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Zionist colonisation and Armageddon

As Israel moves further and further to the right, **Moshé Machover** says religious fanatics are becoming increasingly influential

Binyamin ('Bibi') Netanyahu's motive for calling an early election to the Knesset (Israel's parliament), on April 9, one year before the end of its term, was purely personal: it was his 'stay out of jail' card. His former friend and appointee, attorney general Avichai Mendelblit, could not endlessly procrastinate, and would eventually feel bound to indict him for multiple, firmly attested charges of bribery and corruption.¹ Netanyahu calculated that, if he managed to win an election before being indicted, he would be able to breathe freely for the next five years at the very least.

Winning, in Israel's system of party-list proportional representation, does not mean getting a majority, or even the largest number, of Knesset seats, but being the only party leader able to form a ruling coalition. Netanyahu reckons that if he puts together a coalition with the two main religious parties and two or three small extreme-right parties, then he can get through the Knesset a bespoke law giving him immunity from prosecution.

Netanyahu knew that his chances of winning the election were pretty good. In this he could count on more than his mastery of rightwing, populist rabble-rousing, fabrication of 'facts' and whines of persecution by a hostile elite and 'leftist' media. Propaganda apart, Israel's economy is buoyant and, although inequality remains very high, even the poorest sections of the population - those on minimum wages or social benefits - have experienced some improvement. Unionisation of workers has been increasing, and consequently the number of workers benefiting from improved pay and conditions thanks to collective bargaining has been rising.

Also, since the last elections (March 2015), Netanyahu has avoided large-scale military adventures that exact a toll in Israeli military and civilian casualties; so Jewish Israelis have not felt they were paying a high cost - in human losses or insecurity any more than in economic terms - for ruling over the Palestinian occupied territories. As far as foreign relations are concerned, Netanyahu could count on more than a little help from his friends, including Trump² and Putin.³ Not many national leaders can boast of warm personal relations with both Donald and Vladimir Vladimirovich.

But, leaving little to chance, Netanyahu took several steps to secure his electoral victory and the subsequent prize of immunity from criminal prosecution. In order to make sure that his preferred prospective coalition partners - those of



Dome of the Rock: Zionist extremists want to demolish it

the extreme annexationist and ultra-racist right - would reach the threshold of 3.25% of the valid votes required to win any seats, he acted as match-maker between two such parties, each of which may not have reached this threshold individually, and persuaded them to form a bloc. This ran as the Union of Rightwing Parties, duly passed the threshold and won five seats. In exchange for their complicity in passing a law keeping him out of prison, Netanyahu had promised to accede to their hearts' desire: annexation of parts of the West Bank.

The most serious rival of Netanyahu's Likud party in the elections was the newly formed centre-right bloc, Kahol-Lavan (Blue and White - colours of the flag of the Zionist movement and the state of Israel), led by retired general Benny Gantz, two other retired generals and a civilian windbag, Yair Lapid (the only one of the four with some political experience, having served as minister of finance in a previous Netanyahu-led government).

Lacking any coherent programme, it attracted many voters disgusted with Netanyahu's corruption and rightwing populism. Netanyahu's way of fighting off the potential threat represented by this nine-day wonder was to point out that it would not be able to block a Likud-led government (let alone form a ruling coalition) except in collaboration with Arab parties. The three generals and the windbag, bowing to popular Israeli-Jewish racism, duly vowed that they would never collaborate with Arabs, thereby confirming that they pose no real danger to Netanyahu.

Many Arab citizens, feeling alienated and excluded, were clearly going to boycott or ignore the elections. But to ensure low Arab participation, Likud resorted to intimidation.⁴

In the event, Netanyahu's Likud won 35 out of 120 Knesset seats, the same as the Blue-and-White contender. But the latter's 35 elected MKs have little to hold them together. The hastily assembled, disparate quasi-party may well fall apart before long. Its main contribution to Israel's political history is to have sucked voters away from the bloc formerly led by the Israeli Labor

Party, and reduce Labor, with its pitiful six seats, to a mortally wounded relic, crawling towards a well-deserved demise.

Messianic fanatics

Evidently, the outcome of Israel's elections is part of a worldwide shift to rightwing authoritarian regimes led by elected illiberal demagogues. Netanyahu has much in common with Trump, Putin, Erdoğan, Orbán, Bolsonaro and their ilk. But equally obviously, Israel's rightwing populism comes with a special Israeli twist: that of a Zionist colonising regime, increasingly inspired by a creepy messianism. This growing importance of eschatology in Israeli politics has not received sufficient attention.

Religions tend to have their lunatic fringes - crazed zealots lurking in the obscurity of the relatively harmless margins - who under certain political and social circumstances may emerge as if out of nowhere and shock the world with horrific and dangerous acts. Judaism is no exception to this rule. In my article 'Israel and the Messiah's ass' (*Weekly Worker* June 1 2017), I called attention to the emergence in 1967 of messianic religious Zionism. Extremist forms of this political theology or theological politics have steadily grown in importance. Following the recent elections, its most fanatic true believers are openly represented in the Knesset, as members of the Union of Rightwing Parties, and will no doubt be part of the ruling coalition.

The size of this bloc - a mere five seats in the Knesset - understates the real influence of messianic fanaticism. A significant number of supporters of this ideology must have voted tactically for one of the larger and well-established religious parties (Shas and United Torah Judaism), or for Likud.

Messianic activists differ in one crucial respect from other followers of orthodox Judaism: they are determined to take actual steps to bring about the establishment of a renewed biblical Jewish kingdom. A key part of this plan is the building of a third Jewish temple on the old hallowed hill (the first two were destroyed respectively by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the Romans in 70 CE). An obvious obstacle in the way of the third temple is that the Jews' Temple Mount happens to be the Muslims' Haram

al-Sharif - Islam's third holiest place, site of al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock. These will have to be demolished to make way for the third temple.

Plans to bring this about are by no means new. From 1979 to 1984 a secret cabal of settlers, known as the Jewish Underground, engaged in terrorist actions against Palestinian civic leaders. It also hatched a plot to blow up the Dome of the Rock; but just in time members of the group were arrested and brought to trial on charges of terrorism. Most served short terms, and the ringleaders were pardoned in 1990.⁴ Unrepentant, the zealot leader, Yehuda Etzion, and his mates continued to make plans for the third temple.⁵ But now they have moved from the margins into the centres of political power.⁶ And their numbers have multiplied. A recent TV documentary series has drawn attention to an extensive network of activists making practical preparations for building the third temple and performing the rituals in it.⁷ These include detailed architectural drawings and models for the temple itself, sewing and embroidering vestments for the priests that will officiate in it, and practising animal sacrifices in the vicinity of the holy site.⁸ In order for the priests to be allowed to enter the temple and perform their rituals, they must first be purified with the ashes of a burnt, unblemished red heifer. Red means *totally* red - even two black hairs disqualify it.⁹ A cattle rancher in the Israeli-occupied Golan, by the name of Menahem Urbach, has been commissioned to produce a red heifer by selective breeding. Interviewed on TV, he claimed that the desired animal is expected to be delivered quite soon.

It will be televised

Explosives are easily accessible to the activists, who reside in armed settlements; and some are no doubt stashed away for use, as and when required. Of course, the Muslim world is likely to react violently to the destruction of the holy mosques. This can easily escalate to a major conflagration in the entire region, and possibly beyond.¹⁰

The messianic zealots are not particularly bothered by this prospect: they regard it with the same kind of hopeful anticipation that extreme Christian

evangelicals have for Armageddon.

In fact, both bunches of dangerous nutters, whether Jewish or Christian, share many beliefs (except that the former are expecting the first coming of the messiah, while for the latter it is going to be the second - following which the Jews will have to convert or die). As the *Daily Express* reported recently:

Biblical conspiracy theorists believe the construction of a third Holy Temple in Jerusalem will precede the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Jewish eschatology concerning the end times claims the Holy Temple will rise up from the ground for the third time when the apocalypse nears. Talk of a third temple being built emerged this week in response to a letter penned by the powerful Jewish assembly of rabbis known as the Sanhedrin.

Jerusalem is heading into a mayoral election next week and the Sanhedrin urged both running candidates, Ofer Berkovich and Moshe Lion, to rebuild the temple. ...

The Holy Temple plays a crucial role in Jewish tradition and is a central player in prophecies and tales concerning the apocalypse.

Christian pastor and doomsday preacher Paul Begley has now claimed the signs of the end times are coming to fruition. The Indiana-based preacher said: "The rabbis of the Sanhedrin court are calling both mayor candidates to include in their plans for this city the rebuilding of the third temple ..."

According to Irvin Baxter of the End Time Ministries, the third Holy Temple will be rebuilt in the last seven years of the world's existence. The doomsday preacher said this will happen in the first three years of the end times and will be the "most visible sign" of the end times finally arriving.

Mr Baxter said: "As that cornerstone is laid on the Temple Mount, every network on Earth will be televising this incredible event!"¹¹

Will Israel's security services act in time to prevent an explosion on the sacred site, as they did back in 1984? I do not wish to sound too alarmist, but, when watching Israel careering to extremes of racist populism and annexationism, we should also keep an eye on the movement of messianic fanaticism ●

I would like to thank comrade Ehud Ein-Gil for his help in researching this article.

Notes

1. *Haaretz* February 28 2019.
2. *Haaretz* March 25 2019.
3. *Haaretz* April 4 2019.
4. *Haaretz* April 10 2019.
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Underground.
6. *Ibid*.
7. The very revealing first part of this series can be seen - unfortunately without English subtitles - on www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6NzLD-olaQ&feature=youtu.be.
8. See - https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-police-detain-journalists-documenting-temple-mount-activists-confiscate-equipment-1.7138775?utm_term=.20190418-11%3A41&utm_campaign=Nir+Hasson&utm_medium=email&writerAlerts=true&utm_content=www.haaretz.com%2Fisrael-news%2F1.7138775&utm_source=smartfocus.
9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_heifer.
10. <https://www.mintpressnews.com/will-new-netanyahu-coalition-and-kushners-deal-bring-destruction-to-jerusalem-golden-dome/257880/>.
11. *Daily Express* March 18 2019.

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Review

Labour, Israel and the

Paul Keleman *The British left and Zionism - history of a divorce* Manchester University Press, 2012, pp227, £16.99



It is not often that a book can be classed as indispensable to an understanding of Zionism - the ideology of the movement that established the Israeli state - and its relationship to the left and the labour movement. But *The British left and Zionism* is one.

There are many books which have been written about the history of Zionism - most of them tedious and repetitive - whose conclusions were formed before even a word was written. Books under this heading include David Vital's *The origins of Zionism* and *Zionism: the formative years*. By contrast, anyone wanting a comprehensive Marxist analysis of Zionism could not do better than Nathan Weinstock's *Zionism: a false messiah*. Unfortunately Weinstock himself underwent a "personal and political crisis" and became a Zionist!

For an understanding of the origins of the Zionist labour movement, Zeev Sternhell's *The founding myths of Israel* is groundbreaking. Sternhell, a childhood survivor of the Nazis, tells the story of the endemic political and financial corruption of the Histadrut union confederation and its lack of democracy. As Golda Meir noted, Histadrut was not so much a trade union as a "great colonising agency".² However, if you want a history of Zionism and Israel from both a cultural and political perspective, employing the tools of comparative history, then Gabriel Piterberg's *The returns of Zionism* cannot be bettered. Meanwhile, Joseph Gorny's *The British labour movement and Zionism 1917-1948* never once questions the fundamentals of Zionism. It is essentially a functional and descriptive history.

Paul Keleman's book is the first comprehensive account of the history of the British left and Zionism. It is written from an avowedly anti-Zionist perspective and because of this it provides an essential

and unique insight into the twists and turns of the Communist Party, as it had to adapt its understanding of Zionism to the needs of the Soviet Union's foreign policy.

Today, when 'anti-Semitism' is a principal weapon of the right in the Labour Party, this book is essential to understand how the British labour movement came to adopt and support Zionism from August 1917 onwards. This was an essential component of Labour's support for the British empire and the weaponisation of 'anti-Semitism' is nothing more than a rationale for Labour support for British foreign policy in the Middle East.

Jews and Zionism

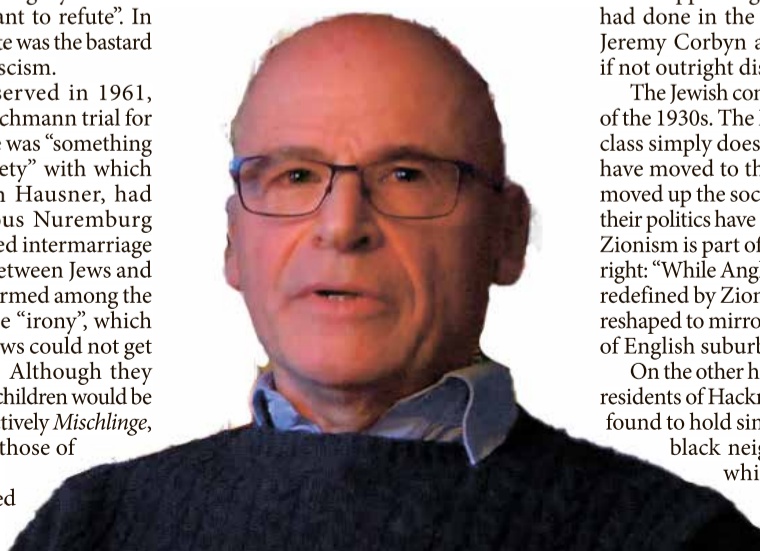
Keleman begins by noting that the character of Israel was determined by the circumstances of its birth - at its centre the expulsion of the Palestinians. Its formation as an ethno-nationalist state "carried a strand of the ideological legacy that the state's existence was meant to refute". In other words, the Israeli state was the bastard offspring of European fascism.

Hannah Arendt observed in 1961, when reporting on the Eichmann trial for the *New Yorker*, that there was "something breathtaking in the naivety" with which the prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, had denounced the infamous Nuremberg laws, which had prohibited intermarriage and sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews. The better informed among the correspondents noted the "irony", which was that Jews and non-Jews could not get married in Israel either. Although they could marry abroad, their children would be considered bastards - effectively *Mischlinge*, to use the Nazi term for those of mixed race.

In view of the fabricated 'anti-Semitism' campaign battering the Labour

Before the 1970s the Labour left was under the spell of the Zionist colonial project. Israel projected itself as a brave socialistic experiment

Paul Keleman: easily the best account of a radically changed relationship



Party today and the allegations that Labour has been 'overrun' by anti-Semitism, it is worth noting the comments of Sydney Webb, a founding Fabian and colonial secretary between 1929 and 1931: "French, German, Russian socialism is Jew-ridden. We, thank heaven, are free." And why? "There's no money in it" (p20).

It is worth noting, in view of the reports that Jeremy Corbyn and 'anti-Semitism' have been responsible for putting Jews off voting Labour,³ that as early as the 1959 general election Jews in Finchley supported the Tories by a ratio of 3:1. In the 1964 general election Jewish voters still preferred the Tories by 2:1. As Keleman noted, "The Jewish community's *embourgeoisement* would also alter its interaction with Zionist politics." Those who therefore suggest that all was fine with the Jewish community and that the only thing preventing it from supporting the Labour Party, as it had done in the past, was the advent of Jeremy Corbyn are being disingenuous, if not outright dishonest.

The Jewish community today is not that of the 1930s. The East End Jewish working class simply does not exist today. As Jews have moved to the suburbs, so they have moved up the socio-economic ladder, and their politics have also changed. Support for Zionism is part of that political shift to the right: "While Anglo-Jewry's Jewishness was redefined by Zionism, its Englishness was reshaped to mirror the social conservatism of English suburbia" (p71).

On the other hand, Jewish working class residents of Hackney in the late 1970s were found to hold similar racist views of their black neighbours as non-Jewish, white inner-city residents.

This is the elephant in the room. Amidst all the nonsense about 'anti-

Semitism', what is omitted is the growing Islamophobia and racism amongst a section of the Jewish population (p74). This reflects the finding of Geoffrey Alderman, an academic and *Jewish Chronicle* columnist, that nearly 2% of the Jewish community in 1979 were voting for the National Front.⁴

The *Jewish Chronicle* of March 3 1978 cited a Jewish primary school headteacher in London, who claimed that Jewish parents did not wish to send their children to the same schools as black children (p77).

In his chapter on British communists and Palestine Keleman began by noting that the Mile End constituency in the East End, which was heavily Jewish, elected England's only Communist MP, Phil Piratin, in 1945. This was a consequence of the leading role that the Communist Party had played in the anti-fascist struggle and that of the Soviet Union in defeating Nazi Germany.

As Zionism, in the wake of the holocaust, began to gain a base among the Jewish working class, the Communist Party had great difficulty in coming to terms with Zionism, which it saw as just another form of nationalism. This problem was compounded by the CPGB's Stalinist politics and the geopolitical considerations of the Soviet Union - which did a 180-degree turn in 1947 by supporting the creation of the Israeli state. The CPGB was afflicted by what Keleman terms "Yishuvism" (the Yishuv being the native Jewish community in Palestine before Israel was created).

The CPGB saw the Jewish working class in Palestine as like any other: "The communist movement's Marxism furnished no insight into the specificity of settler colonialism." One leading member of the party's National Jewish Committee went so far as to describe the Jewish working class in Palestine as oppressed.

'new anti-Semitism'

While the CPGB depicted the Yishuv "in crude, instrumentalist terms as a tool of British imperialism" (p93), it failed to see that the Jewish working class was privileged in comparison with Arab workers and that it was Jewish institutions that were spearheading the exclusion and dispossession of the Arabs.

Zionism in Britain made very little impact among Jewish workers or trade unionists. A correspondent in the *Young Zionist* complained that the Jewish working class had no interest in Zionism and preferred to join the Communist Party. It was not until the war years that Poale Zion (forerunner of the Jewish Labour Movement) increased its membership from less than 500 to 1,500. In 1946 Jews made up 10% of the CPGB's membership (p98).

Kelemen described how in 1948 the CPGB supported Israel in its war against the Arab states (p101). The reason for this U-turn lay in Stalin's crude analysis, which saw Britain as the main obstacle to Soviet interests in the Middle East. The Arabs were seen as British pawns and the future Israeli state as being in revolt against imperialism rather than just British imperialism. It was a gross miscalculation, which undermined the position of the Communist Parties in the Arab east. The CPGB's position helped consolidate support for Zionism in the left wing of the Jewish community.

Labour Party

In his chapter on 'Social democracy and Israel' Kelemen noted the attitude of the Labour Party towards the British empire. Far from supporting the movement for colonial independence, Labour leaders rationalised imperialism into 'good' and 'bad'. The party's handbook for speakers stated: "Imperialism is dead, but the empire has been given a new life. Socialist planning is developing it not for personal profit, but the Common-Weal" (p118).

Labour's support for Zionism was at one with its overall support for empire. Whereas the Tories did not bother to hide their belief that the empire was a source of wealth for capital, Labour's imperialists dressed up Britain's role in the language of trusteeship and benevolence. Even so, on August 20 1948 *Tribune's* editorial was headed, 'Let's stay in Africa'. The reason being that "Africa offers huge material resources, which can be exploited for the benefit of Britain and the world" (p122).

In practice what happened was that Africa, etc was superexploited by the Attlee government in order to pay for reforms, such as the creation of the national health service. Thus the British working class was tied into support for imperialism. It was the left as much as the right of the Labour Party which subscribed to the ideas of Whig historian Thomas Babington Macaulay that colonisation was for the benefit of the colonised. This belief in a 'constructive' imperialism was the basis of Labour support for Zionism. Between 1917, when the Labour Party first declared its support for a "Jewish home" in the War Aims Memorandum, and 1949 the party conference declared its support for Zionism on 11 occasions.

During the nakba, when three-quarters of a million Palestinians were expelled, the Labour press was full of articles such as that in the *New Statesman* by David Kimche, who described Jewish farmers watching with "tears in their eyes", as the Arabs left Haifa and Jaffa. What Kimche did not mention was that they were leaving because the Zionist militias had bombarded them with mortars (p126).

In the 1960s the few MPs sympathetic to the Palestinians were on the right of the party - Christopher Mayhew, George Brown, David Watkins ... This contrasts with the position today when the Labour right is solidly behind Zionism in all its racist glory. In fact, Kelemen shows how

the left of the party was up in arms about Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956 - prominent among them was Aneurin Bevan.

Kelemen skilfully shows how the growth of anti-Zionism on the left owed nothing to Soviet propaganda - as alleged by Zionist propagandists and its echo chamber, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. It was a consequence of Vietnam, 1968 and support for third-world national liberation movements.

One of the great myths of labour Zionism was that, regardless of its colonisation, it was internally socialist. It operated the collective *kibbutzim* and owned a major chunk of the Israeli economy. It was a new generation of historians such as Baruch Kimmerling, Zachary Lockman and Zeev Sternhell who demolished this theory. Labor Zionism's colonisation took a collective form, although in the process it gave birth to capitalism. 'Collective colonisation' was simply the most efficient form of colonising Palestine.

The new left, unlike the Communist Party, was not hindered by the foreign policy requirements of the Soviet Union with its crude understanding of Zionism, which shaded into anti-Semitism. Anti-Zionism was never a part of Soviet opposition to Israel. Kelemen describes the first Palestine solidarity march held in Britain in London in 1969, organised by Tariq Ali's *Black Dwarf*, when 500 were expected and 2,000 turned up. In November 1969 there was the first Palestine Solidarity Conference of 300 people, although the organisation seems to have then disappeared (pp159-60).

This was a time of considerable ferment. In Israel an explicitly anti-Zionist organisation, Matzpen, was founded in 1962 and from the mid 1960s it was advocating the inclusion of Israel in a prospective socialist union or federation of the Arab east. Meanwhile, Fatah, the leading party in the Palestine Liberation Organisation began to promote the idea of a single, democratic, secular state in the whole of Palestine, that despite the fact that the 'official' communists were constrained by their previous support for the Israeli state. In 1972 Ghada Karmi, a Palestinian doctor in London, formed Palestine Action.

Kelemen mentions the travails of *The Guardian*, which employed the first pro-Arab Middle East correspondent, Michael Adams. Adams was the only western correspondent who was not dazzled by the messianic hysteria that accompanied Israel's conquest of the West Bank. I vividly remember BBC correspondent Michel Elkins' barely containing his joy, as Israel won the 1967 war. *Guardian* editor Alistair Hetherington censored a report of Adams on Israel's destruction of three Palestinian villages, from which their inhabitants were expelled (p161).⁶

Pivotal

A pivotal change in Labour's pro-Israel attitude took place in the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur war, when Ted Heath froze British arms sales to Israel. In response Harold Wilson put down a motion supporting the supply of arms to Israel, but after a backbench rebellion Labour MPs were given a free vote and 15 voted with the government, while 70 abstained. David Watkins saw this as the end of 50 years of Zionist domination of Labour policy (p163). Unfortunately he was a tad too optimistic!

Until 1982 and the Lebanese war, the Labour left had been overwhelmingly pro-Israel. At that time Tony Benn and Eric Heffer left Labour Friends of Israel, though Ian Mikado never renounced his Zionism. Kelemen states that LFI was launched in the wake of the Suez war with the support of 40 Labour MPs and that it was created by Poale Zion. Kelemen claims that at that time Poale Zion was a Jewish-only organisation, whereas today

I estimate that at least two thirds of the JLM are not Jewish.

When Tony Blair took over the Labour leadership, LFI came back into favour. Blair declared that it was "one of the most important organisations in the labour movement" and Gordon Brown declared that LFI had more support among MPs than it had ever had in the 40 years since its formation (p179).

In his concluding chapter on 'A new anti-Semitism?' Kelemen notes that the 2006 report of Dennis MacShane's all-party inquiry into anti-Semitism had recommended that the "the Jewish community itself ... is best qualified to determine what does and does not constitute anti-Semitism". As Kelemen comments, this represented a "considerable slippage" from the Macpherson report, which stated that initial reports were only *prima facie* evidence and not conclusive as to whether a racist incident had occurred.

Indeed the very idea of a 'community',

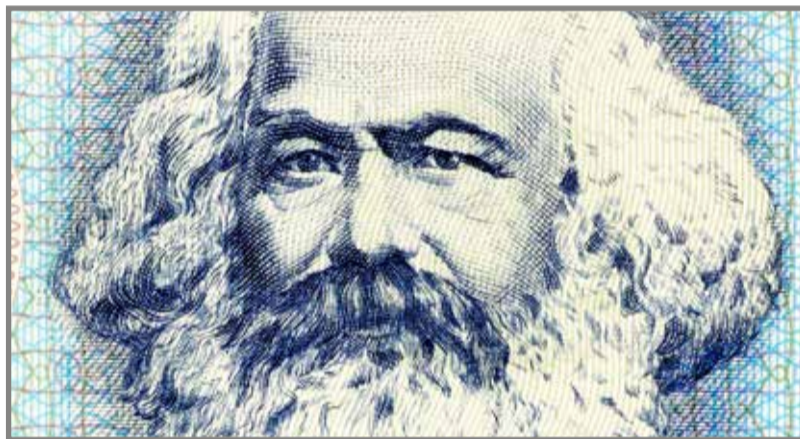
which in reality is a political group, determining what constitutes anti-Semitism, is an obvious recipe for a politically inspired definition, such as that of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which conflates Zionism and anti-Semitism. Kelemen notes that the political context for so-called "new anti-Semitism" was the decline of traditional anti-Semitism and the rise of Islamophobia (p193) ●

Tony Greenstein

Notes

1. www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/meet-the-trotskyist-anti-zionist-who-saw-the-errors-of-his-ways-1.62661.
2. *The Observer* January 24 1971.
3. www.tabletmag.com/scroll/236063/why-just-13-percent-of-british-jews-say-they-will-vote-for-labour-in-the-general-election. See also 'Labour's first Jewish leader is losing the Jewish vote' *The Daily Telegraph* October 30 2014.
4. G Alderman *The Jewish community in British politics* Oxford 1982, pp159, 163-67.
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Elkins.
6. https://mondoweiss.net/2017/06/picnicking-israelis-palestinian.

Model motion



This branch/CLP notes that the old 1918 clause four was drafted by the Fabian leader, Sidney Webb, in order to divert the considerable rank-and-file sympathy that existed for the Russian Revolution into safe, peaceful and exclusively constitutional channels. Clause four was managerial, statist and predicated on the continuation of wage-slavery. It had nothing to do with putting an end to capitalism and bringing about the socialist transformation of society.

This branch/CLP notes that, by sacrificing the old clause four in the full glare of publicity, Tony Blair and his New Labour clique sought to appease the establishment, the City, the Murdoch empire, the global plutocracy. Capitalism would be *absolutely* safe in their hands. A New Labour government could be relied upon not even to pay lip service to a British version of state capitalism.

The Labour Party has been transformed by the influx of tens of thousands of new members and the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader. This branch/CLP therefore believes that the time is ripe to commit the party to the following, genuinely socialist, version of clause four:

1. Labour is the federal party of the working class. We strive to bring all trade unions, cooperatives, socialist societies and leftwing groups and parties under our banner. We believe that unity brings strength.

2. Labour is committed to

replacing the rule of capital with the rule of the working class. Socialism introduces a democratically planned economy, ends the ecologically ruinous cycle of production for the sake of production and moves towards a stateless, classless, moneyless society that embodies the principle, "From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs". Alone such benign conditions create the possibility of every individual fully realising their innate potentialities.

3. Towards that end Labour commits itself to achieving a democratic republic. The standing army, the monarchy, the House of Lords and the state sponsorship of the Church of England must go. We support a single-chamber parliament, proportional representation and annual elections.

4. Labour seeks to win the active backing of the majority of people and forming a government on this basis.

5. We shall work with others, in particular in the European Union, in pursuit of the aim of replacing capitalism with working class rule and socialism.

This branch/CLP calls for this version of clause four to be included as part of Labour's constitution at the earliest opportunity.

[For trade unions:] This branch/conference calls upon the union to campaign within the Labour Party at all levels for this version of clause four to be included as part of Labour's constitution at the earliest opportunity.

1. The central aim of Labour Party Marxists is to transform the Labour Party into an instrument for working class advance and international socialism. Towards that end we will join with others and seek the closest unity of the left inside and outside the party.

2. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, waste and production for its own sake. Attempts to rescue the system through Keynesian remedies are diversionary and doomed to fail. The democratic and social gains of the working class must be tenaciously defended, but capitalism must be superseded by socialism.

3. The only viable alternative is organising the working class into powerful and thoroughly democratic trade unions, co-ops, and other schools for socialism, and crucially into a political party which aims to replace the rule of the capitalist class with the rule of the working class.

4. The fight for trade union freedom, anti-fascism, women's rights, sexual freedom, republican democracy and opposition to all imperialist wars are inextricably linked to working class political independence and the fight for socialism.

5. Ideas of reclaiming the Labour Party and the return of the old clause four are totally misplaced. From the beginning the party has been dominated by the labour bureaucracy and the ideas of reformism. The party must be refounded on the basis of a genuinely socialist programme as opposed to social democratic gradualism or bureaucratic statism.

6. The aim of the party should not be a Labour government for its own sake. History shows that Labour governments committed to managing the capitalist system and loyal to the existing constitutional order create disillusionment in the working class.

7. Labour should only consider forming a government when it has the active support of a clear majority of the population and has a realistic prospect of implementing a full socialist programme. This cannot be achieved in Britain in isolation from Europe and the rest of the world.

8. Socialism is the rule of the working class over the global economy created by capitalism and as such is antithetical to all forms of British nationalism. Demands for a British road to socialism and a withdrawal from the European Union are therefore to be opposed.

9. Political principles and organisational forms go hand-in-hand. The Labour Party must become the umbrella organisation for all trade unions, socialist groups and pro-working class partisans. Hence all the undemocratic bans and proscriptions must be done away with.

10. The fight to democratise the Labour Party cannot be separated from the fight to democratise the trade unions. Trade union votes at Labour Party conferences should be cast not by general secretaries but proportionately according to the political balance in each delegation.

11. All trade unions should be encouraged to affiliate, all members of the trade unions encouraged to pay the political levy and join the Labour Party as individual members.

12. The party must be reorganised from top to bottom. Bring the Parliamentary Labour Party under democratic control. The position of Labour leader should be abolished along with the national policy forum. The NEC should be unambiguously responsible for drafting Labour Party manifestos.

13. The NEC should be elected and accountable to the annual conference, which must be the supreme body in the party. Instead of a tame rally there must be democratic debate and binding votes.

14. Our elected representatives must be recallable by the constituency or other body that selected them. That includes MPs, MEPs, MSPs, AMs, councillors, etc. Without exception elected representatives should take only the average wage of a skilled worker, the balance being donated to furthering the interests of the labour movement ●

Attitude towards the current Labour leadership



1. Our position on the Corbyn leadership of the Labour Party was worked out in advance - that is, well before his actual election - and with far greater foresight and precision than any other campaign, committee, group or party on the left. We are committed to the complete transformation of the Labour Party, forging it into a permanent united front of the working class and equipping it with solid Marxist principles and a tried and tested Marxist leadership.

2. Whatever the idiot rightwing press, Tory ERGers and Tom Watson's Future Britain say, Corbyn is no Marxist. He is, in fact, a sincere, but weak, badly advised, dithering left reformist. True, Corbyn and his closest allies have a record of opposing imperialist wars and adventures, standing in solidarity with striking workers and voting against Tory attacks on migrants, democratic rights and public services.

3. However, since his election it

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has become abundantly clear what the class character of a Corbyn government would be. The Corbyn leadership is committed to reversing austerity, increasing the economic role of the state, repealing some anti-trade union laws and introducing a few minor constitutional reforms. At best that amounts to an illusory attempt to run British capitalism in the interests of the working class. Meanwhile, in the name of *For the many, not the few*, wage-slavery continues, Britain remains a monarchy, subject to judge-made law, one of the Five Eyes, a core imperialist power, a member of Nato and armed with US-controlled nuclear weapons. To call such a programme "socialist" is to violate the commonly accepted language of the left.

4. At present, even such a modest change of course is totally unacceptable to the capitalist class. The biggest fear is that a Corbyn-led government would trigger a crisis of expectations and unleash a wave of class struggles. The Labour right would therefore act to prevent the formation of such a government. Associated with that probability there lies the possibility of the monarch calling another candidate for prime minister for an audience at Buckingham Palace. That could result in the formation of a national government.

5. Nonetheless, a Corbyn-led government cannot be categorically ruled out. But, if it happened, we should expect constitutional and anti-constitutional moves by the privy council, the army, the deep state, etc.

Labour Party Marxists have agreed this 10-point resolution. We consider Jeremy Corbyn to be a sincere, but weak, badly advised, dithering left reformist. Whatever Tom Watson, Tory ERGers and the idiot press say, he is no Marxist

Those on the left who downplay such threats, whatever their subjective intentions, constitute themselves as agents of a criminal complacency.

6. Conceivably, the ruling class could reconcile itself to a Corbyn-led government. But only if: (a) it further denounces its own past and further waters down its own programme; and/or (b) in the event of a dangerous upsurge in popular protests, a major downturn in the world economy or a crash caused by a no-deal Brexit, which temporarily necessitated a left Labour government to serve as the best means of mass deception.

7. The collapse before the 'Anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism' witch-hunt in the Labour Party is a telling warning sign. The appeasement of the Labour right, the failure to challenge blatant lies, the willingness to see good socialists investigated, suspended, sacked, expelled and publicly traduced cannot be excused. And, where Jeremy Corbyn has been silent, John McDonnell has actually given succour to the witch-hunt. Then there is the truly appalling role played by Jon Lansman and his Momentum organisation - praised by the Zionist Jewish Labour Movement. Note: to their everlasting shame Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell and Diane Abbott supported Lansman's anti-democratic coup in Momentum.

8. If the Labour leadership is unable to show elementary solidarity with those targeted by a totally cynical witch-hunt, if the Labour leadership calculates that the bigger cause is served by taking such a course, it

has betrayed not only its past: it has betrayed its future. Giving them a platform in the left press, treating them as prestigious sponsors, calling such people 'comrades' is no longer in any way acceptable.

9. We should defend the Corbyn leadership against Tom Watson and Future Britain, the liberal and rightwing media, the Tories, the deep state, etc. By that we mean, first and foremost, defending the conditions in the Labour Party which allow for the rooting of socialist consciousness and the further spread of Marxist ideas.

10. Our task is to fully empower the Labour Party's mass membership, open eyes as to the real nature of the Corbyn leadership and bring about the circumstances whereby the Labour Party is thoroughly purged of the pro-capitalist right and the leadership is won by real, not supposed, Marxists ●

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