

The Palestinian Struggle & the Anarchist Dilemma

and...

Lessons for the Anarchist Movement of the Israeli-Lebanese War

★ The Anarchist Debate about National Liberation ★



2 Essays by Wayne Price



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★ For further on this topic, see my *The U.S. Deserves to Lose in Iraq but Should We 'Support the Iraqi Resistance'?* at www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=1016

The Palestinian Struggle & the Anarchist Dilemma *and...*

Lessons for the Anarchist Movement of the Israeli-Lebanese War

★ **The Anarchist Debate about National Liberation** ★

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Further debate on this text can be found at:
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★ Internationalism is Our Goal

Internationalists say, "Workers have no country!" and "Workers of the world, unite!" But international working class unity is not yet a reality. It is a potentiality, something which can happen. And it is a goal, something we wish to happen. How shall we get there? Do we ask the oppressed to downplay their interests for the sake of a false unity? Do we ask People of Colour or women or oppressed nationalities really to subordinate themselves to the better-off layers of the working class (the "labour aristocracy") of the imperialist countries? Or do we seek to build working class unity by the better-off expressing solidarity with the most oppressed? It is not the Lebanese Shiites who should give up their fight but the Israeli oppressors to whom we place the demand to give up their national privileges. Let the workers of Israel give up their support for national superiority and a "Jewish state" - then the workers and peasants of southern Lebanon can justly give up their need to defend themselves from the Zionist aggressors.

The differences between the world-spanning power of U.S. imperialism and its junior partners and the weak, poorer, oppressed nations of the Middle East and elsewhere has been made clear for all the world to see. It can be seen in the smashed cities and villages of Lebanon, as in the war-torn streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. It is absurd to treat a war between the U.S.-Israel and Arab peoples as the same as a war between France and Germany, two imperialisms. In the last case, workers should oppose both sides equally. Many anarchists misuse the slogan, "No War but Class War!" This applies to wars among imperialist states (as in World Wars I and II) but not to wars between an imperialist state and an oppressed people. I would say, "No war but the just wars of the workers and oppressed!"

As Peter Kropotkin wrote, "*True internationalism will never be obtained except by the independence of each nationality, little or large, compact or disunited - just as [the essence of] anarchy is in the independence of each individual. If we say, no government of man over man [Note], how can [we] permit the government of conquered nationalities by the conquering nationalities?*" (quoted in Miller, 1976, p. 231)

As we are in solidarity with a strike while opposing the union bureaucracy, so we should be in solidarity with the people of oppressed nations while opposing their nationalist leaders. The world is a complex place, with much interconnection and overlapping of systems of oppression. We need concrete analyses of each situation (for example, the situation in Quebec is quite different from that of Iraq). Slogans are not enough. We need a sophisticated effort to express our politics.

while being the bitterest foes of the union bureaucracy. If anarchists can do this, then they can do the same with national wars by oppressed nations.

Some anarchists have made the argument that they should not support oppressed nations because... there are no such thing as nations. Nations do not exist! As if France and Argentina are not real. It is true that nations are social constructions - that is, they are created by people as opposed to being biological categories. It is true that the boundaries of nations are often unclear: is Quebec a nation? If so, then is Canada a nation? Is India a nation or a conglomeration of many nations? These points are valid but apply also to other categories. Classes are social constructions. The boundaries between classes are unclear. Are the unemployed part of the working class or are they "lumpen-proletarians"? Is the "middle class" a class? The same is true of other categories. Even gender, biologically based as it is, is socially constructed in how society interprets that biological given. This does not mean that class or gender is an illusion any more than nations are illusions.

People believe they are in nations and act on that belief. An institution is nothing else than a pattern of mass behaviour. Michael Bakunin wrote, "*Nationality, like individuality, is a natural fact. It denotes the inalienable right of individuals, groups, associations, and regions to their own way of life. And this way of life is the product of a long historical development [a confluence of human beings with a common history, language, and a common cultural background]. And this is why I will always champion the cause of oppressed nationalities struggling to liberate themselves from the domination of the state.*" (Dolgoft, 1980, p. 401) By "*nationality... is a natural fact,*" he means, not that nationality is a biological fact, but that it is created mostly by unplanned, un-purposive, social history.

Another argument is that national self-determination (liberation) is a democratic right, and anarchists should not be for democratic rights or for democracy. Democracy and its rights were, after all, raised by the capitalist class as a weapon against the feudal lords. It has served, and continues to serve, as a cover for capitalist rule. It has also been raised by Leninists (Trotskyists and Stalinists alike) as a cover for their state-capitalist rule. Again, these points are true.

It would be disastrous for anarchists to position themselves as anti-democratic. Anarchism should be presented as the most radical, thoroughgoing, and consistent form of democracy. Democracy did not begin with capitalism. The very term comes from classical Greece. It goes back to tribal councils of early humanity. It includes the struggles for freedom of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions, including the later struggles of the abolitionists. It includes the hope of workers' democracy.

The problem with capitalism (and Leninism) is not democracy but a lack of democracy and of democratic rights. Capitalism has betrayed its own democratic promises. Anarchists will make good those promises: free speech and association; no racial, national, or gender discrimination; land to the peasants; popular control of all institutions; and self-determination for all nations - among others.

The Palestinian Struggle & the Anarchist Dilemma

Comments on Gordon's *Anarchy Alive!*

A review of the discussion of the relationship between anarchism and the Palestinian/Israeli struggle by Uri Gordon, an Israeli anarchist, in his book "*Anarchy Alive!*", including a response to his attack on my views.

There has been very little written on the relation between anarchism and the Palestinian struggle against Israeli oppression. Therefore it is interesting to read the discussion of this topic by an Israeli anarchist, Uri Gordon, in his recent book, *Anarchy Alive!* Chapter 6 is titled, "*HomeLand: Anarchy and Joint Struggle in Palestine/Israel.*" (pp. 139 - 162) Unfortunately, the chapter is marred by an intemperate and gratuitous attack on my views. Before getting to this, I will review his discussion.

Gordon confronts "*the apparent contradiction between anarchists' commitment to support oppressed groups on the latter's own terms, and those terms being - in the Palestinian case - a new nation-state.*" (p. 139) Again, he says that the conflict "*...between anarchist' anti-imperialist commitments... and their traditionally wholesale rebuttal of the state and nationalism..., would seem to leave them at an impasse regarding the national liberation struggles of oppressed peoples.*" (p. 152) This expresses the dilemma nicely.

He briefly notes that Bakunin, Gustav Landauer, and Rudolf Rocker - all historically important anarchists - supported a people's attachment to its own culture and land (including their right to secede from larger units) but opposed national states. Kropotkin supported national liberation struggles of stateless peoples to remove foreign domination. Gordon could have mentioned anarchists' participation in many national liberation and anti-imperialist struggles around the world, perhaps the most famous being Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine. However, these

examples do not resolve the dilemma of Palestine/Israel.

As he notes, most Palestinians want their own state next to Israel. He worries that anarchist opposition to this demand could be seen as “paternalism,” saying that we know what is good for the Arabs better than they do. More significantly, he is concerned that opposition to a Palestinian state leaves anarchists with nothing positive to say, except that Palestinians need anarchism. But they do not - yet? - want anarchism and it is not going to happen anytime soon. (Nor, I would add, are people likely to be persuaded of anarchism if it is seen as opposed to what they do want, namely national self-determination.) Shall anarchists say that we refuse to support the Palestinians’ struggle against a brutal national oppression until the Palestinians see the light and oppose states and capitalism?

★ Possible Anarchist Responses

Gordon offers a series of possible “responses” (by Israeli or European anarchists essentially) to this dilemma.

A first possible response, he writes, is to accept that there is inconsistency in “endorsement of Palestinian statehood by anarchists,” (p. 154) but to endorse it anyway due to the primary value of solidarity. It may be the only “pragmatic,” “viable,” way to counter the Palestinians’ oppression “in the short term.” (pp. 154-5) (I am reviewing his opinions, which I find thought-provoking, but not yet stating my own.)

A second possible response, he suggests, would deny that there is any inconsistency for anarchists. Palestinians already live under a state, that of Israel (including in the Occupied Territories). To demand that Palestinians live under a Palestinian state instead of under that of Israel would not be unprincipled for an anti-statist, he argues. At most it would be just as bad for the Palestinians; at best, it might be somewhat better, due to the removal of direct foreign oppression.

His third response is “anarchists can support a Palestinian state as a strategic choice...” (p. 155), one step in a long-term struggle. Obviously, the region will not move immediately into anarchism; there will be many stages to go through. Decreasing the tensions between the Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs can open things up for further struggles around gender, sexual orientation, and class in each nation. Having got what they wanted, the Palestinians may learn the limitations of statist solutions and continue the struggle on a new basis.

A fourth response may seem to completely contradict the other three responses. It is to ignore the issue of national statehood while supporting day-to-day Palestinian struggles for jobs and dignity. This includes defending farmers from attacks by Jewish settlers, opposing the wall when it cuts through villages, taking apart roadblocks, etc. Anarchists can be engaged in as united fronts with nationalists, without agreeing with their politics. Israeli anarchists may loyally participate in them without endorsing a Palestinian state. He cites the work of Bill Templer, an anarchist, who recognizes that there will be an eventual two-state set-

As a program in oppressed nations, nationalism may win some benefits for the people, and even more benefits for its aspiring new rulers. But it cannot free any nation from the world market or the power politics of great states. It cannot achieve real independence. As can be seen from the fate of China and Vietnam, as well as India and the African states, nationalism has resulted in new oppressions. Franz Fanon wrote penetratingly about this. The worst example of the way the nationalism of an oppressed people has resulted in new oppression, is Zionist Israel. Only an international revolution by the working class and all the oppressed can free the oppressed nations. (I am asserting this here, not arguing for it.)

But nationalism is not the same as national liberation. Similarly, bourgeois varieties of feminism are not the same as women’s liberation. Black liberation is not the same as liberal integrationism or Farakhan’s nationalism. It is possible to be for national liberation without being for the program of nationalism. An example of a national liberation struggle being waged with a non-nationalist program was that of Nestor Makhno’s anarchist-led effort in the Ukraine from 1917 to 1921. This was fuelled by the Ukrainians’ hatred of foreign occupation by German-Austrian imperialism, Russian Bolshevism, and Polish aggression. Makhno’s anarchist biographer calls it “a savage war of national liberation.” (Skirda, 2004, p. 44). But Makhno never ceased to raise class issues (domination by the capitalists and landlords) and to advocate socialist-anarchist internationalism.

The Makhnovist movement declared (in October 1919), “Each national group has a natural and indisputable entitlement to... maintain and develop its national culture in every sphere. It is clear that this... has nothing to do with narrow nationalism of the ‘separatist’ variety... We proclaim the right of the Ukrainian people (and every other nation) to self-determination, not in the narrow nationalist sense of a Petliura, but in the sense of the toilers’ right to self-determination.” (in Skirda, 2004, pp. 377-378)

★ Arguments Against National Liberation

Most anarchist arguments against supporting national liberation are based in anarchism’s well-founded opposition to nationalism. Anarchists do not believe that founding new states will free oppressed people. Class struggle anarchists emphasize the centrality of the class struggle, and also point out the other (non-class) conflicts within each nation. Anarchists oppose the politics and organisation of bourgeois-statist erstwhile rulers, whether they call themselves Ayatollahs or socialists or Little Brothers of the Poor. All this is absolutely correct.

But it does not mean that anarchists must oppose national liberation or be neutral when an imperialist or colonialist state attacks an oppressed (“Third World”) nation. Anarchists must be on the side of the oppressed. Once again: there is no contradiction between solidarity with the oppressed people under attack and being in political opposition to the misleaders of that people. Similarly, we can support a workers’ strike and stand in solidarity with the workers and their union,

An understanding of the reality of special oppressions does not deny the valid insights of historical materialism. It does not deny the importance of class analysis. To repeat, many oppressions were created by current or past material (class) factors. All of them interact with capitalism (that is, the capital-labour relationship). All are affected by capitalism, as they affect it in turn (dialectically, shall we say). For example, the oppression of women predates capitalism, and may even predate class society of any type (we really do not know). But it has been greatly modified by capitalism to fit the bourgeois family and the capitalist economy.

★ National Oppression and Liberation

Most anarchists today (with certain sectarian exceptions) accept the reality and importance of specific, non-class, oppressions. Mostly anarchists are committed to the struggle for specific democratic rights by women, African-Americans, Native Americans, Gays and Lesbians, prisoners, and other oppressed groups.

But strangely enough, many anarchists who champion non-class liberation struggles often refuse to support national liberation (here meaning the same as national self-determination: the right of a people to determine its own fate). National liberation is also not a direct class struggle, even though its connections to capitalism are pretty clear. That is, the big capitalists of the industrialized nations seek to expand their wealth by dominating the weaker, “under-developed,” nations. The international capitalists seek to super-exploit the workers of these nations (workers who accept lower wages), to sell goods to their states and populations, and to loot their natural resources - oil being the most important resource but not the only one. This is imperialism. Since the imperialist states no longer directly “own” colonies, this is its neo-colonialist phase. The oppressed people of these nations are mostly workers, peasants, and small shopkeepers. But they also include “middle class” and upper class layers. These either aspire to be the local agents of imperialism or to replace the imperialists as the new rulers (or both).

In reaction to foreign oppression, the people of these nations develop a desire for national freedom. First they want their “own” state, and then other measures of independence from the imperialists, such as not being invaded, as well as not being economically dominated. In the absence of an alternative they turn to nationalism. Nationalism is not just a love of one’s country and a desire for its freedom. As a developed program, it means the unity of all sectors of a country, the rich and poor, capitalists and workers, landlords and peasants, patriarchal men and women, the dominant nation and minorities, all “united” against other nations, including THEIR workers, peasants, women, and national/racial minorities. The aim is an independent national state, with its own army, secret police, flag, and postage stamps, and its own national rulers. Meanwhile the capitalists of the imperialist countries encourage nationalism (or patriotism) among their workers, to maintain their rule and use the workers as soldiers against the oppressed nations.

tlement in the short run, but focuses his work among Israelis and Palestinian villagers around such issues as resisting the wall. Templer believes that such work will someday lead to a “dual power” situation as it “hollows out” the state and capitalism. (p. 161)

Uri Gordon deserves credit for trying to face up to the anarchist dilemma in dealing with the issue of Palestinian oppression. Although he never says which response he agrees with (which is somewhat confusing), he seems to support them all to some degree. As anyone who has consistently read my material on this site (see www.anarkismo.net) knows, I am sympathetic to an anarchist who wants to both support national movements against oppression while remaining anti-statist and anti-capitalist (e.g., Price, 2006). However I do not think he has quite found the proper resolution of the dilemma.

★ Gordon’s Weaknesses

Gordon does not distinguish between “endorsement of Palestinian statehood by anarchists,” or “anarchists can support a Palestinian state,” on the one hand, and anarchist support or endorsement of the Palestinians’ national self-determination, on the other. The first idea means that anarchists would say that we agree with the program of an independent state for Palestinians, that we think it would be a good thing for them. This would be a drastic mistake. It would be “paternalistic” in that it would not tell the Palestinians the truth as best we see it.

Support for self-determination is quite different. It implies that out of solidarity we defend Palestinians getting the solution they want, because they want it, even though we anarchists would not make this choice. Similarly, we defend the freedom of workers to join the union of their choice, even though we are likely to oppose most business unions. We defend people’s legal right to vote, as against dictatorships, even though we are anti-electoralists. We defend the legal right to divorce, even though we neither advocate that any particular couples break up nor support bourgeois marriage. **In brief, anarchists should defend oppressed people’s freedom to make choices, without having to agree with the choices they pick. Making their own choices is how people (and peoples, and classes) learn.** (Emphasis added - ZB ed).

Further, his “endorsement” and “support” for a new state, in the short term, misses the point that nationalism can misdirect the struggle. While in solidarity with the Palestinian people (who are mostly peasants, workers, and small businesspeople), anarchists still oppose the program of nationalism. At best, the Palestinians could win their own, structurally independent, state. But they would still be dominated by the world market and international power politics. That is, they would not win real national liberation. That needs an international revolution of the workers and all the oppressed. The nationalist leaders have a disastrous program for the Palestinians. Whether or not Gordon knows this, he does not insist that anarchists say this, even while supporting Palestinian struggles (not say it at

every moment of course, but over time and in various ways). He never discusses how to help persuade some Palestinians of anarchism instead of nationalism.

He tries to deal with this by his suggested fourth response, in which anarchists ignore the statehood question while showing solidarity in action. In practice, solidarity actions, united front work, is the right tactic, but eventually the statehood issue would become impossible to ignore. Surely friendly Palestinians would want to know whether we support their freedom to have their own state or not. What would Gordon answer? Templer, his model, apparently does accept the coming of a Palestinian state; he could not ignore the issue in practice.

★ Gordon's Attack on My Views

Gordon introduces his discussion of my opinions by saying that Wayne Price *"descends into very crude terms."* (p. 150) He then quotes me:

"...Israel is the oppressor and the Palestinian Arabs are the oppressed. Therefore anarchists, and all decent people, should be on the side of the Palestinians. Criticisms of their leaderships or their methods of fighting are all secondary; so is recognition that the Israeli Jews are also people and also have certain collective rights. The first step, always, is to stand with the oppressed as they fight for their freedom." (quoted on p. 150)

This passage does not deny that nationalist misleaders should be criticized or that some methods of fighting (e.g. attacks on civilians) should be criticized nor does it deny that Israeli Jews are people and that they should have certain collective rights. But it says that anarchists (and all decent people) should start by being on the side of the oppressed, the Palestinians, against the state of Israel. Frankly I thought this was non-controversial among anarchists.

Not so for Gordon. He writes, *"Asking all decent people to see someone else's humanity and collective rights as secondary to anything - whatever this is, this is not anarchism... This kind of attitude has become... a typically leftist form of Judeophobia or anti-Semitism."* (p. 150) So, I am not an anarchist and am perhaps an anti-Semite! (It is a blessing that Gordon does not like using "crude terms.")

He claims that I ignore the (small minority of) Israelis who have worked with Palestinians. Based on nothing whatever, he refers to *"Price's complete indifference to those who consciously intervene against the occupation...."* (same) He says that they take action not *"because they are 'siding with the Palestinians,' but rather out of a sense of responsibility and solidarity."* (same) Responsibility for what, if not for the oppression of Palestinians by the Israeli state? Solidarity with whom, if not with the Palestinians? Earlier, he even quoted, with approval, a statement by the International Solidarity Movement, which declared a need *"to actively engage in resistance to the Occupation, to take sides..."* (quoted on p. 142)

value out of the workers (and also to the exploitation of peasants by landlords and capitalists). Non-class oppressions include the oppression of women (gender), of People of Colour (race), of Gays and Lesbians (homophobia), of minority religions, of youth, etc., as well as national oppression. Working class oppression is specific to capitalism and its resolution requires socialist revolution. The other oppressions (even that of the peasants - who are still a large proportion of humanity) are often remnants from pre-capitalism. They are forms of oppression which capitalism, in its revolutionary youth, "promised" to abolish. This was the bourgeois-democratic program as raised in the great capitalist revolutions of England, the U.S., France, and Latin America.

Of course, the capitalists never lived up to their democratic program. They have rather integrated specific oppressions into their system as bulwarks of capitalist exploitation. Some of these oppressions may have been started by early capitalism or by pre-capitalist class exploitation (that is, by economic forces) - but they have taken on lives of their own and exist on their own inertia. All forms of oppression, including class, are intertwined, lean on each other, and prop up each other.

Historically, the class struggle tendency within anarchism (anarchist-syndicalism and most anarchist-communism) has focused on the workers' class struggle against the capitalists. They have often treated non-class oppressions as unimportant, as illusions created by the capitalists to trick the workers, to split and weaken the working class. Once this is pointed out to the workers, supposedly, they would see through this trick and unite against the bosses. This simplistic view is also raised in a crude version of Marxism.

In the radicalisation of the 60s and 70s, there were upheavals by African-Americans, women, Gays and Lesbians, and other oppressed people, including worldwide struggles by oppressed nations against imperialism. In our current period of radicalisation, the vital importance of the working class has been recognized by many radicals. Only the workers, as workers, could stop all society in its tracks and start it up on a new, non-exploitative, basis. The working class overlaps with and includes all other oppressed groupings: women, most People of Colour, and so on. To the extent that it is true that the working class is conservative, or at least non-revolutionary, this is the same as saying that most of the population is non-revolutionary. There is no other, non-class, majority capable of overthrowing capitalism.

However, the true lessons of the sixties remain. It is impossible to ignore the importance of the special, non-class, oppressions. For example, racism was created by early capitalism as a justification for African enslavement (that is, of exploitation of a form of labour). And it continues to have class advantages for the capitalists. But it has also taken on a life of its own. Racism is real. The prejudices, and even hatred, which many white workers hold for People of Colour does not depend on rational causes and will not immediately vanish with good arguments about the value of class unity. We cannot call on African-Americans to stop fighting for their specific democratic rights until the white population gives up its racism.

thinkers, the Socialist Workers Party in Britain - among others. They have focused on the undeniable evils of the Israeli attack and on the popular support for Hezbollah that has swept Lebanon and the rest of the Arab and Muslim world.

This has a somewhat odd effect. During the U.S.-Vietnam war, it was possible to portray the "Communist" side (Stalinist-totalitarian nationalists) as "socialists." But there is no way to put a progressive spin on Hezbollah and like-minded forces. They are for theocratic dictatorships, with no rights for dissident religions, minority nationalities, workers, or women. In the absence of an alternative, they have become the leaders of movements for national defence against foreign occupations. This can and should be said. But for secular Leftists to uncritically hail them as though they were proletarian socialists is bizarre. For anarchists, the point is not just that we do not like such ideas, but that these programs will not liberate Lebanon and other countries from imperialism. Only the anarchist program can do that.

Thirdly, the anarchists have clearly opposed the U.S.-Israeli aggression. They have pointed out the reactionary nature of both sides in the war. However, many have tended to equate the two sides, to treat them as equally bad, and to call for opposing the war on both sides. While there is a good deal of confusion on this issue among anarchists, it is my impression that most have failed to support the oppressed against the oppressor in this war (and in the other Middle Eastern wars).

Instead, I propose a different anarchist approach: Revolutionary anarchists should, at the same time, (1) be in solidarity with the people of the oppressed nation against the oppressor (in this case Lebanon against the U.S.-Israel), while (2) politically opposing all bourgeois-statist (nationalist, Islamist, etc.) programs and leaderships (here Hezbollah, other nationalists, etc.) in favour of revolutionary, internationalist socialist-anarchism. By "solidarity" I mean being "on the side of" the people of the oppressed nation, supporting them against attacks from their oppressors. (Which does not prevent us from sympathy for Israeli - and U.S. - soldiers, but this is a sympathy due to their humanity and their working class background, not a solidarity with their being soldiers.)

It does NOT mean slogans such as "Victory to Hezbollah!" or "We are all Hezbollah!", slogans which imply political agreement with Hezbollah. Recently a group of Gay anarchists in New York City called off a demonstration at the Iranian embassy against the persecution of Iranian Gays. They did not want to play into the hands of U.S. government preparations for war against Iran. I would have preferred that they demonstrated, with signs saying, "U.S. State, Hands Off Iran! Iranian State, Hands Off Gays!"

★ Class and Non-Class Oppressions

This issue is an aspect of a broader question: the relationship between class issues and specific non-class issues when seeking liberation. The problem of oppression may be divided between class exploitation and other, non-class, forms of oppression. Class exploitation refers to the way the capitalists pump surplus

That is, "*siding with the Palestinians.*"

Again he quotes me: "*We must support the resistance of the Palestinian people. They have the right to self-determination, that is, to choose their leaders, their programs, and their methods of struggle, whatever we think.*" (quoted on p. 151)

Gordon again goes ballistic, calling this passage, "*A blank check, then, to suicide bombings and any present or future Palestinian elite.*" (p. 151) But as the last phrase ("whatever we think") should make clear, supporting the Palestinians' resistance and self-determination does not mean that we have to agree with their leaders, programs, or methods of struggle. In this I disagree with Gordon, as stated above, since he apparently does support and endorse a Palestinian state, despite its inevitable "Palestinian elite" (in Responses 1, 2, and 3).

Interestingly, throughout this chapter, he only discusses conceivable anarchist "responses" to the two-state program (Israel plus Palestine), never to the idea of a democratic-secular (or bi-national) single state. Perhaps (I speculate), this is due to his concern for the interests of Israeli Jews, since a two-state settlement would mean that they would keep their own, Zionist-oppressor, state?

Gordon argues that it is wrong of me to ask the movement to make demands on the Israeli, the U.S., or any other state. "*...This would be a 'politics of demand' which extends undue recognition and legitimation to state power....*" This is "*far removed from anarchism.*" (p. 151) (Personally I do not say that people who call themselves anarchists, but with whom I otherwise disagree, are not anarchists, nor am I interested in "proving" that what I propose is anarchist). In any case, this is an odd attack coming from someone who is willing to consider "endorsing" or "supporting" the Palestinians' demand for their own state (a demand on the Israeli and U.S. states).

Anarchists have often made demands on the state, such as to stop waging specific wars or to release prisoners. And we have made demands on capitalists, as in fighting for union recognition or better working conditions. Refusing to make demands on the state or on the capitalists may sound very radical (as if they care whether anarchists give them "recognition and legitimation"!) but it is a reformist cop-out, an abdication of the struggle.

Gordon is so upset that I denied the humanity of Israeli Jews (which I did not do), that I wondered if he would be as concerned about the humanity of other oppressors. And he is! He quotes the revolutionary anarchist Errico Malatesta, "*The slave is always in a state of legitimate defence and consequently, his [note] violence against the boss, against the oppressor, is always morally justifiable.*" (quoted on p. 100) However, Malatesta added that violence should be "controlled" by taking into account "*human effort and human sufferings.*" (same)

Gordon reacts by noting that the modern worker, even though exploited, is not the same as a chattel slave (true, but irrelevant to Malatesta's point). He then writes that Malatesta is seeking "*a convenient way to dehumanise 'class enemies' for the sole purpose of making the violation of persons more palatable.*" (p. 100) This is in spite of the fact that Gordon does not come out for absolute pacifism in his discussion of violence and non-violence (chapter 4).

What Gordon wants to emphasize is the humanity of the exploiter. **Yet oppressors have never suffered from a lack of defenders. It is the slaves, the workers, and the oppressed nations who need defenders - or more precisely, comrades.**

★ Which Side Are You On?

I think that Uri Gordon expresses well the dilemma of anarchists in dealing with national liberation struggles. He looks for ways to be for the oppressed nation of Palestine while remaining true to his anti-statist and anti-capitalist convictions. While respecting his motives, and sharing them, I do not think that he succeeds. I suggest an alternate approach based on defending national self-determination while opposing nationalism.

Unfortunately, his thought-provoking discussion is marred by intemperate attacks on my opinions. His reaction is apparently due to his over-sensitivity toward the interests of oppressors (such as the Israeli Jews or the capitalists - his examples). He objects to the idea that we should be "*siding with the Palestinians.*" By his own account, then, Gordon does not stand unequivocally on the side of the oppressed, the exploited, and the wretched of the earth.

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Lessons for the Anarchist Movement of the Israeli-Lebanese War

★ The Anarchist Debate About National Liberation ★

The war between Israel (with full backing by the U.S.) and Hezbollah (and the rest of Lebanon) is over - temporarily. "Temporarily" because no major issue has been settled, particularly Israel's colonialist role in the Middle East. Meanwhile the war between the U.S. and Iraq has intensified, while the Iraqi sectarian civil war also increases. The U.S.-Afghanistan war continues. And there is good evidence that the Bush administration intends to attack Iran. Peace is not at hand.

The Left, such as it is, has taken a range of positions on the Israeli-Lebanese war, as part of its positions on the Middle Eastern wars in general. First, the liberals have continued to support the U.S. state as well as the Israeli state, but have wanted them to clean up their acts, to show smarter and more sophisticated behaviours. For years, the liberal wing of the U.S. anti-war movement has fought to keep the issue of Israel vs. the Palestinians out of anti-war protests. Now that they had to directly address U.S.-Israeli aggression, they claimed that, while Israel had the "right" to "defend itself," it was being "excessive" and "disproportionate." Instead, these pro-Israeli doves advocated a "cease-fire," equating the two sides, the aggressor and the victim. They should both stop fighting. Mostly liberals supported the demand for Hezbollah to disarm (but not a call for Israel to disarm!). They cheer on the current (temporary) resolution of the war by which various imperialist powers and other states intervene as sheriffs to "keep the peace," more or less.

Secondly, the radical Left mostly became a cheering squad for Hezbollah, as well as Hamas, as it had for the fundamentalist-led resistance in Iraq. (No one is cheering on the Taliban in Afghanistan; this would be too much even for most radical Leftists, I guess.) I am speaking of the Workers World Party and its fronts and splits, as well as the International Socialist Organisation in the U.S. and its co-