

# Impossible reconciliation: The contradictions of labor Zionism



A piece written as a university dissertation. I don't claim it's reliably academic material, but I do hope it offers a libertarian exploration of the early Zionism movement: secular and socialist rhetoric, but inevitably compromised by the national project integral to all forms of Zionism, despite any professed radicalism.

I haven't included the footnotes, so PM me if you want to see them.

## **Abstract**

Characterized by the confluence of European socialist thought and secular Jewish nationalism, Labor Zionism defies a specific ideological definition. By virtue of its competing characteristics—nationalist, socialist, secular, racially exclusionist, and colonialist—Labor Zionism bears the unmistakable imprint of the nineteenth and twentieth century European world. Moreover, the legacy of Labor Zionism remains to this day. The actions of Labor Zionists and the institutions they built—the Kibbutzim, the Histradut, and the state of Israel itself—continue to affect contemporary political and social discourse.

As such, this essay will delve into the historical development of Labor Zionism. The study will discuss various Zionist thinkers and leaders, most notably Theodor Herzl and David Ben-Gurion, as well as analyze varying strains of leftist Zionism. I will then seek to elucidate the antagonism between Labor Zionists' nationalist imperative and their professed socialist goals. Expanding upon this analysis, I intend to explore how the dominant Labor Zionist institutions inevitably came to embody these contradictions. Finally, I will offer an analysis as to how Zionism itself precluded the reconciliation of socialist and nationalist goals.

## **Labor Zionism: An Intellectual History**

Labor Zionism traces its intellectual roots to the works of two late nineteenth century Jewish thinkers, Moses Hess and Nachman Syrkin. Hess' *Rome and Jerusalem*, published in 1892 and pre-dating Herzl's *The Jewish State*, called for the creation of a socialist Jewish state. According to Hess, in order for the natural faculties of the Jewish people to flourish, Jews must reside in a state in which neither class nor racial oppression impede Jewish development. *Rome and Jerusalem* proved groundbreaking not only because it contains the first reference to Jews as a national community, but because Hess took that analysis one step

further to become the first to advocate for the creation of a wholly Jewish state. Notably, the development of Hess' philosophy in many ways parallels the path Labor Zionists would later have to navigate. Addressing the dual oppression faced by Jews, Hess contends, "The race struggle is the primal one, and the class struggle secondary."<sup>1</sup>

Historian Zachary Lockman has called the second founding theoretician of Labor Zionism, Nachman Syrkin, "the intellectual Godfather of Labor Zionism." Publishing *The Jewish Question and the Socialist Jewish State* after returning as a delegate from the first Zionist Congress in 1897, Syrkin's "ethical utopian," non-Marxist Jewish Socialism existed contemporaneously and developed alongside the mainstream Zionism of Theodor Herzl. Assailing Herzl as "bourgeois," Syrkin "despised the Herzlian Zionists for their belief in capitalism, their admiration for the European aristocracy, and their connection to imperialist courts."<sup>2</sup> Despite these claims, Syrkin nevertheless argued for establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. In this endeavor, Syrkin "did not feel it necessary to justify Zionism's claim to Palestine or its likely impact on the country's indigenous population in terms of socialist principals." Once again paralleling the attitudes of his Labor Zionist successors, Syrkin "shared Zionist representation of Palestinians as invisible or marginal," "the object of power politics."<sup>3</sup>

None of this should suggest that all Jews or even all Jewish radicals subscribed to Zionism. The majority did not. As Zachary Lockman writes, "For Jews in the cities, towns, villages, and hamlets of Eastern Europe, and specifically the Tsarist empire, Zionism was only one of several responses to deepening socioeconomic crises and virulent antisemitism" embodied by the pogroms, the Dreyfus affair, and the derogatory characterizations of Jews in popular religion, culture, and political discourse.<sup>4</sup> As late 18th and early 20th century Ellis Island logbooks testify, many Eastern European Jews emigrated to the United States to escape such widespread persecution. Those who remained turned to religion and, increasingly, politics for salvation. While a sizable number of Jews, in particular the assimilated Jews of Western Europe, continued to look toward political reform to secure citizenship rights, the radical European ideologies of socialism, anarchism, and Communism attracted large numbers of the growing Jewish proletariat.

For the radical Jewish workers and intellectuals attracted to Europe's revolutionary currents, Zionism constituted yet another bourgeois ideology. To them, Zionism merely diverted the revolutionary energies of the common Jewish worker away from the anti-capitalist cause and toward a class-collaborationist project.<sup>5</sup> To this end, in 1922 the Communist International branded Zionism a reactionary detraction from the class struggle and "declared a policy of complete hostility" to the Zionist cause.<sup>6</sup> Secular in orientation, many Jewish radicals agreed with Marx's rather crude assertion that "in the final analysis, the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism." Put another way, the downfall of capitalism would eliminate all social hierarchies—religious, ethnic, or otherwise—and religion, a means of social control designed to keep subjugated classes from rebelling, would naturally disappear. Thus, in true Marxian dialectical fashion, socialism would not only free Jews from their political and religious oppression, but free the world from the oppression of religion.<sup>7</sup>

### **Labor Zionism 'On the Ground'**

Labor Zionists arrived in Palestine most prominently during the second and third aliyot, roughly from 1904 to 1923. Their leftist orientation stood in sharp contradistinction to the character of the first aliya "whose economy was controlled by the philanthropic organizations of the Barons Rothschild and Hirsch, and leaned very heavily on the employment of cheap Arab labor."<sup>8</sup> Numbering 5000 by 1900, the first aliya settled primarily in urban areas. Emulating the "Algerian colonial model," the minority who ventured into the countryside

exploited fellahin labor in their citrus groves and vineyards.<sup>9</sup> The idealistic young socialists of the second and third aliyot, however, consciously eschewed the work available in the limited industrial centers of Palestine and, instead, sought to create an organic basis for a Jewish Palestine through toil of the land. In contrast to their immediate predecessors, the young settlers established the principals of Avoda Atzmit (“self labor”) and Avoda Ivrit (“Hebrew work”).<sup>10</sup> Above all, though, early Labor Zionists embraced the ‘conquest of labor,’ (kibbush avodah), a term, according to Bernard Avishai, coined by the “old man” of Labor Zionism and founder of Hapoel Hatzair (“Young Worker”), Aaron David Gordon.<sup>11</sup> In the most literal sense, kibbush avodah entailed the physical labor needed to establish cooperative farms in the Palestinian countryside. Yet for the bourgeois settlers, the conquest of labor had an ideological component as well: the same hard work needed to develop the Jewish settlements would help cleanse them of their middle-class roots and create the Palestinian-Jewish proletariat that would form the basis of a new Jewish society.<sup>12</sup> In the words of an early Zionist folk song, the Jewish settlers would “rebuild themselves in the rebuilding of the land.”<sup>13</sup> To this end, early Labor Zionists developed the concept of the halutziut, a notion that prized those willing to go to the harshest terrain and undertake the hardest work.<sup>14</sup> As a result of this rugged settler culture, many new immigrants left shortly after their arrival. Those who stayed, however, left an important legacy. Simply put, the settlers who remained were the most physically able and most ideologically devoted individuals.<sup>15</sup>

After their arrival in Palestine, Labor Zionists began to institutionalize their presence through the Kibbutz. The Kibbutz movement, based on the creation of wholly Jewish cooperative farming settlements, exhibited a level of egalitarianism that still elicits scholarly review and political emulation to this day. As Bernard Avashai writes, “The radical socialism” of the Kibbutzim “appealed to the pioneers’ democratic sensibilities, since the small, mainly agricultural collectives they envisioned would be directed by the whole community in common, would be a classless society—‘from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.’”<sup>16</sup>

In their time, however, the Kibbutzim encompassed more than a political project designed around socialist principles: the co-operative settlements quite literally rooted settlers in the soil of Palestine. In the minds of many immigrants, the Kibbutz movement provided far more than a material existence. To them, the Kibbutzim prefigured the new socialist Jewish society. As Henry Near writes, “As immigration into Palestine grew during the third aliya, the growth and founding of Kibbutzim increased at a dramatically higher rate than the growth of the Jewish population in Israel as a whole.” This development led many Labor Zionists “to speak of the possibility of creating ‘a general commune of all the workers of the Land of Israel.’” To quote Kibbutz member Joseph Busell, “Our ideal should not be to create an agricultural proletariat, but rather to develop a core of agricultural workers, working for themselves or others.” According to Near, “This view was adopted by virtually all of the Labour Movement... From then on, the principle of ‘workers’ settlement’ became a major aim of the Labour Zionist Movement.” Further, “these sentiments also fueled that libertarian rhetoric that to this day surrounds the Kibbutz movement.”<sup>17</sup>

An impressive achievement under any circumstance, the Kibbutzim undoubtedly embody some of the highest ideals of Labor Zionism. Yet at the same time, the Kibbutzim demonstrated some of Labor Zionism’s sharpest contradictions. Within the larger Zionist movement, the Kibbutzim “never represented a real threat to the Zionist bourgeoisie.” By “reliev[ing] the Zionist bourgeoisie of the need to make unprofitable investment” the Kibbutzim “contributed to Zionist national goals without affecting the class character of the economy as a whole.”<sup>18</sup> External to the Zionist movement, Rudolph Rocker, the anarchist who exhibited “legendary

influence” on the Jewish working class prior to the First World War, warned that the nationalism inherent to the Zionist project endangered the socialism of the Kibbutz. To quote Mina Grauer, “Rocker was convinced that within the framework of a state, the libertarian nature of the Kibbutzim would ultimately be crushed, and their unique economic system would be brought to an end.”<sup>19</sup>

One final glaring contradiction of the Kibbutzim remains: settlers often established Kibbutzim on land confiscated from Palestinian Arab peasants. Purchased from absentee landlords and defended with arms against hostile and often landless Palestinians, the very soil of the Kibbutz belied the true nature of Zionism. In denying peasants ownership of the land they had previously worked, the settlers forfeited, then co-opted the very socialist principals expressed so eloquently by none other than David Ben-Gurion: “The source of true rights to a land . . . is not in political or legal authority, but in the rights of labor. The true, actual owners of the land are its workers.”<sup>20</sup>

While to the outside observer the above statement may seem contradictory, it is, in fact, highly indicative of the manner in which Zionists viewed the native Palestinian population. From the earliest days of Zionism, Zionists had employed the slogan “A land without a people for a people without a land” to lay claim to Palestine and it remains possible that some early Zionists did believe that Palestine was entirely uninhabited. Yet as immigrants began to settle in the cities and villages of Palestine, Zionists came face to face with the undeniable reality that an indigenous Arab population existed in Palestine. In an effort to reconcile this contradiction, Labor Zionists developed a two-pronged strategy to justify continued colonization. First, Zionists denied that Palestinian Arabs were a people in their own right; they were merely “Arabs” or, worse yet, itinerant, landless “Bedouins.” In forging a discourse that still exists within contemporary Israeli politics, Zionists claimed the Palestinian Arabs’ cultural identity was so wholly analogous with the rest of the Middle Eastern Arab population that they could simply be absorbed into the surrounding Arab states. Second, Zionists began to articulate the argument that the Palestinian Arabs had failed to adequately develop the land and economy of Palestine. Zionists settlers, through the ‘conquest of labor,’ had successfully undertaken that task and, as such, had gained the proverbial title to the land.<sup>21</sup>

Possibly the most lasting achievement of the Labor Zionists, outside of the state of Israel itself, is the Histadrut. Founded in 1920 and known formally as the General Federation of Jewish Workers in Palestine, the Histadrut functioned, in principle, as the umbrella Jewish labor federation in Palestine. Central to the success of the Zionist project, numerous scholars have since commented that the exclusively Jewish organization engaged in far more than typical union activities. Zachary Lockman writes that the Histadrut “was in fact as much an institution for colonization as it was a trade union.”<sup>22</sup> In many ways, the early Histadrut consciously functioned as a state labor ministry in the making, or to use the words of David Ben-Gurion, “the socialist Jewish state in genesis.”<sup>23</sup> According to Steven Glazer, “the Histadrut, unlike European trade unions, was from the outset far more than a mere workers movement.” It acted as “an employer, banker, manufacturer, and vast holding company. Even the Zionist military arm, the Haganah, was established by and remained under the control of the labor movement.”<sup>24</sup>

The Histadrut attempted to enact what it termed “constructive socialism,” the building of a Jewish socialist state in Palestine. The basis for the “workers’ economy” revolved around the creation of the Hevrat ha-Ovdim, or “Workers’ Society.” Theoretically a collective holding company, Hevrat ha-Ovdim supposedly gave every Jewish worker in Palestine an equal stake in the creation and functioning of the economy.<sup>25</sup> As such, “whereas most socialist movements, attaining state power, sought to transfer bourgeois property in the hands of the

state,” Ben-Gurion and the Histadut hierarchy, “sought to nationalize the Labor movement’s institutions.”<sup>26</sup> In the words of Ben-Gurion himself, “The task of other socialists is primarily political—to seize power and remake their economy into a socialist one. But we must first build an economy, and root it in socialist principles. Our principal task is one of construction.”<sup>27</sup>

Much like the Kibbutzim, the proclamations of the socialist Histadut contradicted the structure and actions of the organization. The nationalist framework of the Histadut forced it to “[place] Zionist ends above socialist principles and Jewish-Palestinian collective action.”<sup>28</sup> In much the same way as the Kibbutzim movement rejected the land rights of Palestinian peasants, the Histadut denied the Palestinian working class the internationalist solidarity central to any true socialist project.

Internally, the arguments put forth by the Histadut leadership indicate the degree to which the Jewish-Palestinian labor movement was subjugated to the thoroughly bourgeois World Zionist Organization. In seeking funding and legitimacy, the Histadut hierarchy actually promoted its organization as a form of social control. According to Steven Glazer, “the Histadut leadership argued to the politically conservative WZO that its labor policies emphasizing Zionist growth and expansion, while eschewing revolutionary schemes of redistribution, put brakes on the potential radicalism of the membership.”<sup>29</sup>

Predictably, the nationalist goals of Zionism surpassed the socialist goals of the Jewish labor movement. Although lengthy, the words of the secretary general of the Hevrat ha-Ovdim bear repeating:

*We believe in socialist ownership but a capitalistic way of management; moreover, profit is not a 'dirty word' with us; it is a phrase which guides our general economic thinking... We have nationalistic aims. This is an important element. We will set up an enterprise in an outlying border settlement, although we know it will be a money-loser for many years; but eventually, we know it will make a profit. Making a profit is important; but building the country is more important. [...] Frankly, [workers] are laymen; they do not grasp the wider implications of running a business; they can't read a balance sheet; they are weak on long-range planning; these workers have a dozen other weaknesses as members of the Board of Directors [of Histadut-affiliated firms]. But they contribute mightily in another field: they understand management's viewpoint much better and they pass this message on in one form or another, generally without even thinking about it, to their fellow workers. Secondly, management sees the workers viewpoint much, much better, and like the workers, we absorb this viewpoint without even concentrating on it. The result? Strikes in our enterprises are few and far between. Labor and management exist in much greater harmony.<sup>30</sup>*

Statements such as these lead scholars to question whether the Histadut should be considered socialist at all; perhaps merely ‘statist’ provides a more accurate description. According to historian Jason Schulman, “for Ben-Gurion and his co-thinkers the working class was never more than the object of Zionist history; it was the Histadut elite that was the real subject.” Jewish workers “might build the Jewish nation-state, but [they were] not going to own and control that state's means of production, distribution and exchange.” In Schulman’s view, “socialism was a myth” manipulated by the Zionist elite, including Ben-Gurion, “for mobilization.”<sup>31</sup>

As the above statement suggests, to fully understand the character and contradictions of the Histadut, historians must understand the character and contradictions of David Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion, more than any other individual, embodied Labor Zionism. Foregoing the Marxism of his early life, Ben-Gurion took a leading role in forging the Histadut’s constitution and later became Israel’s first Prime Minister. As Bernard Avishai writes, “In

Ben-Gurion, Zionism acquired a leader of world-historical stature. Like other such figures—Gandhi comes to mind—Ben-Gurion now presented the national movement he led as embodying a universal morality.”<sup>32</sup> Ben-Gurion’s most lasting achievement remains his role in crafting and instituting the policy of *mamlachtiut*. Although claiming “Our movement makes no distinction between the nationalist question and the socialist question,” Ben-Gurion defined *mamlachtiut* as, “the primacy of the nation and supremacy of the state over civil society, of political power over social action and voluntary bodies.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Impossible To Reconcile: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Socialism**

Ben-Gurion’s capitulation to nationalist goals demonstrates the intrinsic flaw of Zionism. Zionism, by its very nature, constituted an ideology of “counterrevolution” concerned with “protect[ing] the power of the Jewish and non-Jewish upper and middle bourgeoisies all over the world.” As Stephen Halbrook writes, “Far from arising from the depths of the people, Zionism was an ideological tool of the Western bourgeois Jews in their dealings with the East.” As such, “Zionist colonialism has therefore always been tied most strongly to world imperialism, which was led by Britain until World War II.”<sup>34</sup> Linguistically underscoring this connection, the words of Labor Zionist forefather Moses Hess bear the unmistakable discourse of colonialist justification:

A great calling is reserved for you: to be a living channel of communication between three continents. You should be the bearers of civilization to the primitive people of Asia. [...] You should be the mediators between Europe and far Asia, open the roads that lead to India and China—those unknown regions which must ultimately be thrown open to civilization.<sup>35</sup>

Herzl, writing after Hess, echoes these same sentiments, “If His Majesty the Sultan [of Turkey] were to give us Palestine...we should there form a part of a wall of defense for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism.”<sup>36</sup> Even the socialism of Ben-Gurion carried colonialist justifications: “When we become a great force we can help the Arab workers, and raise up the Arab masses from their degradation. We will be a tremendous factor in the blossoming of these countries.”<sup>37</sup>

The Zionist leadership long understood that to succeed Zionism would need the political, diplomatic and, potentially, military support of at least one world power. In searching for a global power sponsor, Herzl courted not only England, but Germany and the Ottoman Empire as well. Chaim Weizmann, however, did the most to tie Zionism to the British colonial establishment. As the voice of Zionism in London, Weizmann lobbied high-level diplomats and helped craft the language of the Balfour Declaration. A scholarly review, however, confirms that although certain British politicians did identify with the Zionist cause, Britain’s main concern had been maintaining and strengthening its empire.<sup>38</sup> As far back as the time of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour remarked of Middle Eastern policy, “I do not care under what system we keep the oil, but I am clear that it is all important that this oil should be available.”<sup>39</sup> As Zachary Lockman records, the British did not fully embrace Zionism until the until the First World War when “the British government decided that support for Zionism would serve its war aims and was compatible with its plans for the postwar disposition of the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire.”<sup>40</sup>

Scholars such as Zachary Lockman have explored the role of European colonialist assumptions in defining the course of the Zionist movement. In acknowledging that Zionism emerged at the “specific historical conjuncture” of European colonial dominance, Lockman’s *Comrades and Enemies* remains the most thorough and insightful analysis of the impact of this historical reality:

*The historical moment in which the Zionist project was launched was also the heyday of European colonial expansion and rule. In this era the global superiority of European civilization was widely taken to be self-evident, as was the right of Europeans to rule over (and settle among as a privileged caste) non-European peoples deemed to be less advanced.*

[...Zionism] partook of an available contemporary European discourse that delineated a certain set of perceptions of, attitudes toward, and relations with the African and Asia lands and peoples subject to, or now falling under, the economic and political domination of Europeans.

[...] Zionism's similarities to other projects of colonization were not a source of embarrassment or shame for most of the movement's adherents; indeed, they often saw them as selling points. Zionist leaders studied and sought to learn from the experience of European colonial settlement enterprises in places like Algeria, Rhodesia, and Kenya, and many imagined their endeavor as similar in certain ways. Moreover, the Zionist movement readily used such terms as "colony," "colonial," and "colonization." 41

On the question of the indigenous of Palestine, Labor Zionism, operating in the colonial framework, "accepted all the racial elements of Zionism proper."42 Even for ostensibly pro-Arab Zionist parties such as Hashomer Hatza'ir, "the rights of the Palestinian Arab people were tactical considerations rather than principles." 43 As with the Kibbutzim and the Histadut, Zionism's nationalism naturally and logically eclipsed any socialist impulse found in the Zionist left. Quoting Lockman,

*Nationalism had a corrosive effect on the socialist politics of the radical left-Zionist parties of the Yishuv. [...] Their adherence to Zionism, given the realities of the Palestinian situation, compelled them to renounce in practice the principles of proletarian internationalism, of anti-imperialism, of class solidarity, of the right to self-determination, that they held to so devoutly in theory."44*

As Stephen Halbrook writes, "A frequent tendency of contemporary Zionist writing has been to minimize the colonialist and class features of the Zionist movement prior to the creation of the State of Israel." While Labor Zionists may have had a numerical majority within Palestine, power relations incorporate far more than just numbers. The World Zionist Organization (WZO), headed by Theodor Herzl and funded by wealthy Western Jews, controlled many aspects of immigration, settlement, and investment within Palestine. Herzl and the WZO openly sought to tie the Zionist cause to that of European imperialism—"white settlerdom,"—and the needs of Western capital. Tellingly, and in direct opposition to the socialist rhetoric of Labor Zionism, Herzl's original title for *The Jewish State* was *An Address to the Rothschilds*, a class-conscious appeal to the German-Jewish financial and banking dynasty.45

A "great admirer" of the colonialist exploiter Cecil Rhodes, Herzl consciously modeled the Zionist enterprise after the European colonial model.46 "The Jewish Company," Herzl maintained, "is conceived partly on the model of the great land-development companies. It might be called a Jewish Chartered Company. The Jewish Company will be set up as a joint-stock company, incorporated in England, under British laws and protection."47 Herzl promised great profits to those willing to invest, "One million would produce fifteen millions; and one billion, fifteen billions."48 To this end, he appealed specifically to the interests of the British imperial establishment, "In some short years the Empire would be richer by a rich colony." The English crown, "will get ten million secret subjects,"—the world Jewry—who would show their gratitude by catering to the English market.49

Herzl also framed his argument to appeal to the Jewish bourgeoisie's hope to quell the revolutionary impulses of the Jewish people. Writing in the *The Jewish State*, Herzl warned

against the trend of the oppressed Jew “becom[ing] a revolutionary proletariat, the corporals of every revolutionary party.” This applied to both the working class and the Jewish intelligentsia, “We [Jews] continue to produce an abundance of mediocre intellectuals who find no outlet... Educated Jews without means are now rapidly becoming socialists.”<sup>50</sup> Herzl went as far as to state that the Zionist solution provided the only means to control the Jewish masses: “The Jews will serve as volatile revolutionary material just as long as the Jewish Question is not solved along lines suggested by us.”<sup>51</sup>

The structure of WZO’s program ensured bourgeois “domination would be guaranteed by finance capital’s political control.” Herzl’s projected order of emigration not only reflected capitalist logic, but sought to reinforce and reestablish European class society. The dispossessed Jewish masses, especially from Eastern Europe—the revolutionary fodder Herzl and the Jewish bourgeoisie so desperately sought to neutralize—would be the first to arrive. Believing that “only desperate men make good conquerors,” Herzl anticipated the role of Labor Zionism as well as its eventual subjugation to the “aristocratic republic” he envisioned. The lumpens, having established the basis for a functioning society and economy, would attract the petit-bourgeoisie and middle-classes. Finally, the Jewish capitalists who had helped to finance the entire Zionist project would return to the Jewish state to reap the fifteen-fold profits Herzl had promised. In this way, “each class would exploit, and reap the gains from, the class that preceded it.” Herzl’s Zionist vision, subscribing to the economic hierarchy of capitalism and the political hierarchy of the state (“Politics must work from the top down.”) would be neither socialist nor revolutionary.<sup>52</sup> The very structure of the WZO, responsible for funding many of the activities of the Labor Zionists, ensured Zionism could be nothing more than merely an extension of Western colonialism, funded by European capital and supported by imperial governments.

Before concluding, historians should note that even within Palestine some factions did attempt to expose the colonialist basis of Zionism. Undoubtedly authoritarian and “thoroughly Stalinist,” the Palestinian Communist Party (PKP), provided a far more internationalist, anti-imperialist analysis of the motivations behind bourgeois support of Zionism.<sup>53</sup> Expelled from the Histadrut for “subversive activities” in 1924, the PKP provided this damning indictment at their 1923 congress:

*Zionism is the movement of the Jewish bourgeoisie which seeks to create markets for itself and exploits romantic nationalist notions for this purpose. Zionism has tied its fate to British imperialism, and every project of Zionist colonization is economically based on exploitation. All the activities of the Zionist institutions prepare the ground for capitalist colonization at the expense of the exploited masses. All the parties which speak of socialist colonization make it easier for the bourgeois Zionists to achieve their aims.*<sup>54</sup>

Finally, it could be argued that Herzl’s lines of reasoning embodied the pragmatism needed to appeal to the various European parties whose support was needed to establish a Jewish state. However, as this essay has duly noted, the Zionist ideology, even the socialist Zionism articulated before the time of Herzl, was rooted in the European imperial framework and emerged with colonial prejudices and assumptions intact.<sup>55</sup> As the WZO organized the Zionist movement, the distinct class interests of the controlling financiers became institutionalized.

Undoubtedly, the men and women of the second and third aliyot, those who created the material foundations of Labor Zionism, embraced radical political and economic ideologies that in many ways opposed the material interests and often the very existence of the Jewish bourgeoisie of the WZO. In spite of this, Labor Zionism, as a branch of the larger Zionist movement, could represent nothing more than “a leftist tendency of a colonizing political

movement.”<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Socialist Zionism in all its forms still “shared the propensity of all nationalisms to ignore the rights, needs, and aspirations of those excluded from the national ‘family.’”<sup>57</sup> For the Zionist project to logically succeed, the nationalism inherent to Zionism had to subsume and ultimately subjugate the professed socialism of the Labor Zionists. By abandoning socialist internationalism and instead embarking on a nationalist, exclusionist project funded by European capital and supported politically by colonial European states, Labor Zionists proved unable to overcome the ideological and material constraints placed upon them by the very nature of Zionism.