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History of the Crusades

By Yossi Schwartz

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Picture on the cover: Nūr-ad-Din's victory at the Battle of Inab, 1149. Illustration from the *Passages d'outremer*, c. 1490. (Source: Wikipedia, <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cb/BattleOfInab.jpg>)

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History of the Crusades

By Yossi Schwartz, Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine), 01.07.2023

The Kingdom of Jerusalem

The period between the end of Rome in the fifth (476) century and the Renaissance was considered the dark ages of Europe. The first one to use the term "dark age" was the Italian Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch) of the 14th century who based his concept written in 1330 on the poor literature of his study. Later historians expanded the term to include not only the lack of Latin literature, but the lack of contemporary written history and material cultural achievements in general. As Marxists we can say that decline of the forces and means of production led to poor super structures including lack of good literature. Today many historians understand that the middle age is divided into at least two periods. The lower one until the eleventh century and the higher one from the eleventh century to the Renaissance.

Petrarch wrote that history had had two periods: the Classic period of the Romans and Greeks, followed by a time of darkness, in which he saw himself as still living. He believed that one day the Roman Empire would rise again and restore Classic cultural purity. The concept of the European Dark Ages thus began as an ideological campaign to promote Classical culture.

By the late fourteenth century Leonardo Bruni believed they had attained this new age, and a third, Modern Age had begun. The age, which Petrarch had labeled "Dark" became a "Middle Age" between the Classic and the Modern. The first use of the term "Middle Age" was coined by Flavio Biondo around 1439.

Historians from the early 20th century have opposed the terminology of the dark age. For example, A.T. Hatto, translator of many medieval works for the Penguin Classics series, who spoke with irony of *"the lively centuries which we call dark"*.

The decline of Europe after the fall of Rome ended in the 11th century when the Abbasid Caliphate experienced Ages that were Golden rather than Dark; A good example is the Moorish Andalusia (Spain):

"Two larger developments made this development of the high Middle Ages. The first was the revival of trade and towns in the eleventh century, which provided new resources for the higher tasks of civilization. The second was the emperor Otto I's defeat of the Hungarians at Lechfeld in 955, a victory that secured Western borders against foreign invasion from the East and made possible political stability" [1]

"On the foundations of the new political stability, urbanization, and religious reform, a true cultural renaissance occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was marked by the rise of universities and scholasticism and the recovery of the full corpus of Aristotle's work. Professional elites of physicians, lawyers, and theologians appeared for the first time, and trade associations and guilds were formed to protect the interests of merchants and skilled artisans. At every level people discovered and defined themselves by making new boundaries, alliances, dogmas, laws, and organizations" [2]

But why all of a sudden was the revival of trade and towns which allowed for a stronger army in the eleventh century?

It is very difficult to understand the reasons for this development in Europe without understanding the effect of the crusaders' conquests of the Arab lands that were much higher developed in economy and culture. What we see is the historical law of uneven and combined development of different societies.

From the seventh to the eleven centuries while Europe was underdeveloped the Arab Abbasid Dynasty was an enormous unifying political, commercial, military and cultural force. one which joined the peoples of Spain and North Africa in the west with the peoples of Southeast Asia. To be Arab was not to come from a particular race or lineage. To be Arab was to be a member of a great civilization with a high cultural trait rather than a racial mark. The library in Cordoba had 400,000 books dealing with different sciences. To be an Arab meant to be from the Arabic-speaking world — a world of common traditions, customs, and values — shaped by a single and unifying language. It unified Arabians, Africans, Berbers, Egyptians, and the descendants of the Phoenicians, Canaanites, and many other people. This great "melting pot" was not without tensions, to be sure, but it was precisely the tension of this mixing and meeting of peoples that produced the vibrant and dynamic new civilization with remarkable advances in many fields of knowledge and production.

After the death of Prophet Muhammad, the Caliphs guided Islamic world, the last of whom was Ali (Muhammad's son in law). Ali's death split the Muslim world into two with Husain forming and leading one group (Abbasids) under the premise that only blood descendants of Ali (he was Ali's son), while the other group (Umayyad) came to be known as Sunnis as they believed that any Muslim could become a leader of the Islamic world. The first leader of the Umayyad, Muawiyah, laid the foundation of the Umayyad Dynasty that was finally overthrown by Abbasid Dynasty. Umayyad ruled for nearly 100 years from 661 to 750 CE. Abbasid Dynasty, that overthrew Umayyad Dynasty, ruled for nearly 500 years (750 CE to 1258 CE). The Abbasid Dynasty was overthrown by the Mongols in 1258 CE.

By the time of the Crusades (1195-1291 CE), they were a mere shadow of their former past. In 1258 CE, their rule came to an end after the Mongols destroyed Baghdad. A series of "shadow caliphs" continued under the suzerainty of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt (1250-1517 CE). In 1517 CE, with the conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate by Sultan Selim I of the Ottoman Sultanate (1299-1924 CE), the title caliph was officially transferred to the Turks, although they had been claiming it long before that time.

With the rise of the Abbasids, the base for influence in the empire became internal membership in the community of believers rather than Arab nationality. Since much support for the Abbasids came from Persian converts, it was natural for the Abbasids to take over much of the Persian (Sasanian) tradition of government. The Abbasids acknowledged publicly the embryonic Islamic law and to base their rule on the religion of Islam. *"Between 750 and 833 the Abbasids raised the prestige and power of the empire, promoting commerce, industry, arts, and science, particu-*

larly during the reigns of *al-Manūr*, *Hārūn al-Rashīd*, and *al-Mamūn*. Their temporal power, however, began to decline when *al-Mutaim* introduced non-Muslim Berber, Slav, and especially Turkish mercenary forces into his personal army. Although these troops were converted to Islam, the base of imperial unity through religion was gone, and some of the new army officers quickly learned to control the caliphate through assassination of any caliph who would not accede to their demands" [3]

"In 1055 the Abbasids were overpowered by the Seljuks, who took what temporal power may have been left to the caliph but respected his position as the titular leader, restoring the authority of the caliphate, especially during the reigns of al-Mustarshid (1118–35), al-Muqtafi, and al-Nāir. Soon after, in 1258, the dynasty fell during a Mongol siege of Baghdad" [4]

The Abbasid Empire was founded by Abu-al-Abbas; a Persian Sunni who allied with Shiites and other converts from Southwest Asia. He defeated the Umayyad forces in 750; invited its leaders to a conference to discuss peace, and had them all murdered when they arrived. His empire survived until 1258 when it was defeated by the growing Mongol Empire.

Abbasid Emperors established their capital at Baghdad and did not attempt to further expand their empire; rather they attempted to rule the empire they had obtained. Their policies were implemented in the various provinces of the Empire by caliphs. They maintained the old Persian Roads, and implemented a governing system composed of *ulama* (those with religious knowledge) who were Islamic scholars and developed public policy in accordance with Islamic law; and Qadis, or Judges who settled legal matters.

During Abbasid control, Baghdad became a major commercial center. Many caravans stopped and traded there, and it thus became a primary center of banking and commerce. The city grew so wealthy that one Abbasid emperor, Haran al Rashid sent a large number of rich gifts and an Elephant to Charlemagne, king of the Franks.

The empire was eventually weakened by inheritance disputes and rebellions in the provinces. It was substantially weakened at the time it was overrun by the Mongols.

"The Abbasid Empire is referred to as the Islamic Golden Age, and during this period, the arts, sciences, and industry flourished in Baghdad. The Abbasids pursued knowledge and established the House of Wisdom in Baghdad to translate great classic works into Arabic and Persian. Baghdad was then at the forefront of developing sciences such as astronomy, alchemy, and medicine and developing math. During this time, Persian mathematicians advanced the study of Algebra and improved the understanding of anatomy and diseases. The arts, including literature, philosophy, and architecture, flourished, and Baghdad became a center for the production of textiles, glass, crystal, and pottery. New industries developed during this time, particularly those using hydropower and windmills, and the Abbasids made major advances in irrigation and developed industries related to textiles, silk, paper, and other areas" [5]

The golden age of the Abbasid empire was based on the Asian mode of production.

The Asiatic Mode of Production is a concept developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to describe a particular form of pre-capitalist society that was prevalent in ancient societies across Asia, including China and India. The Asiatic Mode of Production is characterized by centralized ownership and control over land, water and labor, as well

as a strong central state that played a dominant role in economic and social affairs.

Marx first introduced the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production in his 1853 article "The Future Results of British Rule in India," where he argued that British colonialism had disrupted India's traditional social structures and modes of production. He later expanded on this idea in his "Das Capital" where he described how the Asiatic Mode of Production functioned in various ancient societies.

There is a certain similarity to Stalinist state and for this reason the Soviet scholars serving Stalin did not like this concept. Not only this but the Asian mode of production contradicted the Stalinist scheme of history, e.g. the linear development of each society from primitive communism to slave society to feudal society to capitalism and to socialism.

The Asiatic Mode of Production is distinguished by several key characteristics that set it apart from other forms of pre-capitalist society. These include:

The role of the state: In the Asiatic Mode of Production, the state in the form of Oriental despotism plays a dominant role in economic and social affairs. It is responsible for organizing and directing production, as well as distributing resources and goods among the population. The state also controls access to land, water and labor, often through a system of tribute or taxation.

Labor organization: Under the Asiatic Mode of Production, labor is organized on a communal basis rather than an individual one. Workers are typically organized into large work units that are managed by local officials. These work units are responsible for production in their respective areas, with each member contributing their labor to common goals.

The Asiatic Mode of Production was prevalent in various ancient societies across Asia, including China, India, Persia, and Mesopotamia. In each of these societies, the state played a dominant role in economic affairs and centralized ownership and control were key features of their social organization.

For example, in ancient China under the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BCE), peasants were required to work on public projects such as roads or canals for a set number of days per year.

Similarly, in ancient India under the Maurya empire (321-185 BCE), land was owned by the ruler and controlled collectively by village communities known as "gramas." The state-controlled access to land and labor through a system of taxation and tribute.

The Asiatic Mode of Production eventually declined over time due to various factors. One key factor was Internal conflicts. For example, in ancient China during the Warring States period (475-221 BCE), numerous small states battled for supremacy over one another which disrupted social order and economic production.

External conflicts also played a role in undermining the stability of Asiatic Mode of Production societies. For example, invasion by external forces such as the Mongols.

Additionally, technological innovations such as iron tools and plows allowed for more efficient agricultural production which made communal forms of labor less necessary. These factors contributed to the eventual decline of the Asiatic Mode of Production as it became less viable compared to other modes of production such as feudalism or

capitalism.

The crusaders following their occupation of part of the Arab society acted as a transitional belt that brought to Europe many of the achievements of the Arabs and this helped the development of the town and commerce in Europe.

The First Crusade (1095-1102) was a military campaign by western European forces to recapture the city of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim control. Conceived by Pope Urban II following an appeal from the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos, the Crusade was a success with Christian forces taking control of Jerusalem on 15 July 1099.

Around 60,000 soldiers and at least half again of non-combatants were involved in the First Crusade which set off on their quest in 1095. After campaigns in Asia Minor and the Middle East, great cities such as Nicaea and Antioch were recaptured, and then the real objective, Jerusalem itself. Many more crusades would follow, the objectives would widen, as would the field of conflict, so that even Constantinople would come under attack in subsequent campaigns.

How did the Crusade begin?

The first Crusade was a reaction to the rise of the Muslim Seljuks, a Turkish tribe of the steppe. The Seljuks won significant victories in Asia Minor against Byzantine armies, notably at the Battle of Manzikert in ancient Armenia in August 1071. They gained control of important cities as Edessa and Antioch and in 1078, the Seljuks created the Sultanate of Rum with their capital at Nicaea in Bithynia in northwest Asia Minor. By 1087 they took control of Jerusalem.

The Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118)

understood that the Seljuk expansion into the Holy Land was a chance to gain the support of western armies in his attempts to control Asia Minor. He appealed to the west for soldiers in March 1095. The appeal was sent to Pope Urban II (1088-1099) who agreed to help and so did thousands of European knights.

A crusade would increase the prestige of the papacy as it led a combined western army to consolidate its position in Italy.

Pope Urban II had already sent troops to help the Byzantines in 1091 against the Pecheneg steppe nomads who invaded the northern Danube area of the empire. He was disposed to assist as a crusade to bring the Holy Land back under Christian control was an end in itself – what better way to protect such important sites as the tomb of Jesus Christ, the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. In addition, there were very useful additional political and material benefits. A crusade would increase the prestige of the papacy, as the threats from the Holy Roman Emperors in the previous century forced the popes to relocate away from Rome. Urban II also hoped to make himself head of a united Western (Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) Christian church. The two churches had been split since 1054.

On 27 November 1095, Urban II called for a crusade in a speech during the Council of Clermont, France. The message, known as the Indulgence, was aimed specifically at knights. He said that those who defended Christendom, all their sins would be washed away, and their souls would win untold rewards in the next life. Urban II then undertook a tour to France during 1095-6 to recruit crusaders with the same message. People swore an oath to become a crusader and then wore a cross on their shoulder. Across Europe warriors, stirred by notions of religious fervor, personal salvation, pilgrimage, adventure and a desire for material wealth, gathered throughout 1096, ready to em-

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People.

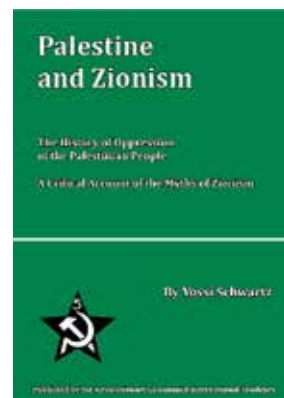
A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz provides a critical analysis of numerous Zionist myths about the Jews as well as about the Palestinians. He demonstrates that the Zionist claim that Palestine is the historic homeland of the Jews lacks any serious basis. *Palestine and Zionism* shows that the history of Zionism in the 20th century is a history of colonialism in the service of the Great Powers and directed against the native population – the Arabs. In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz deals with key events – the “Nakba” in 1948, the wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973, more recent events like the Lebanon War, etc. – which were decisive for the expulsion of most Palestinians from their homeland. Yossi Schwartz also shows that the Palestinian people have heroically resisted against the occupation resulting in two Intifadas as well as the successful defense of Gaza against the Israeli aggression in three wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014). The author also analysis the shameful betrayal by the PLO leadership by signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993. In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz defends the right of national self-determination for the Palestinian people and outlines

a socialist perspective. He emphasizes that the only solution is the right of millions of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland and to replace the Zionist entity with one democratic state from the river to the sea – a *Free Red Palestine* with equal civil rights to the Arabs and the Israeli Jews.

The book contains an introduction and 7 chapters (112 pages) and includes 7 Tables and 3 Maps. The author of the book is Yossi Schwartz, a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine..

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/palestine-and-zionism/>



bark for Jerusalem. The departure date was set for 15 August of that year. Around 60,000 crusaders including some 6,000 knights left for Jerusalem and for the occupation and robbery of the Levant.

The Seljuk Muslims who had taken control of most of Asia Minor and northern Syria in the latter decades of the 11th century were suffering their own particular problems even before the crusaders arrived. In conflict with their bitter rivals, the Shiite Fatimids, based in Egypt, the Sunni Seljuk Muslims had wrestled Jerusalem from them. However, a serious blow to Seljuk ambitions came with the death of the powerful Seljuk Sultan Malikshah in 1092 which produced a scramble for power by various local lords which weakened the Seljuk who were fighting the Fatimids of Egypt. Further, the Seljuk base was in Baghdad, a long way from the battles which would occur throughout the First Crusade, and so there was little centralized support to fight the crusaders. Added to this, the Fatimids Shiite Muslims recapture Jerusalem from the Seljuks just a few months before the Crusaders arrived.

Despite the Pope's appeal specifically to knights, many other people joined the crusade. The first major group was the people's army, a mixed group of poor and petty knights. They were led by the preacher Peter the Hermit and the knight Walter the Penniless (Sansavoir). Peter had earlier been on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he had been captured by Muslims and tortured, now was his chance for revenge and profit.

Meanwhile another group of crusaders, ill-disciplined, made its way down the Rhine. Led by Count Emicho of Leiningen. The group massacred Jews in Speyer, Mainz, Trier, and Cologne. Both groups of crusaders, sometimes referred to as the *'People's Crusade'*.

Those Frankish soldiers were accompanied by an unarmed host more numerous than the armed soldiers, carrying palms and crosses on their shoulders; women and children, too. They were wiped out near Nicaea by a Seljuk army led by Kilij Arslan I on 21 October 1096.

The Fall of Antioch

The second wave of crusaders, this time composed of more knights and professional warriors, arrived in Constantinople in the autumn and winter of 1096. Alexios' army, commanded by the Byzantine general Tatikios, managed to recapture Nicaea in June 1097. Antioch was the next big crusader capture on 3 June 1098 after an 8-month siege where the attackers themselves came under siege from a Muslim force from Mosul. The Crusaders also suffered from plague, famine, and desertions. Unfortunately for Alexios, on his way to support the siege of the city he had met refugees from the area who wrongly informed him that the Crusaders were on the brink of defeat to a huge Muslim army and so the emperor returned home.

The Capture of Jerusalem

In December 1098, the crusader army marched onwards to Jerusalem, capturing several Syrian port cities on their way. They arrived in Jerusalem on 7 June 1099. Of the vast army that had left Europe there were now only around 1,300 knights and some 12,500 infantries. Protected by massive walls and a combination of moat and precipices,

Jerusalem was going to be a tough military nut to crack. However, a number of Genoese ships arrived, which were used to make two siege towers, catapults, and a battering ram. Despite these weapons, the defenders resisted the siege, although the Muslim garrison was remarkably reluctant to break out and make raids on the besiegers, they set and await the promised support from Egypt. Then, in mid-July, Godfrey of Bouillon decided to attack what seemed a weaker section of the wall. Setting up their siege tower under the cover of darkness and filling a portion of the moat, the Crusaders managed to get inside the city on 15 July 1099.

The Kingdom of Jerusalem

A mass slaughter of Muslims and Jews followed, possibly 75,000 were killed. A contemporary Muslim source (Ibn al-Arabi) puts the figure at 3,000 of the city's probable 30,000 residents. Within a month, a large Egyptian army arrived to take back the city, but they were defeated at Escalon. Jerusalem, for the time being at least, was back in Christian hands; Godfrey of Bouillon, the hero of the siege, was made the king of Jerusalem. Back in Italy, Pope Urban II had died on 29 July 1099 without knowing the success of his crusade.

The kingdom of Jerusalem was a state formed in 1099 from territory in Palestine wrested from the Muslims by s during the First Crusade that lasted until 1291.

"The rulers of the neighboring Crusader states of Antioch, Edessa, and Tripoli were the king of Jerusalem's vassals; in return for aid and protection. The kingdom existed in what today is Israel, southern Lebanon, and southwestern Jordan, including four great baronies: the county of Jaffa and Ascalon, the lordship of Krak or Montréal, the principality of Galilee, and the lordship of Sidon. Jerusalem and its surrounding territory plus the cities of Tyre (Lebanon) and Acre composed the royal domain. Though fiefs tended to become hereditary, kings often had to intervene to settle succession disputes and to enforce the Assizes of Jerusalem, the code of law upon which the government of the kingdom was based" [6]

"The Kingdom of Jerusalem was the most important of the Crusader states, controlling a narrow strip of coastal lands from Jaffa in the south to Beirut in the north. Under the kingdom's control were the fiefdoms of Acre, Tyre, Nablus, Sidon, and Caesarea, amongst others. In addition, there was Cyprus, a handy Christian base for western ships to stop and resupply. The king of Jerusalem could ask for military assistance from the other Crusader states, but they were not obliged to give it and often did not. The king did have the help of the military orders like the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, specialist knight-monks who were the best-trained fighting men in the Levant and who were given particularly important passes and castles to guard. The orders owed allegiance to none but themselves, though, and they could sometimes act contrary to the king's plans. This lack of political unity between the Crusader states and the absence of a single cohesive fighting force, would, in the end, greatly contribute to their downfall" [7]

The kingdom of Jerusalem attracted a small but steady stream of settlers from the west, who were encouraged by a gift of land as long as 10% of their produce was given to the local lord. Those farmers already long-established were permitted to keep their land but had to contribute anything up to one-third of their produce (or half in the

case of olives and wine) to their overlords. Merchants came too from the Italian states of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa.

The Jerusalem kingdom and its vassal's states were not colonies in the modern sense of the term, where distant lands were exploited for resources to benefit the homeland. They were settlers' colonies.

The Zionist Historian Joshua Prawer, Israeli historian of the kingdom of Jerusalem and the crusades; *"wrote that the Kingdom of Jerusalem was not synonymous with modern imperialism, as the creation of a settlement of people at a distance ("overseas"), while maintaining political, ethnic and cultural ties from the province of origin of the settlers, and also through conscious detachment or separation from the ethnic, social and multiplicity experience of the veteran population in the inhabited country. Colonial activity differs from the typical colonialism in that the latter continues to maintain a living connection with its base (with "the land that is"), a connection of "matter" and "spirit", of Ashrae and resources, of cultural and political unity"* [8]

The Templars

"Templar, also called Knight Templar, member of the Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon was a religious military order of knighthood established at the time of the Crusades that became a model and inspiration for other military orders. Originally founded to protect Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, the order assumed greater military duties during the 12th century. Its prominence and growing wealth, however, provoked opposition from rival orders. Falsely accused of blasphemy and blamed for Crusader failures in the Holy Land, the order was destroyed by King Philip IV of France." [9]

From the time of the First Crusade until the formation of the Templars, the Al Aqsa Mosque served as a royal palace for the Christian King of Jerusalem. However, in the 1120s Baldwin II granted use of the building to the Templars and Al Aqsa served as the Order's headquarters until the surrender of Jerusalem in 1187, following the Battle of Hattin.

The two mosques that stood in a compound known as the Haram al-Sharif were used by the crusaders. The Dome of the Rock was handed over to the Augustinian order and converted into a church. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, after first being used as a palace, was given to the newly formed Templars in 1120. The Templars believed it was the site of the long-gone Solomon's Temple that the Templars took their full name – The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon.

Al Aqsa would be the headquarters of the Templar order for the next sixty-seven years until Jerusalem was liberated by Salah Adin in 1187. It was during their tenure at the Al-Aqsa Mosque that the Templars were said to have carried out excavations on, supposedly unearthing treasures that have fueled speculation and conspiracy theories for centuries.

Among the artifacts the Templars are said to have unearthed during their time on Temple Mount were the fabled Holy Grail, the Turin Shroud, the head of St. John the Baptist, the Spear of Destiny, the embalmed head of Jesus Christ and the location of the last resting place of the Ark of the Covenant, believed to be buried somewhere in modern-day Ethiopia.

The Templars were ousted from Jerusalem at the end of the 12th Century, and many people believe they took

whatever they found during the course of their excavations with them, hiding the treasure of Solomon's Temple in their headquarters in Paris until the order was brutally disbanded in 1307.

Salah al-Din (Saladin) and the liberation of Jerusalem

Saladin is the Western name of Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, the Muslim sultan of Egypt and Syria who famously defeated a massive army of Crusaders in the Battle of Hattin and captured the city of Jerusalem in 1187. At the height of his power, he ruled a unified Muslim region stretching from Egypt to Syria and Arabia.

Salah al-Din was born Yusuf Ibn Ayyub in the central Iraqi city of Tikrit in 1137 or 1138. His family was of Kurdish descent, and his father Ayyub and uncle Shirkuh were elite military leaders under Imad al-Din Zangi, a powerful ruler who governed northern Syria at the time. After growing up in Damascus and rising through the military ranks, the young Saladin joined an army commanded by his uncle Shirkuh, who served Zangi's son and heir, Nur al-Din, on a military expedition to Egypt.

In 1169, after Shirkuh's death, Salah al-Din was chosen to succeed him in command of Nur al-Din's forces in Egypt. He was also appointed vizier of the crumbling Fatimid Caliphate, which ruled Egypt at the time. With the death of the last Fatimid caliph in 1171, Saladin became governor of Egypt, and set about reducing the power and influence of Shia Islam and reestablishing a Sunni regime there. Governing in the name of Nur al-Din, he strengthened Egypt as a base of Sunni power in the region.

Nur al-Din died in 1174, and Salah al-Din launched a campaign to take control of the lands he had ruled. He also sought to establish his regime as a major military leader capable of challenging the four Western-controlled Crusader states, which had been established after the First Crusade in 1098-99.

As sultan of Egypt, Salah al-Din returned to Syria and managed to capture Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul from other Muslim rulers. His forces also conquered Yemen, which enabled him to consolidate control over the entire Red Sea. In addition to his military exploits, he also pursued diplomatic efforts to achieve his goals. He married Nur ad-Din's widow, Ismat, who was also the daughter of the late Damascan ruler Unur, which helped him gain legitimacy through association with two ruling dynasties. Finally, he gained widespread Muslim support by proclaiming himself the leader of a jihad, or holy war, dedicated to defending Islam against Christianity.

After nearly a decade of fighting smaller battles against the Franks (as the Crusaders from Western Europe were called), Salah al-Din launched a full-scale attack in 1187 with troops from across his realm and a large Egyptian fleet at Alexandria. His army met the Franks in a massive clash at Hattin, near Tiberias (modern-day Israel) and defeated them on July 4, 1187.

On October 2, 1187 the City of Jerusalem surrendered to his army after 88 years under Christian control. Though he had planned to kill all Christians in Jerusalem as revenge for the slaughter of Muslims in 1099, he agreed to let them purchase their freedom instead.

After he liberated Jerusalem, Pope Gregory III called for a new Crusade to recapture the city. In 1189, Christian

forces mobilized at Tyre to launch the Third Crusade, led by three powerful kings: Frederick I "Barbarossa," the German king and Holy Roman Emperor, King Philip II of France and Richard I "the Lionheart" of England.

The Crusaders laid siege to Acre, finally capturing it in 1191 along with a large part of Salah al-Din's navy. Yet despite the military prowess of the Crusader forces, Salah al-Din withstood their onslaught and managed to retain control over most of his empire. His truce with Richard the Lionheart in late 1192 ended the Third Crusade.

"The crusaders in Palestine lost hope of the arrival of the fourth crusade and in 1204 they signed a truce with Salah al-Din's brother al-Adil. Rather than reinforcements arriving, the opposite happened with many of the crusader knights in Palestine leaving for Constantinople to claim territory and fiefs and this deprived the Kingdom of Jerusalem of potential helpers."

The sixth crusade, or the Crusade of Emperor Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor and king of Sicily succeeded in taking Jerusalem through diplomacy, the emperor signed a ten-year deal with Sultan al-Kamil the son of al-Adil. in 1229. He was the first Christian monarch to re-establish Christian rule in Jerusalem after Salah al-Din liberated the city. Al-Kamil agreed to a ten-year truce in February 1229, giving up Jerusalem and other places in Palestine to the crusades, however retaining al-Aqsa Mosque in Muslim hands and the aiding of Frederick to al-Kamil against all his enemies including Christians. Frederick entered the holy city in March 1229 and crowned himself King of Jerusalem. However ten years later the Muslims liberated Jerusalem that remained under Muslim rule until the British occupied Palestine.

Having accomplished their mission, many crusaders now returned to Europe, some with riches, a few with holy relics, but most rather worse for wear after years of hard battles and scant reward. A fresh wave of crusaders, though, arrived in Constantinople in 1100, and they were organized by Raymond of Toulouse. On 17 May 1101 Caesarea was captured; on 26 May Acre fell too. Ominously, though, for future crusades, the Muslims were becoming more familiar with western battle tactics and weapons. In September 1101 a crusader army of Lombard, French, and German knights was defeated by the Seljuks. Things were only going to get more difficult for western armies over the next two centuries of warfare.

"Believed to be constructed around the mid-10th Century BCE on an elevated area of ground in Jerusalem that would later come to be known as Temple Mount, Solomon's Temple was said to be Phoenician in design. A magnificent, white marble and gold-covered building" [10]

To conclude: despite the continued recruitment drive in Europe and attempts to create permanent 'colonies' and kingdoms, it proved impossible to hold on to the gains of the First Crusade, and more campaigns were required to recapture such cities as Edessa and Jerusalem itself after its fall again in 1187. There would be eight official crusades and several other unofficial ones throughout the 12th and 13th centuries, which all met with more failure than success. Outbreaks of fighting between crusaders and Byzantine forces were common, and the mistrust and suspicion of their intentions grew. Crusader groups took the opportunity of Christian fervor to attack minority groups, especially Jews in northern France and the Rhineland. The crusading movement also spread to Spain where, in the

second and third decades of the 12th century, attacks were made against the Moors there. Prussia, the Baltic, North Africa, and Poland, amongst many other places, would also witness crusading armies up to the 16th century despite the dubious military successes, continued to appeal to knights, soldiers, and ordinary people in the west, and its target included not only Muslims but also Jews, pagans, schismatics, and heretics.

The Zionist Crusade

The idea of creating another kingdom of Jerusalem this time by the Jews did not begin with Herzl but it began in a joint Christian-Jewish initiative for the occupation of Palestine was presented by David Reubeni to Pope Clement VII in the early sixteenth century in March 1524.[8] The Pope who saw this as an opportunity to mobilize Jews who were in need for arms to occupy Palestine under European auspices wrote letters to some European monarchs to support such an endeavor, such as the King of Portugal[11]. This may be the first time such an initiative was put forward for a colonialist settler Jewish state through relocating Jews to settle with European support. Although this did not materialize, it was the template that was followed a few centuries later by Theodore Herzl and succeeded with European support.

According to the Jewish Virtual Library: REUVENI, DAVID (d. 1538?), adventurer who aroused messianic hopes in the first half of the 16th century. (The last period of the crusade) The main sources of information about his life are his "diary," written in Hebrew, and contemporaries' letters. Yet the "diary" accounts of his travels in the East prior to his appearance in Europe seem mainly fictitious, based on myths prevalent at the time. His true name and identity are unknown. He claimed to be the son of a King Solomon and brother of a King Joseph who ruled the lost tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh in the desert of Habor: hence his name "Reuveni." At other times, however, he claimed descent from the tribe of Judah and even compiled a pedigree tracing his ancestry back to King David. Although scholars disagree about his origins, there is some evidence that he was of Sephardi origin and lived in Israel and hence had good knowledge of the land, and especially the holy places. It also seems that he was connected to the sages of the Jerusalem Yeshivah, particularly the famous rabbi and kabalist Avraham ben Eliezer Halevi.

His first historically recorded appearance was in Venice in autumn 1523. According to contemporary accounts, he appeared to be aged about 40. He claimed to be commander in chief of his brother's army and requested the Jews of Venice to aid him on an important mission to the pope. Although most of the Jews doubted his story, he found support among certain notables including the artist, Moses da Castelazzo. In February 1524 he arrived in Rome, riding on a white horse, and was received by the humanist Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo, whose support strengthened Reuveni's position with Rome's Jews and it seems they were ordered to attend to his needs. Shortly afterward he was received by Pope Clement VII to whom he proposed a treaty between his state and the Christian world against the Muslims.

According to his diary, he requested the pope to give him letters to the Holy Roman emperor Charles V and to Fran-

cis I of France, recommending them to extend him their help, mainly in the form of armaments. He also asked for a letter to the mythical "Prester John" in Ethiopia. Yet it seems that his real purpose was to get to Portugal, for which he indeed received a letter of recommendation, so that the description in his diary is only a cover-up, written after the failure of his mission in Portugal. In Rome Reuveni found support in some enlightened Jewish circles, including the bankers Daniel and Vitale da Pisa and Benvenida Abravanel, wife of Samuel Abravanel, who sent him money and a silk banner embroidered with the Ten Commandments. This and the other banners he carried created a theatrical impression wherever he traveled.

In 1525 Reuveni was in Portugal where the king, John III, received him as an official ambassador. He was immediately acclaimed by some of the Marranos, who flocked to see him and kiss his hands, convinced that he heralded the coming messiah. To the representative of the sultan of Fez he openly said that the time had come for the Jews to take Jerusalem and Ere Israel from the hand of the Ishmaelites. Reuveni also established contact with the Jews of North Africa and sent them letters of encouragement. However, while his prestige as a harbinger of redemption grew among the Crypto-Jews, his reputation with the nobility and officials gradually declined. The unrest he caused aroused serious suspicions at court and Reuveni was summoned to the king, who accused him of coming to suborn the Marranos to revert to Judaism. When Diego Pires (Solomon Molcho) declared himself a Jew, Reuveni was ordered to leave Portugal. He left amid the grief of the Marranos, but he encouraged them by saying that he had come on that occasion only to inform them that redemption was near. He was arrested off the Spanish coast and imprisoned until, as he says, he was released on the instructions of the emperor Charles V. Here the "diary" breaks off but additional facts are known. A short while afterward he was shipwrecked off the coast of Provence, imprisoned for two years by the lord of Claremont, and released at the request of the king of France on the payment of ransom by the Jewish communities of Avignon and Carpentras. In November 1530 he was back in Venice, after having visited various places in Italy. He tried to have consultations with the city governors and attempted to bring his plans to the attention of the emperor. At the suggestion of Frederick, marquis of Mantua, he traveled to that city. However, Frederick was informed by some of Reuveni's enemies among the Jews that he had forged several letters – to himself, to the pope, to Charles, and to the Jews from his brother King Joseph – to replace the documents which he claimed had been lost during his travels. The marquis now warned the pope and Charles V against Reuveni and when he and Molcho appeared before the emperor in the summer of 1532 they were imprisoned. Molcho was burned at the stake while Reuveni was taken to Spain in chains. He perished in due course (probably at Badajoz in 1538), charged with having seduced New Christians to embrace Judaism.

From his "diary" Reuveni emerges as a man in whom the misery of the Jews aroused strong feelings. He admired the Jews of the West (while despising those of the East) and addressed himself to them; they in turn were impressed by those very qualities in him which he found in them. His deep feeling, fearlessness, and steadfast char-

acter are greatly praised by the banker Daniel de Pisa. Reuveni aroused the greatest fervor among the Marranos and downtrodden Jews brought up in the new spirit of the Renaissance and longing for redemption. Reuveni was the first to move the messianic idea and activity to a rational political sphere. He felt that an impressive appearance and a seemingly realistic political program were likely to help the messianic propaganda among the Jews and Marranos. Hence his constant stress that he is not a prophet nor a messiah but only a military commander and occasionally he evaluates the martial qualities of the Jews he has encountered. All his exaggerated stories about his many expenses, his wicked servants, and his great treasures reflect his naive idea that nobles acted in this fashion. His activity is in sharp contrast with the messianic magical-mythical activity typical of that period, and in this he seems to continue in the path of R. Avraham ben Eliezer Halevi. It appears that Reuveni was interested in creating a certain geopolitical situation which would have messianic meaning for the Jews (a Christian-Muslim war which would become the war of Gog and Magog). This was probably the purpose of his traveling with Solomon Molcho to meet the Emperor Charles V in Regensburg. He re-edited his diary after his failure in Portugal, in the hope that it would help him reestablish his credibility and continue in his messianic activity. This is the explanation for the many contradictions in the diary. However, all his pretentious posturing does not hide the fact that he was a deeply religious man, scrupulously observing the Jewish precepts, fasting six days in the week, and feeling that Providence had chosen him to announce the coming redemption to his oppressed fellow Jews.

The story of David Reuveni and of Solomon Molcho (Hebrew: Shelomo Molkho), or Molkho, originally Diogo Pires (c. 1500 – 13 December 1532) who was a Portuguese Jewish mystic and messiah claimant] When he met with Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to urge the creation of a Jewish army, the emperor turned him over to the Inquisition and he was burned at the stake. Both earlier Zionist crusaders fascinated subsequent generations and was the subject of a number of novels (e.g., by Max Brod the Israeli Zionist and he fascinated other Zionists[12]).

The Next famous non-Jew Zionist was Napoleon. Many Jews of the time believed that Napoleon was their benefactor. Primo Levi has pointed out that in Italy, some Jews named their sons Napoleone in his honor, and in Germany, when Jews adopted family names, some chose Schöntheil, or Bonaparte in German. In France, Jews wrote Hebrew prayers to praise Napoleon during services and called him "Helek Tov" in Hebrew or "good portion" (bona-parte), as Ronald Schechter discussed in "Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815." As he abolished ghettos and granted civil rights to Jews, convening a council, which he termed with biblical grandeur the Sanhedrin, Napoleon was admired by Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav and Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Rimanov.

Napoleon conquered Egypt in July and August of 1798, and by February of the next year he embarked on his campaigns through Syria, which Palestine was part of it. About 13,000 soldiers set out toward Israel with the lightest possible equipment, as the mission's success depended on its speedy conclusion. Napoleon left Cairo on February 9, and within four days his armies were deep within

the Sinai Peninsula. Napoleon captured El Arish on the 18th, and Gaza one week later. On February 26, he arrived in Ashdod and in Ramle two days later. On March 22, 1799, a day before he began his hasty retreat from Syria, the French newspaper *Le Moniteur Universel* published a notice that claimed that Napoleon's campaign sought to reinstate Jewish independence referring to the Jews as the "legal heirs" of the Land of Israel.

Some claim that during the difficult hours of the siege of Acre Napoleon sought a way to attract Haim Farhi, the Jewish adviser to Ahmad Jazar, to his side. The story about his intention to grant independence to the Jews became entrenched, and eventually became a component in the plans of European imperialists to settle colonialist Jews in Palestine.

The Evangelist Christian Zionism preceded Zionism. Jewish Christians like Joseph Frey, who founded the London Society for the Jews, Joseph Woolf, and two theologians Ridley Herschell and Philip Hirschfeld formed a link between the earlier Restorationism of German Lutheran pietists and British evangelicals, and played a large part in galvanizing widespread evangelical support in the UK for the colonization of the Jews of Palestine.

Lord Shaftesbury lobbied Lord Palmerston for moves to allow Jewish return to Palestine, primarily by the appointment of a British Consul in Jerusalem in 1838. He also pressed for the building of Christ Church, the first place of Reformed worship in Jerusalem despite Ottoman and local opposition.

"The impact of George Eliot's 1876 novel, Daniel Deronda, was central to the coalescence of the first Zionist movement, Hovevei Zion, in the early 1880s. Later, pioneer Zionist Nahum Sokolow wrote: 'In the Valhalla of the Jewish people, among the tokens of homage offered by the genius of centuries, Daniel Deronda will take its place as the proudest testimony to the English recognition of the Zionist idea.' In this essay, in honor of the 200th anniversary of Eliot's birth, Philip Earl Steele examines the influence of the novel on the nascent Zionist movement and locates it within the wider movement of 19th century British Christian Zionism."

"Theodor Herzl, however, speaking at the close of the First Zionist Congress held in Basel on 31 August 1897, even before he gratefully acknowledged the pioneering role of many Jewish Zionists, said: 'We must, moreover, thank the Christian Zionists' [13]

Benjamin Disraeli, earl of Beaconsfield, Viscount Hughenden of Hughenden, byname Dizzy, (born December 21, 1804, London, England—died April 19, 1881, London), British statesman and novelist who was twice prime minister of British colonialism (1868, 1874–80) and who provided the Conservative Party with justification for imperialism. Disraeli's imperial policies were clear. His first success was the acquisition of Suez Canal shares. Disraeli overrode the opposition against the purchase and bought the shares using funds provided by the Rothschild family. Early in 1876 Disraeli brought in a bill conferring on Queen Victoria the title empress of India. There was much opposition, and Disraeli would have gladly postponed it, but the queen insisted He was a pro Zionists and wrote the book *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* about David Alroy's messianic mission to Jerusalem 1837.

The pro-Zionist Evangelists were considered idealists. British Idealists. New Liberals and Liberal Imperialists

were all in favor of imperialism, especially when it took the form of white settler communities. The concession of relative autonomy was an acknowledgement of the potential of white settler communities to go the way of America by severing their relationship with the Empire completely. In other words, the formation of settler colonialism.

Liberal Zionists are right that Israel's settlements in the occupied territories in 1967 are a huge problem. But they are wrong when they say that somehow "settlements and continued occupation" will undermine the vision of Theodor Herzl, founder of political Zionism. As a matter of fact, occupation was central to Herzl's plans. Herzl's Zionism was not part of the "tradition of democratic national liberation movements." as the liberal Zionists claim the fact is quite the opposite. Herzl's Zionism was old-fashioned turn-of-the-century colonialism.

His diary includes the text of a letter Herzl wrote to Cecil Rhodes, shortly after the infamous British colonialist had colonized the land of the Shona people in Africa – whose land he claimed and renamed Rhodesia. *"You are being invited to help make history," Herzl wrote to Rhodes. "It doesn't involve Africa, but a piece of Asia Minor; not Englishmen but Jews... How, then, do I happen to turn to you since this is an out-of-the-way matter for you? How indeed? Because it is something colonial... You, Mr. Rhodes, are a visionary politician or a practical visionary... I want you to put the stamp of your authority on the Zionist plan and to make the following declaration to a few people who swear by you: I, Rhodes have examined this plan and found it correct and practicable. It is a plan full of culture, excellent for the group of people for whom it is directly designed, and quite good for England, for Greater Britain... What is the plan? To settle Palestine with the homecoming [emphasis mine] Jewish people"*

The Zionists do not deny that this is what Herzl wrote in his diary, but they argue that this is not colonialism but the return of the Jews to their historical land. However, the claim that the ancient Jews and the Jews today are the same people is to ignore the fact that the ancient Jews lived in slave society and the modern Jews are living in a capitalist society. The Nazis claim that modern Germans are the same as the German tribes. However, the generally accepted definition of what and who qualifies as Germanic is tied to archaeological (weapons, tools, artifacts) and linguistic (runic script,) proof, and not that much with the borders of modern-day Germany or even the Germania of Roman times. Mussolini claimed that the Italians are the same as the Romans. To sustain such an absurdity, it is necessary to use arguments based on genetic – e.g., racist pseudo-scientific theory. Zionism aspired to redeem the Jewish people by forcing it to face the realities of its biological existence. The Zionists claimed that Jews maintained their ancient distinct "racial" identity, and that their regrouping as a nation in their homeland would have profound eugenic consequences, primarily halting the degeneration they fell prey to because of the conditions imposed on them in the past. Some Zionists believed in Lamarckian driven eugenics that expected the "normalization" of Jewish lifestyles to change their constitution. Others believed that transforming conditions would shift selective pressures exerted on the Jewish gene pool.

The contributors to the book "Jewish Tradition and the Challenge of Darwinism" present case studies showing how Jewish discussions of evolution have been shaped by

the intersections of faith, and ideology in specific historical contexts. Furthermore, they examine how evolutionary theory has been deployed when characterizing Jews as a race, both by Zionists and by anti-Semites.

In February 2019, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, reported that the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the peak religious authority in the country, had been requesting DNA tests to confirm Jewishness before issuing some marriage licenses. Despite public outrage and protests in central Tel Aviv, the Rabbinate have not indicated any intention of ending DNA testing, and reports continue to circulate in the Israeli media of how the test is being used. One woman allegedly had to ask her mother and aunt for genetic material to prove that she was not adopted. Another man was asked to have his grandmother, sick with dementia, take a test.

Does it remind us of some other such test of who is a Jew? According to the Zionist ideology, followers of Judaism, who lived in the region and in Palestine (where it is erroneously assumed they were dominant) about 2000 years ago, are the same as Jews today, and (according to the story) inheritors of "Israelites" and before them "Hebrews." The Zionist claim the right to occupy the land because of promises inserted in the Bible, which they interpret as given to them by a "God." Hebrew is seen as a very ancient language that goes back to the presumed time of Moses and before.

The crusaders claimed that the "holy land" is a Christian land occupied by the Muslims. As a matter of fact, the Europeans who settled in North America claimed that they were the chosen people settling in the promised land. The same is true with the Boers settling in South Africa.

The Judeo-Christian tradition, on its ugly side, is central to the models employed to justify conquest and colonization, beginning with the Crusades and colonialism starting in the sixteenth century. Accounts like Exodus and "the Conquest of Canaan" drove colonial projects in North America, Australia, and South Africa. Colonists in what became the U.S. and Canada transferred biblical typology to construct a myth of god's chosen people who were entitled to conquer.

Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel who was responsible for the Nakba was in love with the bible story of Joshua's conquest of Canaan.

When American Presidents speak of common values the U.S shares with Israel they are absolutely right when we remember what the white colonialists did to the Indians and the blacks in North America.

Zionist claims have been built on Western claims based on sacred geography and quasi-archaeology of the "Holy Land." This sacred geography evolved with the Christianization of the region in the fourth century, the Crusades starting in 1099, and British imperialism that promised the Zionists a national home and a new version of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

Thus, The Zionist claim system, which developed and adapted over more than a hundred years, was preceded for centuries by a somewhat similar Western claim system. Both systems have understandings and perceptions common in an age of limited knowledge related to the region's history.

Western Christian Zionism emerged in the form of "sacred geography." A new kind of crusade, accompanied by missionary campaigns and travel accounts, it displayed

feverish millennial sentiments still common today.

The Zionist rely on the Bible as a proof for their right to possess Palestine. However, there is much proof that the stories of the Bible are taken from older civilizations and they are myths rather than accurate historical documents of actual events.

1. *"Antecedents and Polytheistic Origins: Epigraphic and other archaeological finds illustrate that biblical accounts are copied from previous regional myths prevalent at the time. A Mesopotamian flood story is almost exactly the same as what became the story of Nūa (Noah), later confirmed as more of the epic of Gilgamesh was retrieved. A Mesopotamian cylinder portrays the story of Adam and Eve, complete with a tree and snake (reproduced in George Smith's 1876 book). As recently as 2010, an Assyrian tablet with a treaty by Esarhaddon reads like the covenant told in the Old Testament (Murdock 2010). Other finds like the execration texts, Meshah' stele and 'Amarna letters provide more contexts for regional history and need to be re-interpreted. It has become clear with time that the biblical stories are not "unique." More discoveries such as the epic cycle from the city of Ugarit, the Qumran/Dead Sea Scrolls and Kuntillet 'Ajrud, and other evidence from ancient Egypt, point to another fact: monotheistic religions derive from the preceding polytheism. Judaism contained polytheistic elements at times when it had been assumed to be the product of the one true god. It did not invent monotheism. Thus, the gods in the three monotheistic religions have different ancestries, or they have, really, different gods."*

2. *Historicity of Other Accounts: Later accounts such as Exodus, the "Conquest of Canaan," The story of the freed slave conquering Canaan is impossible as the Bible story does not mention the fact that at that time the Egyptians ruled Canaan and had many armed forces.*

3. *Lack of factual or traceable historical corroboration. Starting in the 1980s a scholarly movement known as the Copenhagen School, among them Thomas L. Thompson, interprets these stories and figures as literary-mythological themes. Other scholars, like Keith W. Whitelam, have documented the biblical industry, with its exaggeration of "ancient Israel" and the disregard for Palestinian history. Israeli archaeologist Ze'ev Herzog also recaps these conclusions" [14]*

4. *"Contrary to common impressions, people in Palestine were predominantly polytheistic in their religion, with a minority of Jews (or Yahwists) and Samaritans. More than 90% of villages in Palestine were "pagan" in the early fourth century with a tribal "Arab" population, as Wilkinson states, well before the Muslim conquest (Asali, 96-97). Wilkinson also cites Michael Avi-Yonah's estimate that the Jewish population declined from a questionable 65% in the first century to 9% in the seventh century CE. The time of "Herod" (more accurately "Harad") indicates the poly-religious composition in Palestine, with "Phoenicians" and "Arab" tribes in large sections, and the Jerusalem temple used by different religionists among them Yahwists (Strange 112)" [15]*

5. *"The "Western Wall," called so in reference to a temple, actually the remnant of a Roman fortress or a retaining wall built by Herod, did not exist as a point of pilgrimage before the Ottoman conquest. The Encyclopedia Judaica, (1971), acknowledges that the "Western Wall" "became a permanent feature in Jewish tradition about 1520 [CE], either as a result of the immigration of the Spanish exiles or in the wake of the Turkish conquest of 1518." It's likely that its evolution to holy status developed much later, in part relying on the proximity of Al-Aqsa compound*

and Islamic tradition. Zionism has appropriated the pantheon of Muslim saints and legends, such as 1948 maqams (graves of holy men), which were Palestinian and "were not a component in Jewish tradition" (Benvenisti 273-279). The same hectic take-over applies to conventionally named places, such as the Tower of David now turned into a museum of "Jewish history," which has nothing to do with David architecturally or factually (the Byzantines were the first to call it by mistaken identification). A rock platform in Silwan was quickly identified as part of "David's palace," though some Israeli archaeologists have rejected this and pointed out that the stones are predominantly Hellenistic (Erlander; Finkelstein et al.). A host of archaeological sites (e.g., Majiddul "Megiddo," Asqalān/"Ashkelon" and Herodium) and abandoned or destroyed Palestinian villages (e.g., Sataf and "Canada Park") have been turned into national parks for Israelis to visit as their heritage".

"Al-Amarn letters, debunk the historicity of biblical narratives, emphasizing the Bible's literary character (32: 8-9) which tells how the father god Īl or El ("Elyon," the High and Mighty One) distributes his sons to the nations, and gives one son, Yahweh, to the tribal descendants of Yaqūb (Jacob), that is the Israelites. In this passage, the later Masoretic text replaced "sons/children of God/ Īl" with "sons/children of Israel," thus appropriating the god entirely, owning it as exclusive. Another confusion results from translating Yahweh, or "Adoni" (a title of Yahweh) as "Lord," thus diluting its distinction from "God," or Īl/El the Highest. Amazingly, the Qumrān scrolls agree with the letters from about the same period" [16]

The similarity of Israel to the kingdom of Jerusalem is not new. On 14-17 July 1991, the Third International Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East was held in Syracuse, New York. This society, which holds an international conference every four years, includes a group of historians interested in the Crusades and publishes an annual on Crusades research worldwide. The first conference, held in 1983 in Cardiff, was chaired by Joshua Prawer, the dean of Israeli historians. The title of this conference was "Crusade and Settlement." The second conference was held in 1987 in Haifa and Jerusalem where the conferees were received by Israeli President Haim Herzog. The title of this conference was "The Latin Establishments in the Levant and the Crusade." In attendance were seventy-five academics from around the world for whom the Israeli Institute for Scientific and Literary Studies held several panels in the Van Leer Center in Jerusalem. In addition, Israeli historians organized several different expeditions to Crusader sites. These trips were led by Benjamin Kedar, a protegee of Prawer to the site of the decisive Battle of Hattin, where the crusaders were defeated.

Meron Benvenisti, in his book *Conflict and Contradiction*, notes, "The Study of the Crusades became, years later, fashionable, because Arab scholars began to draw parallels between Zionism and the Crusades." He also adds, "I was also mobilized to write a pamphlet in which I vehemently denied the validity of the comparison. All such historical parallels are political battle cries, but this particular one is absurd." In a few short lines, Benvenisti formulates the following rebuttal, "How foolish are the attempts to compare us to the Crusaders; how utterly absurd is the perception of us as a bunch of rootless drifters. The seedling, planted almost one hundred years ago, has grown into a robust and ramified tree, with roots deeply thrust in the soil of moles. Unlike Balian [the Crusader nobleman] we have nowhere

to go and no storm will uproot us. Yet we may dry up or rot from within" [17]

But if this comparison is absurd, why invest so much in the study of the crusade state? "The lady doth protest too much, me thinks" as in the play Hamlet by William Shakespeare.

In contrast Joshua Prawer, Benvenisti's professor and one of the most famous Israeli historians with an international reputation in Crusade Studies, did not let the facets of the similarity between the two political philosophies slip by unnoticed. In his book, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Prawer quotes Faucher de Chartres, the Latin priest who accompanied the First Crusade and resided in Jerusalem: "Consider, I pray, and reflect how in our time God has transferred the West into the East. For we who were Occidentals now have been made Orientals We have already forgotten the places of our birth; already they have become unknown to many of us, or, at least, are unmentioned There are here, too, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Some tend vineyards, others till fields Different languages, now made common, become known to both races, and faith unites those whose forefathers were strangers Those who had little money there have countless bezants here, and those who did not have a villa possessed here by the gift of God a city You see, therefore, that this is a great miracle, and one which must greatly astonish the whole world" [18]

How similar to the Zionist propaganda of turning a dry desert to blooming land.

The selection of this quotation indicates that Joshua Prawer, who emigrated from Poland in 1936, recognized the extent of the similarity in the individual and social experience of Crusaders and Zionists. Rather than studying the comparison and denying its validity, he chose to study the Crusaders' experience as if it were a historical model which could be completely avoided. As if you can cheat the dialectics of history that will lead unavoidably to the fall of the Zionist kingdom of Jerusalem.

The European Jews who witnessed the Crusaders wrote four volumes reviewed by Shlomo Eidelberg. From those volumes we learn about the hatred of the Jews for the Crusaders' religion, their mission, and their symbols as the Crusaders had slaughtered Jews in the hundreds while traveling east through the Rhineland in an effort "to get rid of the infidels." The volumes also state that the Jews preferred death to baptism. They sought refuge from the Crusaders by beseeching bishops to grant them sanctuary in churches along the way. The Crusaders thus initiated the historically recurrent attacks against Jews in Europe which culminated in the horrible anti-Semitic massacres by the Nazis. And in spite of it the Zionists exiled and killed the Palestinians in the Nakba.

The Crusaders led a murderous rampage through Muslim territories after the downfall of Jerusalem, an event upon which Ibn al-Athir believed more than 70,000 Muslim deaths occurred. He also wrote that an additional number of Jews gathered in synagogues to seek refuge and the Crusaders burnt down the synagogues thus leading the occupants to a fiery death. Crusaders disallowed Jewish and Muslim habitation of Jerusalem until Saladin's liberation of the city. At the time of this liberation, Saladin allowed the Jews to return and live among the Muslims.

Between 1947 and 1949, Zionist military forces attacked major Palestinian cities and destroyed some 530 villages.

About 15,000 Palestinians were killed in a series of mass atrocities, including dozens of massacres. Many others, especially babies, small children and old people died in the "death march to Jordan. Others were shut when they tried to return to their fields and orchards.

The Crusader state was established on the ruins of Arab Muslim populations. To this end in the first decade of their occupation and until the downfall of Sidon in 1110, the Crusaders would enter a community, kill its residents, and "set up Christian structures on that site". This practice ended not for humane reasons but because there were not enough crusaders to achieve this goal any longer. Also pivotal was the fact that the Crusaders required the urban Arabs' knowledge in the fields of trade and manufacture. The Zionists did not expel all the Palestinians because they needed them as cheap labor under military rule.

The crusaders formed a racist structure in which they were favored over the local population. They did not legally differentiate between Muslims and Eastern Christians and forced both to pay taxes and banned them from wearing Western clothing. Even though the urban Arabs were permitted to keep their property, continue in their trade, and keep their religion, their rights as first-class citizens were usurped by the crusades. As for the rural population and peasants, they gradually sank into slavery as they and their property were transferred to the ownership of the knights and their kings. This rural population was also allowed to keep their religion. In contrast, the European serfs were given their freedom immediately upon joining the Crusades. The Bedouins became the exclusive property of the King of Jerusalem who had the right to collect taxes from them and restrict their movement in order to turn them also to cheap labor.

Prawer states, "The difficult problem which faced the Crusaders was not scarcity of land but shortage of manpower." [19] The Zionists considered the fact that the Crusaders depended

on Arab and Muslim farmers a strategic weakness and an essential component of the downfall of the Crusader state. The Zionist movement, since its early days at the turn of the century, has insisted on reliance only on Jewish farmers, which has been achieved by the establishment of kibbutzim and moshavim. These state farms have contributed to the security of food supplies both before and since the inception of Israel.

The structure of the crusaders was the following: The king ruled the state with the support of the noblemen, a class of privileged Franks. Next in the social order came the knights and then the bourgeoisie. Lowest in the order was the indigenous population. The law of the Crusader state was a combination of French and Roman jurisdictions which created a feudal system of inheritance. The legitimacy of this law was derived from the Latin Church of Jerusalem, which was loyal to the Pope. This church refused to accept any of the Eastern Christian churches on an equal footing.

Do we need to point out the similarity of the Zionist apartheid state?

In contrast to the Crusader state that had many social and national conflicts, the Zionist state has, until this year, been able to protect itself from violent confrontations among its various factions. These factions represent the different strata of ethnic, racial, social, economic, and even religious groups that compose Israeli society. The Israeli government has been able to protect itself from internal divisiveness by relying upon the sentiment that Israel is threatened by vicious external forces. In the past it was mainly Egypt, and in our days Iran.

The crusading ideology existed for several generations sending one Crusade after the other; in the early decades headed by the kings and potentates of Europe. However, the Church was unable to sustain the zeal that moved armies for a prolonged period despite the commitment of

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: The Zionist Wars

A History of the Zionist Movement and Imperialist Wars

In *The Zionist Wars* Yossi Schwartz gives an overview about the process of Zionist colonialization of Palestine as well as the resistance of the indigenous Arab population. He deals in detail with the popular struggles of the Palestinians against their expulsion by the Zionists. *The Zionist Wars* elaborates in detail the character of Israel's military campaigns in 1948 and the following decades which resulted in the expulsion of large parts of the Palestinian population. These wars were also crucial to implement the imperialist subjugation of the Arab countries.

However, as Yossi Schwartz elaborates, the Zionist state has passed its peak already some time ago which has been demonstrated by its failed military campaigns in Lebanon as well as in Gaza.

In *The Zionist Wars* the author also discusses in much detail the program of the communist movement on the Palestinian question. He shows the adaptation and finally capitulation of Stalinism to the Zionist project – culminating in massive arms shipments for the Israeli forces during the War of 1948.

In this book Yossi Schwartz elaborates the analyses and conclusions of Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International for the libera-

tion of Palestine. He also discusses the strength and weakness of his successors in dealing with the Zionist state and the Arab liberation struggle against it.

In *The Zionist Wars* Yossi Schwartz defends the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people and outlines a socialist perspective.

The book contains an introduction and 20 chapters (136 pages) and includes 2 Tables and 4 Maps. The author of the book is Yossi Schwartz, a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-zionist-wars/>



successive popes. Europe became preoccupied with its internal conflicts and lost its fervor to support the Crusader State, which was abandoned and left to meet its fate in 1291.

Today the American Jews are divided, and many understand that Israel is an apartheid state. Only the right wingers Orthodox American Jews support Israel and some of them immigrate to Israel. At the same time Western imperialism that has supported Israel is declining.

Finally, just to end the comparison between the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Zionist state, the Templars that made Al Aqsa their headquarters were called Templars because they believed that Al Aqsa Mosque is built on the ruins of the Jewish Temple built by King Solomon. This is also the claim of the Zionists who want to wipe out the Palestinian super structure.

Conclusion

Zionism, is the heir – albeit an illegitimate one – of the Crusader movement. It was born out of the depth of the Crusader residue in Western societies as it combined the dreams of reconquest of the Holy Land with the historical antipathy toward the Easterners along with the solution of the Jewish question in the West. The Zionist movement has interjected a factor that has contributed decisively to the receptivity of modern Western societies to its ideology. The emphasis on Judaism as a national identity in addition to a religious identity. This nationalist definition of Judaism has found an echo in the era of imperialism. In addition, it has attracted the fundamentalist Christian evangelical ideology, to the support for Zionism. Thus, the Jewish Zionists have been transformed from being victims of the First Crusade to being the executors of the Crusaders after the Crusaders were destroyed by Philip IV king of France. Do not make a mistake and think that only the Zionist state is racist. What should be emphasized here is that “Western civilization” is not a benign but a convenient and useful construct for the imperialists. It evolved mostly during the 16th to 17th centuries, in association with the Renaissance and with colonization. Zionism is part and based on this “Western civilization”. In particular the Crusaders activities like killing thousands of Arabs when they occupied the “Holy land” and subjected the local native population.

Endnotes:

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- [5] <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/discuss-political-cultural-economic-282921>
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Publications of the RCIT

The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism

Israel is losing the war of propaganda

Yossi Schwartz, *Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine)*, 30.08.2023

For many years the Zionists were able to present Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East. A democracy that is forced to defend itself against the only Jewish state against terror aiming to destroy the only democracy in the region. A terror motivated by anti-Semitism.

Even today you can find in the capitalist newspapers this projected image of Israel. For example, in the British Telegraph: "You may have read by now that the situation in Israel is dire. Here is the Middle East's only democracy, and our most important ally in the region, falling apart before our very eyes. In recent years, the country has painstakingly built up a reputation for an (almost literally) bulletproof economy, a high-tech miracle that continues to deliver growth and secure investment opportunities despite the threat of war and terror. Now, people are talking of the end of democracy" [1]

The claim that Israel is a democracy raises the question: what is democracy? Was the U.S after it won the war with Britain, a democracy based on slavery? If it was for whom? Was South Africa a democracy? After all there was a parliament, all white men and women could participate in the election and there was division of power between the government, the court and the parliament.

May the existence of a constitution characterized democracy? The Stalinist Russia had the best constitution and yet it had a totalitarian regime.

Is democracy the opposite of dictatorship? Ancient Athens had a very advanced democracy for the 50,000 citizens that ruled over 500,000 slaves. For the citizens it was democracy, but for the slaves it was a dictatorship.

It is the same for bourgeois democracy: it is a democracy for the capitalist class and dictatorship for the working class. Those who doubt that this is the case have only to think, is there a democracy in the place of work? In the army? How much money a person needs to run for elected position?

The state apparatus – the police, army, courts, bureaucracy and similar institutions—is set up and controlled by this capitalist class. These big businessmen—the bourgeoisie, or monopoly capitalists—consistently use the police, army, national guard, courts and bureaucracies to break workers' strikes and generally to put down the rebellions of the poor who own no means of production. The police, army and national guard are never called out against the class of bankers and corporation executives.

In short, this state is a bourgeois dictatorship. This does not mean there is a dictatorship of one or several men. It does mean there is a class dictatorship, where a tiny handful of profit-makers rule society and use the state as their machine to suppress the working people.

The liberal democracy we are told, is a regime that all are equal before the law. But this is a myth in the real world. A rich person can use the laws in his defense, hire very skilled lawyers and have connections in high places. This is not the case for the workers and the poor.

Israel has never been a liberal democracy. Before the war of 1967 the Palestinian citizens of Israel lived under military regime. After 1967 the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza lived under military regime and their lands and water have been stolen under military regime and are attacked by the settlers defended by the Zionist army and police and by

raids by the Israeli army. The Palestinians citizens of Israel are discriminated against by hundreds of laws.

Thus, Israel is an apartheid state. According to Article 1(1) of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (the 'Convention'), *'[the] Convention declares that apartheid is a crime against humanity and that inhuman acts resulting from the policies and practices of apartheid and similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination... are crimes violating the principles of international law, in particular the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and constituting a serious threat to international peace and security'*

Article 1(2) of the Convention goes on to declare *'criminal those organizations, institutions and individuals committing the crime of apartheid.'* *The crime of apartheid as defined in the Convention includes, among other things, 'denial to any members of any racial group the right to life and liberty of person: by murder of members of any racial group, by the infliction upon members of any racial group of serious bodily or mental harm, by the infringement of their freedom or dignity, or by subjecting them to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and by arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment of members of any racial group or groups.'*

The opposition to Netanyahu in the streets for the last 34 weeks says that the government of Netanyahu is destroying the democratic regime of Israel! Thus, for them apartheid regime under a different racist government is democracy.

The deniers of the nature of Israel as an apartheid state claim that in the late 20th and early 21st centuries much of what is purported to be criticism of Israel is in fact tantamount to demonization of Israel. The proponents argue that anti-Zionism and demonization of Israel, or double standards applied to its conduct amount to antisemitism.

However, this propaganda is losing ground. Growing number of trade unions, cities, people of the academia and even high officers of the Zionist army are speaking openly about Israel as an apartheid state.

Amos Goldberg, a leading professor of the Holocaust at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, has published an article saying that Israel's treatment of Palestinians as "apartheid" is not anti-Semitic, in a guest post in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ). The Israeli government, Goldberg stated, fights against human rights, democracy and equality and propagates the opposite: "authoritarianism, discrimination, racism and apartheid" [2]

"Felix Klein, Germany's commissioner for Jewish Life and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism, said using "apartheid" in such scenarios is "an anti-Semitic narrative" in an interview with Die Welt, one of Germany's most-read newspapers.

Goldberg's standpoint was not an outlier, he urged Klein to understand. Rather, it represented a growing chorus of voices, including leading Israeli academics propagating the term apartheid to describe the treatment of Palestinians by the current regime.

In fact, if Klein were right, Goldberg wrote, then some of the best-known Holocaust and anti-Semitism researchers from Israel, the United States, Europe and worldwide would be anti-Semites" [3]

He referenced a petition co-initiated by Omer Bartov, the Israeli-born historian and professor of Holocaust and geno-

cide studies at Brown University, titled *The Elephant in the Room*, which states: "There can be no democracy for Jews in Israel while Palestinians live under an apartheid regime".

The petition has been signed by more than 2,000 academics, clergy, and other public figures. The petition includes illustrations that include a large elephant with the words "Israeli occupation" alongside a speech bubble that reads "Let's just ignore it", and surrounded by dozens of people freely waving placards for various social justice movements.

"Palestinian people lack almost all basic rights, including the right to vote and protest," the petition reads, "Settler vigilantes burn, loot, and kill with impunity."

Ex-Israeli army general likens military control of the West Bank to Nazi Germany. "Amiram Levin accuses the IDF of being a 'partner in war crimes' when it stands by as settler extremists attack Palestinians, says situation in West Bank is 'absolute apartheid'".

"Amiram Levin, who headed the IDF Northern Command, commanded the elite Sayeret Matkal unit and served as deputy director of the Mossad spy agency, told *Kan* radio on Sunday morning that the military is not only suffering harm to its preparedness because of reservists' threats and refusals to serve amid the government's judicial overhaul, but is also "rotten to its core" due to Israel's ongoing presence in the West Bank.

"It stands on the side, looks at the rioting settlers, and begins to be a partner in war crimes," Levin told the public broadcaster. "It's 10 times worse than the issue of [military] readiness... and I say honestly, I am not angry at the Palestinians, I am angry at us. We are killing ourselves from the inside." [4]

To defend Israel from the accusation of being apartheid state a pathetic Zionist minister stated that Israel is only a prison for the Palestinians:

"Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said that Israel isn't an apartheid state. The reason, he said, is that one has to view the Palestinians in the West Bank as prisoners" [5]

And while the Zionist propaganda is failing, the government of Netanyahu is seeking a conflict with Hamas, Hezbollah and even Iran in order to unite all the Zionists

Yesterday early morning the Zionist air force attacked an airport in Syria:

"Israel launched an airstrike against an international airport

in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo before dawn on Monday, putting it out of service, Syria's state-run media reported." [6]

On Friday, Saleh al-Arouri, deputy head of Hamas's politburo, told a Lebanese news outlet that any Israeli targeted killings of the group's leaders would spark a regional war.

"At the outset of the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday, Netanyahu said that he "heard the verbiage by the senior Hamas official Arouri, from his hiding place in Lebanon. He knows very well why he and his colleagues are in hiding. Hamas, and the other Iranian proxies understand very well that we will fight with all means against their attempts to use terrorism against us – in Judea and Samaria, Gaza and everywhere else," Netanyahu said, referring to the West Bank and the Palestinian coastal enclave ruled by Hamas. "Whoever tries to hurt us, whoever finances and organizes, whoever dispatches terrorists against Israel, will pay the full price." [7]

Thus, we live in a short period of calm before the storm. In a time of a cold war between Israel and its enemies.

Unlike the war in the Ukraine that has two aspects – first, a war between Ukraine and imperialist Russia and the other between Russian imperialism and Western's imperialism – in a war between Imperialist Israel and the non-imperialist Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas, there is only one aspect which calls for the defeat of the Zionist state.

*Down with the Zionist apartheid imperialist state!
Defend the Palestinian resistance!*

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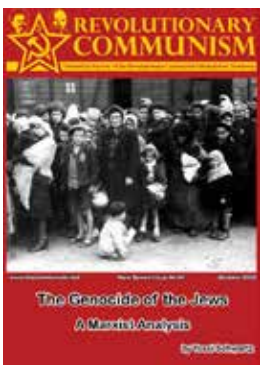
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Publications of the RCIT

The Genocide of the Jews A Marxist Analysis

By Yossi Schwartz

Introduction * The Conditions of the Jews on the Eve of World War II * The Pseudo-Scientific Racist Theory of Social Darwinism * Anti-Semitism as a Branch of Social Darwinism * The Nazi Labor-Death Camps * Zionist Ideology as a Branch of Social Darwinism * The Genocide of the Palestinians * Who Are the Guilty Parties for the Genocide of the Jews? * The Uniqueness of the Genocide of the Jews * The Use of the Holocaust * So What Is Unique About the Genocide of the Jews? * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

Zionist Pigs – Hands Off the Eritrean Refugees

Yossi Schwartz, *Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine)*, 04.09.2023

Eritrea was called Mdree-Bahree (which means Land of the Sea). The term “Eritrea” derives from the Greek term Sinus Erythraeus, which can be translated in English as the Red Sea. The name was given to the sea between the Arabian Peninsula and the Africa continent, by Greek tradesmen of the third century B.C. This part of the world is considered the origin of the human race. It’s from this place that our first ancestors migrated to other parts of the globe. The first known inhabitants of Eritrea are the Kunama and Nara about 3500 B.C ago. The ‘Land of Punt’ is believed to be in this part of the world. Around 2000 BC the Beja people from southern Egypt entered Eritrea. The first inscription in the Geez alphabet dates from 800 B.C.

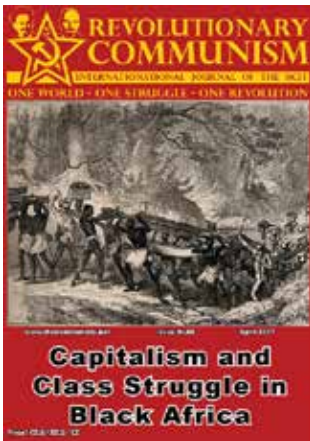
In 1890 Italy colonized the land of Midri-Bahri along the Red Sea, and named it Eritrea. Italian colonization was replaced by the British in 1941 that was annexed to Ethiopia. In 1993 after 30 years of war with Ethiopia it won its official independence. Nevertheless, it has remained a semi colony.

Although some EPLF cadres at one time espoused a Stalinist ideology, Russian Stalinism supported the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia. The EPLF declared it is committed to establishing a democratic form of government and a free-market economy in Eritrea. It became a semi colony of the United States as the United States agreed to provide assistance to Eritrea, conditional on continued progress toward a capitalist economy. In May 1991 the EPLF established the Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) to ad-

ministrating Eritrean affairs until a referendum was held on independence and a permanent government established. EPLF leader Afewerki became the head of the PGE, and the EPLF Central Committee served as its legislative body.

Eritreans voted overwhelmingly in favor of independence between 23 and 25 April 1993 in an UN-monitored referendum. The result of the referendum was 99.83% for Eritrea’s independence. The Eritrean authorities declared Eritrea an independent state on 27 April 1993. The government was reorganized and the National Assembly was expanded to include both EPLF and non-EPLF members. The assembly chose Isaias Afewerki as president. The EPLF reorganized itself as a political party, the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).

President Isaias and his party, the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice—the successor to the EPLF—remained firmly in power. Conditions within Eritrea grew increasingly repressive, with personal rights and freedoms routinely violated. The government’s program of conscription into national service, for lengthy, indefinite periods of time, was compared to enslavement and was one of the reasons why large numbers of Eritreans have taken dangerous journeys to flee the country. The country came under fire by the UN Human Rights Council, which accused Isaias’s government of having committed human rights violations against the citizens of the country. Reports released in 2015 and 2016 detailed the alleged human rights violations, such as enslavement, rape, torture, and murder; some violations were labeled as crimes



PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

Theses on Capitalism and Class Struggle in Black Africa

*An Analysis of Imperialist Exploitation and Oppression
and the Perspectives of the Liberation Struggle*

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

Introduction * Some Background Notes on Black Africa’s Modern History: How Colonial Plunder and Oppression Blocked Independent Development * Popular Struggles against Colonialism Led to Formal Independence * Formal Independence as Disguised Imperialist Dependency * The Reactionary Role of White Settlers * Is Capitalist Black Africa Rising? * Africa in the Grip of Imperialism * China as a new Imperialist Great Power Challenging the Western Domination * The Working Class and the Oppressed * Rising Class Struggle * Key Lessons for a Revolutionary Strategy in Black Africa * Imperialist Domination and Authoritarian Regimes Remain in Place despite Formal Changes * Breaking the Capitalist Chain – The Program of Permanent Revolution * The Revolutionary Struggle against Imperialism * Imperialist Chauvinism and the Anti-Imperialist Patriotism of the Oppressed * The Independence of the Working Class and the Struggle against the Popular Front * The Struggle for Pan-African Unity * The Revolutionary World Party and its African Sections * Footnotes

against humanity.

"The relationship between Israel and the government of Eritrea, often referred to as the "Africa's North Korea," has been strained for a while now. Israel has not authorized the appointment of an ambassador to Asmara, Eritrea's capital, and the Israeli embassy building has been left deserted since 2020. Eritrea consistently votes against Israel in international forums, including the United Nations, and was a vocal opponent against Israel's reinstatement as an observer in the African Union. With this information in mind, one might be tempted to ask why Israel did not disengage all official diplomatic relations with Eritrea. One of the most common explanations to this conundrum is Israel's security interests in the Horn of Africa, a region that constitutes a strategic geographical location. If foreign sources are to be believed, Israel maintains intelligence bases and Navy submarines in and around that area" [1]

"Israel and Eritrea formed diplomatic relations in the 1990s after Eritrea became independent. Since independence, the country has known only one ruler, the dictator Isaias Afewerki, who turned the country into one of the most isolated and totalitarian states in the world today. Nevertheless, Israel maintained ties with Eritrea over the years both on the diplomatic and security planes. At the same time, thousands of Eritreans fled to Israel, many of them trying to avoid being drafted.

In 2019, the Supreme Court rejected a petition calling for the Israeli government to release a Foreign Ministry paper detailing human rights conditions in Eritrea. The paper could have played a role in determining the status of Eritrean refugees in Israel, but the justices accepted the government's position that making the document public would harm bilateral relations.

The court's ruling provided a rare peek into the relationship between Israel and the murderous regime in Eritrea, which most Israelis are unaware of.

Reports in the foreign media alleged, among other things, that there was an Israeli base in Eritrea, that the Israeli Navy operated in its Red Sea territorial waters and that Israel has listening posts in the country that provide intelligence on countries in the region. No official Israeli source has ever confirmed those allegations.

In 2017, the Houthis rebels in Yemen threatened to attack "secret bases" that Israel supposedly operated in Eritrea. It should be noted that Israel supported Ethiopia when it was fighting Eritrean rebels seeking independence, but that didn't stop Israel and Eritrea from cooperating after the latter won its independence" [2]

Human Rights Watch says that Eritrea is among the worst in the world, particularly with regards to freedom of the press. Eritrea is a one-party state in which national legislative elections have been repeatedly postponed the judiciary is weak, and constitutional provisions protecting individual freedom have yet to be fully implemented Some Western countries, particularly the United States, accuse the Government of Eritrea of arbitrary arrest and detentions and of detaining an unknown number of people without charge for their political activism. Additionally, Eritrean citizens, both men and women, are forcibly conscripted into the military with an indefinite length of service and used as forced labor.

"The Eritrean Embassy in Israel has been around since 2004. Lacking an official ambassador, the embassy is currently run by a designated custodian. It filed an official request to hold a cultural festival that, among other things, would help raise funds for the Eritrean regime, and asked Israeli officials to provide pro-

tection for the festival, fearing asylum-seeker reprisal" [3]

Tel Aviv police were informed many times during the week before Saturday, September the second, that the Eritrean refugees would clash with the supporters of the regime attending the celebration and yet on Saturday morning only two policemen guarded the hall. As was expected a clash between the supporters of the regime and the refugees took place and the police arrived using brutal force. 170 people were injured, 19 seriously and 39 were detained. Thus, the police wanted this clash.

Why? This was an opportunity to deport the Eritrean refugees.

Following a ministers' meeting in Jerusalem, Netanyahu hit out at the Supreme Court for blocking deportations and said he would start deporting "rioters" immediately

"Israel is considering tough steps including the immediate deportation of Eritrean asylum seekers involved in riots in Tel Aviv on Saturday. Some 170 people were injured in violent clashes with police and in-fighting between groups of supporters and opponents of the Eritrean regime.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said "a red line" had been crossed. He also ordered a new plan to remove all African migrants that he described as "illegal infiltrators".

Saturday's unprecedented disorder began after activists opposed to the Eritrean government said that they had asked Israeli authorities to cancel an event organized by their country's embassy" [4]

Instead, police appeared in riot gear and fired tear gas, stun grenades and live rounds. On Saturday the Zionist camp that said they want democracy did not say one word on the brutal police nor on the Likud announcement that it is time to remove the refugees. Yes, they want democracy but only for the Jews.

Hands off the African refugees!

To hell with the racist police!

Recognize the African asylum!

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What the RCIT Stands for

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) is a fighting organisation for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. It has national sections in various countries. The working class is the class of all those (and their families) who are forced to sell their labour power as wage earners to the capitalists. The RCIT stands on the theory and practice of the revolutionary workers' movement associated with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Capitalism endangers our lives and the future of humanity. Unemployment, war, environmental disasters, hunger, exploitation, are part of everyday life under capitalism as are the national oppression of migrants and nations and the oppression of women, young people and homosexuals. Therefore, we want to eliminate capitalism.

The liberation of the working class and all oppressed is possible only in a classless society without exploitation and oppression. Such a society can only be established internationally.

Therefore, the RCIT is fighting for a socialist revolution at home and around the world.

This revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for she is the only class that has nothing to lose but their chains.

The revolution can not proceed peacefully because never before has a ruling class voluntarily surrendered their power. The road to liberation includes necessarily the armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasant republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in rank and file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods and schools – in councils. These councils elect and control the government and all other authorities and can always replace them.

Real socialism and communism has nothing to do with the so-called "real existing socialism" in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba or Eastern Europe. In these countries, a bureaucracy dominated and oppressed the proletariat.

The RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of workers and the oppressed. We combine this with a perspective of the overthrow of capitalism.

We work inside the trade unions and advocate class struggle, socialism and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is a layer which is connected with the state and capital via jobs and privileges. It is far from the interests and

living circumstances of the members. This bureaucracy's basis rests mainly on the top, privileged layers of the working class - the workers' aristocracy. The struggle for the liberation of the working class must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their upper strata.

The RCIT strives for unity in action with other organizations. However, we are aware that the policy of social democracy and the pseudo-revolutionary groups is dangerous and they ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class.

We fight for the expropriation of the big land owners as well as for the nationalisation of the land and its distribution to the poor and landless peasants. We fight for the independent organisation of the rural workers.

We support national liberation movements against oppression. We also support the anti-imperialist struggles of oppressed peoples against the great powers. Within these movements we advocate a revolutionary leadership as an alternative to nationalist or reformist forces.

In a war between imperialist states (e.g. U.S., China, EU, Russia, Japan) we take a revolutionary defeatist position, i.e. we don't support neither side and advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class. In a war between an imperialist power (or its stooge) and a semi-colonial country we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed country.

The struggle against national and social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) must be led by the working class. We fight for revolutionary movements of the oppressed (women, youth, migrants etc.) based on the working class. We oppose the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism etc.) and strive to replace them by a revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class win. The construction of such a party and the conduct of a successful revolution as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in Russia are a model for the revolutionary parties and revolutions also in the 21 Century.

For new, revolutionary workers' parties in all countries! For a 5th Workers International on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without a revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

