect of Zionist ideology that neither he nor most of his detractors even notice – the view that the Nazi Genocide was really only about the Jews.

But it was not: half a million Roma gypsies were also wiped out by the Nazis. Also several million Slavs, gays and communists. Jehovah’s Witnesses even. Jews had the highest death toll because they were the target group with the highest population, but it was not all about the Jews. But while Eisen has become fixated with debunking the essentially true but misused facts about the actual slaughter of Jews, many of his most vehement critics share this focus on the Jewish ownership of the *Shoah*. But unlike Eisen, most of these do this same thing from a straightforwardly Jewish chauvinist standpoint.

**Jewish racism against … Jews?**

After all, racism is above all a reflection of real relations of oppression. Judge in that regard, the allegations of ‘racism’ that have been flung at Eisen, and were also flung at Corbyn by association. How on earth is Eisen a racist in propagating his (incorrect) views on the *Shoah*? Is he, as a Jew, engaged in some form of oppression of other Jews by means of his opinions? Not at all, the idea is absurd, since (a) Jews are not an oppressed minority, but a rather well-off and in many ways privileged minority in British society today, and (b) if they were in some ways oppressed, they would then have a lot more to worry about than the views of a mistaken Jewish individual like Eisen. The hounding of Eisen by the media to get at Corbyn was an act of chauvinistic bullying by the most powerful gang of organised racists in Western societies today. It is the kind of thing the workers movement needs to oppose. But to oppose things like this, it is necessary to understand the complexities of the question and why this is necessary.

This is a problem also with some who aspire to be anti-Zionists and supporters of the Palestinians. For instance, when the ‘scandal’ of Corbyn’s sometime association with *Deir Yassin Remembered* was in full swing, and Corbyn had issued the necessary statements pointing out that he had no sympathy for Eisen’s views (obviously true), then a letter was put together by a bunch of Jewish leftists ‘defending’ Corbyn against the attacks of the *Jewish Chronicle*:

“You report Paul Eisen as saying that Jeremy Corbyn donated to Deir Yassin Remembered. So did many people before discovering the existence of anti-semites and Holocaust-deniers in the organisation. Many people
attended the occasional fundraising concert that DYR organised, without either knowing of or sympathising with Mr Eisen’s views.” (http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/142553/anti-israel-activists-attack-jc-challenging-jeremy-corbyn)

What is notable about this letter is two-fold. One is that while it is obviously correct for Corbyn to dissociate himself from Eisen’s views, which no-one has ever seriously suggested he had anything in common with anyway, this letter attacks Paul Eisen as an ‘anti-semite’, i.e. as a racist. This goes further than simply dissociating the authors (and Corbyn) from Eisen’s views. The other point is that this letter does not mention that Eisen is actually Jewish himself. This is not accidental. For if it had mentioned this, it would have somewhat undercut elements of ideology that these leftists share with the Jewish Chronicle and the main bevy of Jewish chauvinists attacking Corbyn.

Attacking a Jewish person as ‘anti-semitic’ is very odd. In situations where real oppression is taking place, in Nazi Germany, for instance, or in Israel/Palestine today, it is perfectly possible for some member of the oppressed population to betray their own people. There are examples, both current and historical. Many Palestinians consider, with good reason, the sinister former PLO official Mohammad Dahlan, to be an Israeli agent. There were good grounds, in times past, to consider the Stern Gang (Lehi) terrorist and later Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to be a Nazi collaborator. Similar things occur in every struggle against oppression, in South Africa during the anti-apartheid struggle the Zulu chief Buthelezi was a blatant collaborator and traitor. During the Jim Crow period in the US, the phenomenon of the ‘Uncle Tom’ was also well known – Booker T Washington was perhaps the best known example.

Such people betray their own people in a struggle against oppression. It would not be accurate to actually call them racists against their own people, but their betrayals were certainly products of their own weakness, cowardice and corruption in the face of the oppressor. They are, and were, rightly reviled.

But Jews are not the victims of oppression today. They are the perpetrators of oppression in the Middle East. And many, if not most, diaspora Jews support that. Jews are subject to no oppression in the advanced capitalist countries. So where do allegations of ‘anti-semitism’ against Jewish figures like Paul Eisen come from? How is it possible to be racist against yourself, or even in some way a traitor to your own people in a situation where your own people are not oppressed, but many of them are either participants, or complicit, in oppression themselves?

These are not idle questions. Paul Eisen is the tip of an iceberg. There is quite a long, and growing list of people of Jewish origin who have been accused, including by Jewish activists on the far left, of being anti-Semites, i.e. anti-Jewish racists. If you sat down and wrote out a list, you could come up with dozens of prominent people – a look at the board of directors of Deir Yassin Remembered yields quite a few to start with. And if those are the prominent ones, it is doubtless true that there are many more non-prominent ones who agree with them. So a whole layer apparently exists of ‘anti-Semites’ of Jewish origin who it is supposed to be permissible for the left to join with Zionists in denouncing and ostracising.

Some of the most sophisticated of these ‘left’ Jewish chauvinists, uneasy about the logic involved in this, concede that these Jewish non-conformists are not dangerous in the least to Jewish people. But they say, the Palestine solidarity movement must be ‘protected’ from their influence to avoid it being ‘discredited’ as ‘anti-Semitic’ by the Zionists. This argument is steeped in paternalism, apparently non-Jews in general (and Arabs in particular) are too stupid to be able to handle this complex problem through democratic engagement and debate. It has
to be solved by surgical means by Jewish political vigilantes.

The real explanation for this is that many of those on the left who aspire to be anti-Zionists nevertheless share the dominant prejudice today that for all the crimes of Israel and its supporters internationally (particularly the bourgeois ones who significantly materially and politically support it), there is something inherently progressive and ennobling about being Jewish, something that puts Jews on a higher moral level to the rest of humanity.

**Collective guilt vs. collective innocence: a false dichotomy**

We as Marxists reject the notion of collective guilt of entire peoples. Many good liberal middle class Germans, often quite leftist in their aspirations, are consumed with guilt about Germany’s past, and even today mobilise politically on the basis of such guilt. Such is the basis for the middle-class left anti-Deutsch movement in Germany, whose guilt about the Shoah leads them, logically enough, to turn a blind eye to the crimes of Zionist Jews today because Jews were once victimised appallingly by German imperialism. Their slogan, we should note is, “Never Again Germany”.

Paul Eisen and his ilk are the Jewish equivalent of the anti-Deutsch. This is not racism at all, in other words, but a confused anti-racist impulse. This is shown, incidentally, by Netanyahu’s recent pronouncement that Hitler did not want to exterminate the Jews, but merely to expel them from the Reich. According to Netanyahu, Hitler was then persuaded to ‘burn’ the Jews by the Palestinian potentate Haj Amin al Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. There is a degree of formal similarity between what Netanyahu says about Hitler, and what Eisen says. But the intention is the opposite. By denying Hitler’s guilt, Eisen is trying to undercut the Israeli rationale for the oppression of the Palestinians. But when Netanyahu denies Hitler’s guilt, it is in order to transfer it to the Palestinians through the person of the Mufti: Netanyahu is seeking to create the political conditions for a genocide of the Palestinians.

So here you see similar elements of false analysis, but used for opposite purposes. But absurdly, one of the responses of the Jewish-centred left has been to accuse Netanyahu of ‘holocaust denial’. Thus massively missing the point, and showing that even now, they consider Jews to be much more important than Arabs. Netanyahu is not interested in history, except as a means to incite the massacre of Arabs in the here and now. Whereas Eisen is wrongly using history to defend the Palestinians, in the way he sees it. These are opposite phenomena.

Anyone in Germany who denounced the anti-Deutsch as anti-German ‘racists’ would be engaged in the same kind of fundamental error that those on the British left who denounce Eisen and co. as ‘antisemitic’ are engaged in. Implicitly, such accusers of the anti-Deutsch could be said
to share some of the conceptions characteristic of Nazi apologists.

And those who make analogous allegations against Eisen, in exactly the same manner, are echoing what are in fact Zionist tropes about the sacral nature of the Jewish people, and their moral superiority over others.

This is also the unconscious or semi-conscious driving force of the various Jews-only groupings that are regularly formed in and around the Palestine solidarity movement.

Socialists reject the notion of collective guilt of peoples. But we also reject the notion of collective innocence, which in fact just displaces the notion of collective guilt onto other people(s). The theory of Israel as a colonial-settler state, as opposed to a state of Jewish settlers politically identical in substance to the current settler ‘pioneers’ who are slicing up the West Bank, assigns the primary role in driving Israeli colonisation to the United States and the former colonial powers.

It essentially says that no matter what crimes Jewish political or military forces may commit against Arabs, Jews collectively are innocent of these actions. It is the Americans and British who are really to blame.

And of course, they share much of the blame, from the Balfour Declaration to Suez, to the massive US support for Israel in recent decades, the US, UK and other imperialist bear massive culpability. But Jews as a semi-national grouping, with a ruling class that spans some national borders and has its own independent interests, are not collectively innocent either. They bear as much of the responsibility as their allies.

There is no collective guilt of Americans, British, French or Germans, or Jews, for any of these things. The blame fundamentally lies with the various ruling classes, in their different forms and permutations. But collective innocence of any and all of them is a capitulation to some form of reactionary nationalism, and exonerates these ruling classes.

In the case of Jews it is evidence of some level of shared conceptions with Zionism – a product of social pressure, since as is the main theme of this article, a modified form of racism, incorporating Zionist conceptions and influence, is the hegemonic form of racism today.

To conclude, Karl Marx stated that “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it”. This rightly emphasises the role of practical activity in order to affect material reality. However, a corollary of this is that in order to begin to change the world, you have to understand it, at least at some basic level.

And through either lack of real analysis, or social pressure, or more likely a combination of the two, understanding of the real role of Zionism in Western societies, and the material roots of this, has been lacking among Marxists. This article is part of an attempt to rectify that, to arm the left and labour movement with a coherent understanding of this very sophisticated, and also very coherent, form of bourgeois class-enemy politics. ▲
Judeo-Christian or Judeo-Christian-culture or Judaeo-Christian-civilisation

Recently, pseudo-historians and pseudo-sociologist and with the help of confirmed-idiots have used the above expressions, very frequently.

I, for one, deny such a terminology because it is a contradiction in terms, and is even a "non-term".

This composed-word is made of two antagonistically different entities which did not and could not, nor should not become one....... Let us recall when did Christianity and Judaism meet for the first time....... And I remember that the first Christian was nailed to a Roman Cross as a favour to the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem........

And if we consider that the closure of Auschwitz-Ovens (1945) was the last recorded encounter between Christians and Jews....... So how and when could anyone speak of Judeo-Christian-civilization??

Pogroms were made by Russian Christians Inquisitions were made by Spanish Christians Nazi Germany was 100% a Christian society and culture,


Must I remind each of us that, on this planet, the only safe place for Jews is (or was) when Jews were living among the Arabs, as Arab-
citizens. Only until 1948, unfortunate-ly........until when Zionism took over from Judaism and it created The State of Israel on the tombs of the Palestinians -Arabs......

Am I reinventing history here? or just recalling it . The expression or the terminology “Judeo-Christian” is absurd. There was never such a thing.....

it was always Judeo versus Christian versus Judeo versus Christian versus the Jews....etc....etc... It started with Jesus of Nazareth and has (hopefully) ended with Adolph Hitler, hopefully!

Next time you hear or read that senseless expression, remember please that “Judeo-Arab” has had a better history and it was a sublime experience and a superior and humane encounter.

Judaism is far better off under Islam and or under Arabism History has proven this in the past and on several occasions, repeatedly.

Forget “Judeo-Christianity” it is a very recent-western-Zio- invention, a smoke screen, a false confession........ just to camouflage a bloody past....... to hide endless-intolerance, endless-atrocities, lies and genocides.

Raja Chemayel A Christian Arab Or better said: an Arab Christian!!
This set of theses will be presented for discussion at the meeting on 14th September of the Communist Platform of Left Unity

1. Of all the advanced capitalist/imperialist countries today, Israel is second only to the United States in the threat it poses to the future of humanity. It is an artificial imperialist entity introduced into the Middle East from without, and consolidated though the expulsion of the bulk of the indigenous Palestinian Arab population. As a result it is in a state of permanent conflict with the Palestinians, who have a dual national consciousness both as Palestinians and as part of the national aspirations of the Arab peoples of the entire Middle East.

Israel is built entirely on territory stolen by force from a native population that is on a much higher cultural level than the indigenous victims of earlier settler states associated with European colonialism, such as the United States and Australia. Its conflict is with Arabs who have a modern national consciousness greater than virtually any dispossessed indigenous people. Israel has therefore armed itself to the teeth and become a garrison state, stockpiling likely hundreds of nuclear weapons, and threatens the population of the semi-colonial Arab states that surround it with destruction should it fear loss of supremacy.

2. What is distinctive about Israel is that, unlike earlier settler states populated by colonists from imperialist nations that conquered them as part of an imperial project, Israel has no ‘mother country’. It was populated by part of the Jewish population from several countries, as part of a deal by the Zionist movement with British colonialism during the First World War. The Zionist movement being a unique nationalist movement politically led by part of the Jewish sections of the bourgeoisie in several advanced capitalist countries. This deal led over three decades of British colonialism and gradually accelerating Jewish immigration, in the context of the Nazi mass murder of European Jewry during WWII, to a reactionary war of national independence partially against the British, but mainly against the Arab population.

With conventional settler states, that have a ‘mother country’, the character of that power plays a major role in determining the character of the settler state that subsequently emerges. But in a sense, Israel’s ‘mother country’ is the Zionist movement itself, not Britain, which only played an enabling role in the foundation of Israel by a third party movement. Therefore, the character of the Zionist movement itself is decisive in determining the character of Israel.

It is crucial for communists particularly in the Western imperialist countries, Israel’s bankrollers in terms of aid, and armourers, to have a clear conception of the forces in the world that are supporting Israel in its war against the Palestinians. This is because, unlike the West’s allied dictatorships, from whom the ruling classes are compelled to maintain a certain political distance, Israel is openly embraced as a so-called ‘democracy’ and treated as a part of the ‘family’ of ‘civilised’ nations. This means ignoring that Israel’s Jewish ‘democracy’ was achieved by expelling the majority of its Arab population; without this expulsion a Jewish state would be impossible. For communist internationalists, no stone can be left unturned and questions considered taboo in exposing the real bases of support for the oppression of the

Zionism and Colonialism
Palestinians in the Western countries. To fail to do this is to betray internationalism and the Palestinians.

3. Empirical observation alone shows that Israel has organised bases of support within the ruling classes of several imperialist countries, centrally the United States, and those in Western Europe (including the UK). In the US, AIPAC (American-Israeli Political Action Committee) operates with great influence in both political parties; in the UK, there are powerful ‘Friends of Israel’ factions in all three major parties; the

Conservative Friends of Israel in particular embraces 80% of Tory MPs. This is a staggering level of sponsorship from the main party of the British ruling class; it is echoed in the other parties and this pro-Israel ideology has a similar level of hegemony to Cold War anti-communism among the ruling class.

This ruling class support has a material basis, and not just in terms of old-fashioned imperialist realpolitik. As the late Israel Shahak, genocide survivor and decades-long defender of Palestinian rights within Israel, wrote in a very important work on the Jewish question:

“US support for Israel, when considered not in abstract but in concrete detail, cannot be adequately explained only as a result of American imperial interests. The strong influence wielded by the organised Jewish community in the USA in support of all Israeli policies must be taken into account in order to explain the Middle East policies of American administrations. This phenomenon is even more noticeable in the case of Canada, whose Middle Eastern interests cannot be considered as important, but whose loyal dedication to Israel is even greater than that of the USA. In both countries (and also in France, Britain, and many other states) Jewish organisations support Israel with the same loyalty which communist parties accorded to the USSR for so long. Also, many Jews who appear to be active in defending human rights and who adopt non-conformist views on other issues do, in cases affecting Israel, display a remarkable degree of totalitarianism and are in the forefront of defence of all Israeli policies. It is well known in Israel that the chauvinism and fanaticism in supporting Israel displayed by diaspora Jews is much greater (especially since 1967) than the chauvinism shown by an average Israeli Jew…” (Jewish History, Jewish Religion: the Weight of Three Thousand Years, 1994, p102).

The influence Jewish organizations are able to exert in imperialist policy is not the product of the ‘Jewish vote’ or even some mysterious ‘lobbying’ power at their disposal, as is euphemistically said by some critics who fear being falsely accused of racism. The Jewish vote in imperialist countries is electorally tiny. In the US around 2% of the population are Jewish, and there is no reason, is strictly numerical terms, why a ‘lobby’ based on such a small percentage of the population should have the power not only to force American governments to adopt the most slavish support for very brutal actions of Israel, but also to destroy the careers of politicians who speak out against such actions.

4. It is however, explained by one salient fact: Jewish overrepresentation in the US

Zionism and Colonialism
and other ruling classes. For the United States, which is the most powerful state in human history, you can easily find informed Jewish sources that place the representation of Jews among billionaires, the most powerful elements of the capitalist elite, at between 40 and 48%—nearly half (for example see http://www.jewishworldreview.com/joe/aaron101007.php3). This is the only logically coherent explanation for the power of the so-called lobby. It must be faced fearlessly by Marxists, irrespective of any discomfort that may result from confronting the widespread prejudice (for that is what it is) that to mention, let alone try to analyse, such factual matters is in some way racist. To ignore them in this way is itself an act of betrayal of those on the receiving end of the crimes that result from this state of affairs, and in that sense a chauvinist position.

A materialist analysis of why this is the case is crucial. This is a very complex and difficult question, and there are enormous social pressures on those who would try to analyse it. The history of genocide against the Jews in the first half of the 20th century is ruthlessly used by propagandists for the Zionist project to justify today’s crimes against the Palestinians. Not only that, but in the earlier period anti-semites exploited the atypical social structure of the Jews—their overrepresentation in business and finance—as an important component of the paranoid, racist ideology that led to the Nazi genocide in Germany and Europe. This history is also exploited today against critics of this phenomenon. However difficult this makes addressing today’s problems in this regard, the challenge of producing a coherent materialist analysis of them cannot be ducked. Today, as Palestinians face regular one-sided massacres and the threat of mass population expulsions, and the wider Arab and Middle East faces the real possibility of a nuclear genocide at Israel’s hands, solving this very tricky ideological and political problem is possibly the most crucial, strategic task that communists have to solve. If we can’t confront this, we may as well give up any pretence of communism and revolution.

5. Fortunately, there is a materialist, Marxist tradition we can draw on in analysing the origins of this. In its most developed form this was developed by Abram Leon, a young Jewish Marxist, during the Second World War. His work The Jewish Question, a Marxist Interpretation is the classic Marxist study of Jewish history, basing its starting point on Karl Marx’s earlier sketch of this question. Beginning in antiquity, Leon’s work most directly relates to the period from early medieval times to that of early imperialist capitalism. His analysis is of the Jews as a ‘people-class’, whose very survival as a people since antiquity was bound up with their role as the repository of merchant’s capital, commodity distribution and therefore foreign trade in fundamentally feudal society, where the dominant mode of exploitation involved the production of use value, not exchange value. Trade was therefore regarded as a separate activity, outside the social norm, that could best be confined to practitioners of a ‘foreign’ religion.

This is somewhat different to the question of usury, which only became dominant among the Jews with the decline of feudalism and the rise of commodity exchange as an increasing norm. This brought the rise of ‘native merchants’ etc., which pushed the Jews to the margins of commodity exchange in the form of usury, which was regarded as a socially odious activity.

Leon noted that in the early period of feudalism, the Jews were in fact often highly privileged due to their specialist trading role. Later, as their role shifted to usury, tax-farming, etc., they became exploitative intermediaries that were often hated by the exploited peasantry. On more than one occasion, events that are often regarded as pogroms were in fact peasant revolts against exploitation. In the later feudal peri-

**Zionism and Colonialism**
This had a dynamic that led to the Jews retreating into ghettos and/or being driven from country to country as their economic role became increasingly superfluous. This happened at different times in Western and Eastern Europe, so there is quite a complex tapestry of events that needs to be understood. In Eastern Europe, this period of Jewish decline and oppression coincided with the beginning of the decay of capitalism.

In the early capitalist period, a key achievement of the bourgeois revolutions was the opening up of the ghettos, and a beginning was made to the assimilation of the Jews, the logical outcome of the redundancy of this medieval trading class. However, with the end of the epoch of progressive capitalism, this came to a halt and you had the rise of racialised anti-Jewish sentiment. Leon witnessed the growth of this hatred, and the rise of Nazism, and projected that the Jews would remain pariahs, and that status would only be relieved through the overthrow of capitalism.

Unfortunately Leon did not live to see the foundation of the state of Israel, and thus to be able to analyse the Jewish Question in the post WWII period. He perished in Auschwitz in 1944, at the age of only 26. His writings about history were spot on; his speculations about future developments were not, since Jews are no longer pariahs but have been re-absorbed by later imperialism in a different political situation. But given that his historical analysis was correct, it ought to be possible to pick up the threads from where he left off and, using the same method, analyse the current situation correctly.

6. The redundancy of any class, including a people-class, results in its dissolution and its members’ absorption into other classes. This process began with the emancipation of the Jews after the bourgeois revolutions as laid out by Leon and referred to above. Members of the former people-class were absorbed into the bourgeoisie, the working class (particularly as an artisan-proletariat), and various layers of the urban petty-bourgeoisie. As a people with centuries of experience of trade in commodities — that is, in the operation of merchant’s capital — prior to the capitalist era proper, they had major cultural advantages for operation within the bourgeoisie. They had more accumulated ‘cultural capital’ in the spheres particularly of trade and finance than the mainstream ‘native’ bourgeoisies of the nations they were beginning to integrate into.

In the early stages of capitalism, this did not matter, as the system was growing so strongly that there was room for many in the developing capitalist classes that were coming to dominate what became the Western countries. Jewish bourgeois prospered together with other bourgeois and assimilation appeared to be making good progress. But with the beginning of capitalist decline in the late 19th Century, suddenly it was not so rosy. With the narrowing of capitalist growth, the advent of depression, something similar to what happened in the mid-medieval period recurred.

In mid-medieval times the Jews were seen as insidious competitors by a rising...
‘native’ class of merchants, who proceeded to drive them out of the mercantile field and into the degraded field of usury. In the later 19th Century, Jewish capitalists were seen in a similar way by many ‘native’ capitalists in Europe, and though they were not driven out in the same way, this hostility became one of the source components of modern anti-semitism.

This would probably have died down in time without another source component of the same anti-semitism – bourgeois hostility to the role of the Jews in the working class movement. Because the Jews had been an oppressed pariah class under late feudalism, those sections of the former people-class who did not make the transformation into the bourgeoisie itself became among the chief exponents and subjects of a genuinely progressive, working class radicalisation. Both Jewish workers and Jewish intellectuals played a crucial role in the revolutionary wing of the labour movement in many countries.

One has only to mention Marx, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Jogiches, Joffe, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Abram Leon, and many more sterling leaders of the working class who were of Jewish origin. Thus the revolutionary Jews were hated by the bourgeoisie at the same time as the bourgeois Jews became regarded by many ‘native’ bourgeois as dangerous upstarts who were too successful in business for their liking. Then you can add a third component to this: the fact that Jews had played a significant, if secondary, role in earlier emancipatory events such as the French Revolution earned them the enmity of forces that still existed that were hostile to the legacy of the bourgeois revolutions themselves, such as most notably the Tsarist regime in Russia, as well as elements of the aristocratic Junkers class in Germany.

Then there was yet a fourth component, which was then subordinate but is much more important today with the existence of Israel and its role in the world. There is an undeniable element of anti-gentile hatred and bigotry among quite a few Jews that is symmetrical to anti-semitism, a belief that non-Jews are not ‘chosen’ and therefore inferior, and can be treated with contempt. This comes from Rabbinical teachers and some scripture. Obviously the progressive, revolutionary Jews did not hold with that, but it existed among the rabbis and the more conservative Jewish elements, and could be caricatured by the proponents of anti-semitism in roughly the same manner that Islamophobes today caricature some of the more strident passages from the Qu’ran, Hadiths, etc. to demonise Muslims.

These are the four main factors that gave anti-semitism its potency from the late 19th Century onwards. To cut a long story short the proletarian component of what the classic anti-semites saw as the joint conspiracy of the revolutionary and bourgeois Jews was wiped out in Europe by the Nazis and their supporters in other countries particularly in Eastern Europe. In Germany the bourgeois Jews were largely wiped out also, but not in the rest of the world, and not particularly in the United States, where the Jewish bourgeoisie was already quite influential and became much more so as time went on, particularly since WWII.

There is no moral judgment contained within the observation that Jews are overrepresented in the bourgeoisie of the United States and other advanced countries. It is simply a material fact with certain implications for politics. If there were no quasi-nationalist consciousness, no sense of common purpose, it would have no significance whatsoever. What makes it significant is that they do have such a common purpose today, and also a common project, which is manifested in Israel and Zionism. This is significant to those on the receiving end of Israeli oppression, and their sympathisers.

7. Virtually all accounts of the birth of Zionism in the 19th Century, including that of would be Marxists, talk of Zionism as simply a reaction to the birth of anti-
Zionism and Colonialism

semitism, and do not seriously analyse the class nature of the Zionist project. This is not spelt out; the birth of Zionism is simply put down to amorphous ‘Jews’ in general, making a mistaken response to anti-semitism that has reactionary implications.

This is not enough in terms of analysis. The fact is that Zionism always was a quasi-national movement of the Jewish bourgeoisie, which had been initially pretty painlessly successful in gaining a major share of the fruits of expanding capital in the era of progressive capitalism, only to see this come under threat when the imperialist epoch began. The problem is that this bourgeoisie did not have a territory to build a nation around. And in any case, it was not necessarily in favour of migrating and tearing out its roots in other countries even if a territory were somehow miraculously given to it. But it felt it needed a territorial asset, a home base to call its own even if it did not want to reside there all the time. This is easily comprehensible in terms of bourgeois consciousness and a Marxist understanding of the national question, it just demands a degree of flexibility in the understanding and application of Marxist tools of analysis, that can be most effortlessly applied to other, more straightforward national questions.

In the early period of Zionism, obviously this quasi-national project appeared problematic and there was not unity among the Jewish bourgeoisie as to whether it was viable or not. But the project was bourgeois, and was extensively funded by part of the Jewish bourgeoisie abroad, particularly in the USA. The lack of unanimous Jewish bourgeois support for the Zionist project in the earlier period meant that it had to rely on support from various pseudo-left Zionist currents, those who manifested nationalist deviations from the revolutionary impulses that drove the genuine elements of the communist and socialist movement who happened to be of Jewish origin. Thus when Israel was founded, its original leaders were dominated by the fake-left nationalist trend. But despite that, the real nature of the Zionist project was thoroughly bourgeois and reactionary; that disjunction between consciousness and reality has long since been resolved through the decay of the fake-left Zionists and the dominance of the open right. The ‘left’ always served a cover for the right, but now they are a pathetic fig-leaf for it.

The Jews are not a nation, but they have a pan-national bourgeoisie that had national aspirations and wanted a territorial asset to give expression to that. Once that territory was actually created, through manoeuvres with the imperialist powers, it led to a transformation of the situation. Israel’s ‘Law of Return’ gives all Jews who fit Israel’s criteria of who is a Jew, anywhere in the world, automatic citizenship rights. That legal right to Israeli citizenship is a material force, which gives some people power over and in preference to other people. It gives Jews overseas implicit power over the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. It does not make Jews a nation in the sense of Stalin’s famous definition of a nation in Marxism and the National Question, which still arguably contains the correct Marxist
Zionism and Colonialism

definition of a nation. But it is a material change that confers legal, national rights. It therefore means that Jews, under the hegemony of their own bourgeoisie as most other peoples of the world live under the hegemony of their own bourgeoisies, constitute a semi-nation under that hegemony.

8. There is a common ethnocentric project between the ruling class of Israel and the various hegemonic pro-Israel bourgeois Jewish organisations in a number of imperialist countries, centrally the United States. This pan-imperialist Zionist bloc within the bourgeoisie plays an active role in the oppression of the Palestinians. This bourgeois current, which extends from the ruling class of Israel to penetrate deeply into the US ruling class (and to a lesser extent the ruling classes of several European imperialist countries also) has some of the attributes of a national bourgeois formation without a single territory exclusive to itself.

It is therefore both a powerful imperialist formation, and deeply unstable. In this epoch of declining capitalism, it plays the role of a kind of ‘vanguard of the bourgeoisie’ — not quite the mirror-image of Marxism but with aspirations along those lines. It has been instrumental in pushing the nationally limited imperialist bourgeoisies to partially transcend their own national particularisms. Hence the ‘traditional’ imperialist bourgeoisie, based on the nation-state, having overcome their previous fear of the supposedly proletarian-internationalist role of the Jews as a result of the outcome of WWII, now regards Jewish ‘cosmopolitanism’ and bourgeois semi-internationalism as a good thing, and to a considerable degree defers and follows the leadership of the Jewish/Zionist bourgeoisie.

But this is unstable, and depends for its coherence on the maintenance of Israel as a Jewish state. Without that ethnocentric entity in the Middle East, the Jewish layers in the ruling classes in the imperialist countries would have no focus to unite them; their ‘internationalism’ (in reality tribalism) would collapse, and the Jewish bourgeoisie would simply over time disappear through assimilation into the national ruling classes of the imperialist countries. This bourgeois caricature of internationalism would collapse.

Hence the rabid support of Israel by the bourgeois Jewish-ethnocentric fractions in the imperialist countries, their ability to maintain broader bourgeois support, and the failure of more seemingly rational voices in the ruling class to prevail over them. This represents a kind of bourgeois class instinct as to its interests against the proletariat, giving it additional political weapons against the genuinely internationalist aspirations of the working class movement. Unfortunately, due to inadequate political leadership, the left has until now failed to correctly deal with this problem.

9. Understood properly then, maintaining Israel’s status as a Jewish ethnocracy is a strategic necessity for the stability of world capitalism. Conversely, for the same reasons, the dissolution of this ethnic tyranny and the assimilation of its Jewish population into a state of affairs where all of its inhabitants and refugees have equal political rights over all of historic Palestine is a priority of the working class worldwide.

There is no ‘Jewish problem’ in the sense that the racist movements of the late 19th and early 20th Century tried to make out. There is however, by means of the activities of the Jewish bourgeoisie, an additional factor of complexity in the relations between the imperialist ruling classes that in its distinctive way, threatens the world with barbarism in a novel and unexpected form. This is why, in many ways, the Israel/Palestine question is presently the most crucial and strategic question of world politics. ▲
descendants, nations are commandeered and offered as polite compensation.

As for the memory of the millions of blacks who died en route in the Atlantic Slave Trade (not to mention their brethren who died either tilling fields or being beaten to their demise), the millions of Native Americans who died throughout the Americas after the arrival of Europeans, and the millions who died at the hands of European colonialists in Africa, there is no memory. There has been no effort to mitigate the residual effects of the atrocious acts, no effort to appease the disturbed and restless spirits of those wronged. Memorials are few, acknowledgment is scant, and nowhere are apologies to be found. “It wasn’t me who did it—-it was those people back then.”

During the mid-19th century the infamous Scramble for Africa was at its pinnacle. Every European superpower that was anything readily and enthusiastically partook in military conquest of African nations. Though several sovereign African states proved themselves formidable and presented valiant reciprocation of European aggression (most notably the Zulu, Asante, Herero, and Ethiopians) most African states succumbed to European belligerence rather easily.

European technology, political impetus, and a most rabid and feral type of aggression were simply too much for most Africans to resist. And so, upon Mother Africa, colonialism was imposed with great arden- cy, and for the first time Africa was under the yoke of Europe. It was unprecedented.

In 1885, King Leopold of Belgium surveyed a map of Africa and tacitly observed the territorial highlights of nations that had been conquered by his continental cohorts. He was less than satisfied at the many possessions of Great Britain, the foremost Empire of the world, as well as those Germany, France, and Italy. Both a sense of envy and consternation overtook him. If Belgium could not conquer African territory then its status as a legitimate European power bastion would be thereby threatened. Before his eyes, all of his rivals were declaring war on African people throughout and acquiring territory, slave labor, and abundant resources. Hell bent on capitalizing off of the violent exploitation, King Leopold appealed at the Berlin Conference of 1885 and was granted the territory that would become the Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The Congo was unbelievably wealthy—-her jungles, soils, and wildlife abounded in rubber, ivory, and minerals.

King Leopold’s personal army, the Force Publique, was swept up in a desirous frenzy to acquire this wealth that by 1908, when European powers actually had to retake the Congo from Belgium because of the gross genocide and carnage that had been wrought, it was conservatively estimated that over 10 million Congolese had died. That would be around 50 percent of the Congo’s population, an undoubtedly astounding amount. It is often contested that these estimates are grossly inaccurate and in reality a figure significantly higher.
than 10 million would be more fitting to account for these gross tragedies.

Like the nations controlled by his relatives, King Leopold II was transfixed upon the idea of white supremacy and white colonial domination. To impose European control upon Africa, they would stop at nothing. King Leopold not only extracted tremendous amounts of wealth from the land and henceforth bolstered the economy of Belgium (as well as his own personal wealth) but he did so through enslavement of almost all of the native populace.

To King Leopold, these Africans were “subhumans” and “savages” and “life not worthy of life”. Each and every Congolese soul who perished at his behest was victim to a man who assigned absolutely no value or worth to the lives of Africans. To him, their lives may as well have been nothing---animals exceeded them in significance. King Leopold was a man who believed wholly (and shared this belief with many of his European colonizing cohorts) that the value of white life was infinitely greater than that of a black life. After all, beyond labour or sexual satisfaction, the black life had no true worth.

If the black inhabitants of the Congo were “noble savages” then it is only fair to christen their Belgian masters as “savage nobles”. Though the whites characterized the Africans as primitive, feral, and less than human, closer to simian creatures, it was not the Africans who committed savagery and animalistic barbarity upon “cultured” Europeans. King Leopold’s henchmen utilized almost every known form of torture and punishment to murder Congolese peo-
Congoleses were beaten, shot, beheaded, burnt to death, hung, starved, stabbed, impaled, infected with disease, and whipped to death. Those who didn’t die from the cruel punishment often endured lifelong injuries such as castrated genitals, severed limbs, severe burns, loss of eyes, and permanent scars from whips.

Those who managed to remain physically unscathed still endured the pain of slave labour and the psychological torment that such an imposing and cruel slavocracy imposed upon them. No man was free from the yoke of King Leopold’s fierce, callous oppression, and every single inhabitant of the Congo was in some great way victim to the bloody subjugation. Contending with more conservative, doctored estimates, some estimate that up to 30 million Congolese perished during the brutal regime of King Leopold II as a direct result of his vicious efforts.

What memorial stands today to honour the millions who died from Belgian subjugation in the Congo? Who is to dictate what tragic transgression is worthy of eternal commemoration and which one should merely be cast into oblivion? As Africans, perhaps we should blame ourselves for not calling for remembrance of these atrocities.

Of course the perpetrators and the descendants of the perpetrators are going to try their best to eradicate all memory of these horrid transgressions---in their aversion to altruism, honour, and humanity, they would rather deny responsibility and tarnish the memory of these brave individuals who endured so much but inevitably succumbed, than concede wrongdoing.

In a most audacious and affronting statement, Christoph Muzungu, the culture minister for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, advocated the erection of a statue of King Leopold II. Oblivious to the fact that millions upon millions of his countrymen were murdered by this bloodthirsty despot, likely some of them being his familial ancestors, he argued that, “people should see the positive aspects of his rule.” The Congolese people, a bit more aversive to the memory of such a savage tyrant, immediately dismantled the statue within hours of its erection.

Are our ears closed to their never-ending cries and screams and pleas that will forever echo throughout history? Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters! When will we REMEMBER the plight of our ancestors? Will we remain oblivious and ignorant to their anguish forever? Hear their cries!

In our reflection upon the grand history and innumerable events of humanity’s past we are inevitably forced to once again encounter the horrors and inhuman transgressions that our forbearers have made against others as well as the transgressions that have been made against our forbearers by others.

In contemporary history there is perhaps no event more horrid and incomprehensible as the Holocaust. Following the rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany, his Aryan Ideal was put forth with unforeseen adamancy. To better facilitate the securing of Germany (and eventually continental Europe) for Aryan people, his racial agenda called for the elimination of *untermenschen* (subhumans), most of whom were, in Germany, Jewish people.

Over the duration of World War II (and preceding this conflict) Hitler and his Aryan henchmen facilitated the mass elimination of nearly 6 million Jews. In addition to this, 4 million Slavs, Poles, and rarer minorities such as blacks were systematically eliminated. While the Jews were obviously not the only victims of the Holocaust or the mass German onslaught against those they deemed enemies and inferiors, the incessant memorials to this heinous and savage crime have characterized this event as one that has solely affected Jews.

The term “Holocaust” has become effectively synonymized with “Genocide of Jews” although this is highly inaccurate and extremely disrespectful to those of other faiths and ethnicities who also died at the hands of the Nazis, the label “*untermenschen*” seared into their corpses.

One may often wonder why the plight of the Jewish people has become so well known, so mourned over, and so thoroughly impressed into the global collective consciousness. Why have so many, even the ancestors of those who perpetrated the heinous acts against the Jewish people, shuddered at mere thoughts and reflections of the brutality and callousness expressed by the German people towards their scorned Jewish enemies?

And why is it that the innumerable casualties of Africans, Native Americans, Asians, and virtually all non-white ethnic groups of the world are deemed unworthy of tears, mourning, and remembrance. For them, a mere “sorry” must suffice for the tens of millions they lost, and the plight and suffering of their ancestors is merely swept under the rug, cast into oblivion---forgotten. While our school textbooks devote entire chapters to the subject of Jewish suffering, especially the Holocaust, other genocides, such as that of the Congolese, have not merited even paragraphs.

In the West, they never fail to remind us of the plight of the Jews and the extreme, gory adversity that they have ostensibly endured throughout the history of man. Holocaust memorials are erected, dates are observed, reparation money is distributed to the victims and their

*Continued on p.29*