

"doikeyt" has remained a powerful idea in the jewish radical world for over a century precisely because it refuses the separation of struggles.

it rejects the nationalist idea that jewish bosses, politicians, and religious authorities should be supported in the interest of 'the unity of the jewish people'. it rejects the economic idea that the struggles of communities oppressed along racial, religious, or cultural lines should be set aside in favor of 'the unity of the working class'. it rejects the exceptionalist idea that jewish communities and struggles are fundamentally different from those of other peoples. and, less consistently and less explicitly, it rejects the misogynistic and patriarchal ideas that the liberation struggles of women and young people should be submerged in either class-based or community-based politics.

and, perhaps most importantly, it rejects a separation between the 'local' and the 'global', insisting on their constant interweavings. "doikeyt" is a declaration that what happens "here" is shaped by structures of power that must be confronted here, but cannot be dismantled through struggles here alone.

it says that the struggle for jewish cultural autonomy in diasporic communities, the class struggle in each place where jews make their lives, and the struggle against the colonization of palestine cannot be divided. in part because of the common enemies that link them; in part because the fantasy of separate solutions feeds into false and failed answers to each of them; in part because the freedom we demand for ourselves is meaningless without liberation for all. and, ultimately, because being "here", being present where we are, must be a practice of mutual solidarity, not a state of isolation.

rozele made this

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shearith korakh

tradition tells us: after the slave revolt in egypt, the former slaves and their allies wound up adrift in the desert east of the Red Sea. as mooses and aaron consolidated their power as 'leaders' of the revolt and escape, a group challenged their self-appointed rulership. the speaker for the rebellious group, korakh, used the religious/political language of the day to make the anti-authoritarian case: "you have gone too far! for all the community are holy, all of them, and the holy one is in their midst. why then do you raise yourselves above the holy one's congregation?" [numbers 16:31. it took murderous divine interventions, killing thousands in earthquakes, fire, and plague, to crush the anti-hierarchical revolt. the establishment of the hereditary high priesthood followed, institutionalizing the b'nei amram family's rule.

'shearith korakh' means 'the remnant or survivors of korakh':
those who follow in the tradition of that rebellion,
insisting on full freedom as we struggle, revolt, and escape

this series prints zines, pamphlets, &c dealing with political, social and cultural topics of interest to jewish anarchists and our friends

galut גלות golus
exile

zine project #four

for a vibrant jewish anarchist rebel culture & the embrace of love and resistance



"there, where we live, there is our country"

דאיקייט

Bundists at the beach



[yiddish]

transliterated variously:

doikeyt - doikayt - doykeyt - doykayt - doykeit - doikeit
the first two the closest to its pronunciation; the last two aggressively germanized

etymologically: here-ness

literally: presence; existence

politically: the subject of this zine

shearith korakh series - giml

"doikeyt" is one of the key political principles developed by the *algemeyner yidisher arbeter bund in lite, poyln, un rusland* - the General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia - better known as the Bund. the Bund was the dominant labor and revolutionary organization among yiddish-speaking jews in the russian empire before the 1917 revolution, the strongest jewish political party in poland between the world wars, the heart of the urban jewish armed resistance to the nazi attempted genocide, and an unparalleled influence on the jewish left throughout the ashkenazi diaspora of the 20th century.

the Bund held to a core marxist political orientation, but its focus on jewish workers and their communities - and more specifically on yiddish-speakers - led it to differ in very significant ways from other socialist and communist currents with jewish memberships (the bolshevik faction within the Russian Social Democratic Party; the Polish Socialist Party; &c). similarly, as it placed steadily increasing importance on jewish cultural identity, and on yiddish language and culture in particular, its commitment to a class analysis and an internationalist perspective led it to differ from other political and social movements within the ashkenazi world (the 'national-cultural autonomism' of simon dubnow's Jewish People's Party; the various assimilationist 'modernizing' trends; &c).



young Bundists in vilna



Bundist cooperative leather shop

Bundist self-defense unit in odessa, 1918



"doikeyt" crystallizes many of the distinctions that defined the Bund in relation both to other radicals and other jews, articulating a politics that grew to resemble the intersectional approach to women's liberation created by black feminists and womanists in the late 20th century.

it does so at least partly because it was developed as part of the Bund's battle against the political force they saw as one of the most destructive within their communities, despite its comparatively small reach before 1945: zionism, and more specifically so-called 'left' or 'labor' zionism. the Bund saw 'labor' zionism's claim to embody both a socialist politics and a jewish cultural program as particularly dangerous because it was accompanied by active promotion of emigration, alliance with wealthy jews on the basis of nationalism, and hostility to existing jewish cultures and languages (yiddish in particular).

embracing a principle of "here-ness", or more accurately, "being present", is first of all a clear expression of fundamental opposition to zionism.

it is an embrace of diasporic life, in all its local specificities and variations, that runs counter to both the 'emigration to palestine' and the 'true national center in palestine' versions of the core zionist principle of 'liquidation of the diaspora'. "doikeyt" insists that jewish life can only be lived through cultures and traditions that stem from specific places and contexts in historical memory, not religious myth, and in interaction with other communities who share those places and contexts.

ashkenazim, in other words, are an indigenous people of eastern and central europe, just like the gagauz, tatars, hutsul, and other groups who've rarely enjoyed political autonomy.

the struggles facing jews within the russian empire, or the polish state, are connected most immediately to those they live alongside, rather than to other jewish populations separated from them (and joined to their own neighbors) by history and geography. those struggles require: a 'local internationalism' that defends the autonomy of all communities; a diasporic view of communities spanning state borders; a class-based internationalism that makes it clear where to seek alliances in other communities; and a class-struggle orientation within the jewish sphere which creates internationalist parallels with similar battles inside other communities.

the principle works similarly in the 20th-century ashkenazi diaspora, from melbourne to buenos aires to the bronx: "doikeyt" means being present in jewish and other communities' efforts to win and defend cultural and institutional autonomy; in regional and national battles for economic justice; and in the power struggles between rich and poor, right and left, within jewish communities.

"doikeyt" is also a rejection of the other basic pillar of zionism: racially- or religiously-defined jewish control of the land between the jordan and the mediterranean, either for its own sake or as a solution to the 'jewish question'.

"here-ness" is a declaration that emigration is not an answer to oppression - that oppression can only be defeated by confronting it, not by proclaiming it to be eternal and making common cause with its perpetrators to achieve their goal of expulsion and separation.

"being present" is also, at its heart, being present with others: being one of many communities living alongside each other, struggling together for mutually-supportive autonomy rather than against each other for territorial control. this approach allowed the Bund, as early as 1905, to foresee 'labor' zionism's colonial future of palestinian resistance, zionist apartheid, and exploited foreign 'guest workers' in eerie detail:

those who are expropriated will doubtless not stand by with folded arms. and won't capitalism in 'Eretz' prefer a cheap arab workforce? so: do the socialist zionists think they'll establish a special settlement area for the bedouins [i.e. palestinians], and pass laws that don't apply to non-jewish migrant workers?