

**An East London Jewish credo**

# **The Thirteen Articles of Faith**

1. I believe with a perfect faith that all men, whether sons of the covenant or not sons of the covenant\*, are born free, and that freedom is their portion throughout life.
2. I believe with a perfect faith that the man who derives wealth from the labour of others, himself not working, is an impudent plunderer.
3. I believe with a perfect faith that poverty will never cease from the earth until communal labour be organised — until every man be compelled to work according to his strength, and receive of his labour according to his needs.
4. I believe with a perfect faith that man will be a "slave of slaves" so long as one individual is suffered to rule over others, and a few are allowed to legislate and make laws for the many.
5. I believe with a perfect faith that stupidity will prevail over knowledge and darkness over light, so long as men cannot acquire education and train themselves according to their several capacities.
6. I believe with a perfect faith that men of religion will persecute those of other religions so long as poverty and distress exist and that the majority of mankind will be, as now, smitten with blindness.
7. I believe with a perfect faith that war will exist and thousands will be slaughtered upon the battle-field as long as "force" prevails and one country derives profit from the ruin of another.
8. I believe with a perfect faith that women will be but the slaves and playthings (Shashuim) of men so long as they are dependent upon them and do not enjoy the fruits of their own labour.
9. I believe with a perfect faith that labour — which supplies all the needs of man — will be despised in the eyes of all so long as the working men toil to fill the pockets of those who sit still and idle.
10. I believe with a perfect faith that murderers, thieves, adulterers, and all kinds of criminals will not cease so long as poverty remains to give birth to them.
11. I believe with a perfect faith that men will devour each other alive, unless a new light soon dawn upon humanity and the working men rise as one to throw off the yoke of capital, and put under foot those who oppress them.
12. I believe with a perfect faith that the upright intellect can achieve all: that the rule of reason is at hand, when men will live as a band of brothers and all nations form one united family.
13. I believe with a perfect faith that the end will come speedily and in our days.

\* Adherents of the Jewish religion.

# **Confessing the socialist faith**

**T**HE working-class socialist movement always has to begin by asserting its own ideas in terms of the prevailing ideas in bourgeois society. It has sometimes seized on the forms in which antagonistic bourgeois ideas are expressed and used them for its own purposes. It has adapted existing forms and rituals to new ends. Thus the Chartists sang "God Save the People" where others sang "God Save the Queen."

Thus in the period before the First World War, socialist Sunday schools existed all over Britain, paralleling the official church Sunday schools for children.

This "Socialist Ten Commandments", paralleling the Ten Commandments of Moses and the Christian churches, was used in some of them.

Jewish socialists too sometimes paralleled religious forms in their way of propagandising for their socialist ideas. This credo — confession of faith — expressing secularist and socialist ideas in



religious style, appeared in an East London Yiddish language paper in 1887. It was translated and printed in *Justice*, the paper of the Social Democratic Federation, to which the East London Jewish socialists were affiliated.

## **The Socialist 10 Commandments**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Love your school-fellows, who will be your fellow-workmen in life.</li> <li>2. Love learning, which is the food of the mind; be as grateful to your teacher as to your parents.</li> <li>3. Make every day holy by good and useful deeds and kindly actions.</li> <li>4. Honour good men, be courteous to all men, bow down to none.</li> <li>5. Do not hate or speak evil of anyone; do not be revengeful, but stand up for your rights, and resist oppression.</li> <li>6. Do not be cowardly, be a friend to the weak, and love justice.</li> <li>7. Remember that all the good things of the earth are produced by labour, whoever</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enjoys them without working for them is stealing the bread of the workers.</li> <li>8. Observe and think in order to discover the truth; do not believe what is contrary to reason, and never deceive yourself or others.</li> <li>9. Do not think that he who loves his own country must hate other nations, or wish for war, which is a remnant of barbarism.</li> <li>10. Look forward to the day when all men will be free citizens of one fatherland, and live together as brothers in peace and righteousness.</li> </ol> |
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